

Vegetation clearing

Vegetation clearing means the destruction of vegetation or interference with its natural growth in any way including removing, clearing, slashing, cutting down, ringbarking, scar-barking, pushing or pulling over, poisoning, burning, flooding, draining or compacting of roots.

The term does not include:

- destruction of standing vegetation by stock
- lopping a tree by cutting or pruning its branches, provided it does not involve:
 - removing the tree's trunk or
 - cutting or pruning the tree's branches excessively or so severely that it is likely to die or
- mowing of grass or lawn.

Under the *Planning Act 2016*, vegetation clearing is 'development' (operational work) and regulated under a local government planning scheme.



How is vegetation clearing intended to be regulated under the proposed planning scheme?

The regulation of vegetation clearing under the proposed planning scheme is similar to the current *Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014* (current planning scheme).

Clearing vegetation identified as 'exempt vegetation clearing' in Schedule 1 Definitions, will continue to not require a development application to Council. Some examples of common exemptions (provided certain conditions are met) include:

- clearing for emergency work or
- clearing of invasive plants identified in the Sunshine Coast Council Biosecurity Plan.

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It is important to note that vegetation clearing which is exempt for the purposes of the planning scheme may be subject to assessment under State or Federal legislation.

Where vegetation clearing is not identified as exempt, and the clearing is within a mapped habitat area or mapped area of Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) under the proposed Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay, a development application for vegetation clearing (operational work) is generally proposed to be required.

The development application would be assessed against the provisions of the proposed Vegetation Management Code in Part 8 of the proposed planning scheme. The Vegetation Management Code addresses issues such as vegetation protection, waterways and wetlands, ecological connectivity, management of clearing works and vegetation disposal.

Vegetation clearing associated with other development (e.g. change of use, subdivision or other works) that is assessable development under the planning scheme is proposed to be assessed as part of that application. A separate development application is not proposed to be required. The development application may also require assessment against overlay codes, such as the proposed Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay Code.

Similarly, vegetation clearing associated with the establishment of a dwelling house or other accepted development under the planning scheme is proposed to be assessed against the relevant accepted development requirements of the Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay Code. Where the requirements for accepted

development cannot be met, an application to Council would be required (either via concurrence agency referral or code assessment).

Are environmental offsets proposed to be required?

Where vegetation clearing cannot practically be avoided, an environmental offset may be required. Environmental offsets involve the provision of compensatory habitat, which may be located on or off the development site, to counterbalance the loss of habitat and other values as a result of the clearing. The *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*, proposed Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay Code and Environmental Offsets Planning Scheme Policy, provide details in relation to the proposed provisions relating to environmental offsets.



What are the key changes?

Provisions relating to vegetation clearing under the proposed planning scheme are similar to the current planning scheme, with updates to reflect recent legislative changes and State interests.

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Changes have also been made to better align assessment of clearing with mapped habitat areas.

Clearing within a mapped habitat area or mapped area of Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) under the proposed Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay is generally proposed to require assessment by Council, unless another exemption applies.

How can I find out more?

- Go to the following [information sheets](#):
 - Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay
- Go to the following parts of the [proposed planning scheme](#):
 - Biodiversity, Waterways and Wetlands Overlay Code
 - Vegetation Management Code
 - Find out the zoning and overlay mapping that is [proposed for your property](#)
- If you have a question, contact Council's planning scheme team:
 - Email: newplanningscheme@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
 - Phone: 07 5409 0570

To explore the proposed planning scheme or make a submission, scan the QR code or visit:

<https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/newplanningscheme>



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