



Together We're Making a Difference

LACHLAN CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

2 Sherriff Street

FORBES NSW 2871

P (02) 6851 9500 F (02) 6851 6991

Outcomes from Native Vegetation Regulation Review Community Consultation

The Lachlan Catchment Management Authority (CMA) held a public information session on Friday the 18th November 2011 at the DPI Research Centre in Condobolin to explain the Native Vegetation Regulations and to seek ideas on how the regulations could operate more effectively.

Representatives from Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), community groups and local landholders were in attendance.

Rob Gledhill Chairman Lachlan CMA, chaired the meeting and Tim Ferraro of GHD facilitated the information session.

Craig Wood of OEH(Dubbo) gave an overview of the Native Vegetation Regulation Review and explained the aims of the review which included looking to achieve faster assessment of minor activities, increased flexibility for landscape approaches, less red tape for environmental works, only one approval system (streamline), clearer exemptions and more.

Results of a recent survey conducted by the Lachlan CMA PVP unit were presented by Alan McGufficke, Program Manager, Advisory Services & Ecosystems.

Points raised in discussion

- Inconsistency between government agencies
- Waiting times for Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) processing and a lot of red tape
- Staff capacity and training required to process a PVP
- The need to match PVP application complexity to the expertise (Triaging PVP)
- There seems to be a greater focus on trees than on grasses and agriculture
- Discrimination against undeveloped blocks, no opportunity to develop for agriculture
- Need to look at big picture, i.e. landscape planning
- Need to take into account the differences between properties
- Definition for native grass/pastures needs to be more realistic
- There is a need to focus on outcomes more than the process
- If environmental outcomes were profitable then engagement would increase
- CMA's should have a little more discretion when making decisions
- Landholders should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity, manage their native vegetation on a demo paddock before progressing to larger scale
- Staff levels at maximum allowance under Catchment Management Authority (CMA) budget
- A generic offset ratio would be useful based upon the area to be cleared
- A perception that a change of land use is bad, i.e. development
- Assessment based on potential habitat for threatened species rather than actually present
- The difficulty of assessing regrowth
- Species listing should be based more on field assessment than on predictive mapping for Invasive Native Scrub (INS).
- Should be more commonality between CMA policy for trunk Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) for INS
- Some INS PVP's leave too many large trees
- Environmental Issues need to be weighed up against food security
- Cultivation intervals for INS could be reduced to keep regrowth under control
- Need greater flexibility, but would need stronger guidelines

Key issues raised from the public meeting included

- The ability for self assessment and greater flexibility and discretion in processing Property Vegetation Plans (PVP's)

- The need for structural adjustment or compensation for landholders who have land that they are unable to clear

- The need for consistency of definitions

- Legislation needs to keep up with Agricultural technology. Paddock trees are hindering the adoption of precision Agriculture, controlled traffic farming which provides improved soil structure, reduced fuel costs and increased yields

- Turn around time for PVP's are too long and there is too much red tape

- It is important to concentrate on outcomes rather than process

For further information contact David Creeper PVP/Biodiversity Coordinator on 6851 9511 or 0428 234 972. Email david.creeper@cma.nsw.gov.au