

Vegetation Management (Regional Ecosystems) Amendment Regulation 2022

Explanatory notes for SL 2022 No. 120

made under the

Vegetation Management Act 1999

General Outline

Short title

Vegetation Management (Regional Ecosystems) Amendment Regulation 2022.

Authorising law

Sections 22LA, 22LB, 22LC and 72 of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*

Policy objectives and the reasons for them

The *Vegetation Management Act 1999* was established to regulate the clearing of native vegetation in Queensland.

The objective of the *Vegetation Management (Regional Ecosystems) Amendment Regulation 2022* (the amendment regulation) is to give effect to updated regional ecosystems (RE) and corresponding RE classes which are declared within the *Vegetation Management Regulation 2012*.

The *Vegetation Management Regulation 2012* supports the implementation of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* by (amongst other things) declaring the classification of REs.

The list of declared REs and RE classes in the *Vegetation Management Regulation 2012* has not been updated since September 2021.

The Queensland Herbarium maps the REs that occur in Queensland. This mapping process results in regular reviews to RE descriptions and status and in new versions of the Queensland Herbarium's RE map. The Queensland Herbarium finalised version 12.2 of its RE mapping and this map along with the updated list of RE and RE classes, ensures that the vegetation mapping being used under the vegetation management framework represents the best available science.

The *Vegetation Management Regulation 2012* requires amendment to declare an update to the RE and RE classes to align with the best available science to improve the vegetation management mapping.

Achievement of policy objectives

Schedules 1 to 5 of the *Vegetation Management Regulation 2012* will be amended to provide for:

- one RE that is changing to a higher RE class schedule (e.g. from least concern to of concern),
- one RE that is changing to a lower RE class schedule (e.g. from of concern to least concern),
- 28 new REs being added to the schedules,
- three new grassland REs being added to the schedules, and
- three REs being removed from the schedules.

The dictionary is also having two definitions added to link to scientific documents to define what ferricrete and footslopes means in relation to regional ecosystem descriptions that contain these terms. These terms are not defined in the vegetation management framework or dictionary so references to the source of these definitions was added to provide clarity in understanding what these terms mean.

These amendments are a legislative requirement of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* when updating RE classes. As such, this is the most reasonable and appropriate way to achieve the policy objectives to ensure these mechanisms are based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge and understanding.

Consistency with policy objectives of authorising law

The amendment regulation is consistent with the objectives of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, to regulate the clearing of vegetation in a way that prevents the loss of biodiversity.

The update to the REs and corresponding RE classes will ensure the regulation of vegetation clearing is based on best available science and prevents the loss of biodiversity.

Inconsistency with policy objectives of other legislation

The amendment regulation is not inconsistent with the policy objectives of other legislation.

Benefits and costs of implementation

The benefits of the proposed amendments are to ensure the best available science is being used for the mapping associated with the vegetation management framework.

The cost of implementation involves stakeholders investigating the changes to the status of REs in certain areas of the state associated with updated RE mapping.

This is likely to temporarily increase the number of landholders checking the regulated vegetation mapping on their properties due to the announced changes being sent out via an email alert. This will generate an increase in the number of online vegetation map requests that the government mapping system receives. This is also likely to increase the number of landholder enquires that the Department of Resources VegHub (vegetation enquiry service) receives.

The additional support costs associated with these elements will be funded through existing resources.

Consistency with fundamental legislative principles

The amendments are consistent with the fundamental legislative principles.

Consultation

The amendments will have potential impacts to stakeholders due to the changes to RE statuses in certain areas of the state associated with updated RE mapping.

The potential impacts to stakeholders and their concerns will be managed by the Department of Resources through an email alert to vegetation mapping users who have previously downloaded maps to communicate that there may be changes to vegetation mapping on their property.

Amendments to the RE and RE classes is a scientific update to ensure the best available science is being used for the mapping associated with the vegetation management framework.

The list of REs associated with the version 12.2 mapping was developed from a number of Bioregional Technical Review workshops held by the Queensland Herbarium and comprised of Government and non-Government experts during 2020-21. The experts categorised the REs according to the criteria for endangered, of concern and least concern Res specified in the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*.

In accordance with the *Queensland Government Guide to Better Regulation* (the guidelines) the Office of Best Practice Regulation (OBPR) was consulted regarding whether further regulatory impact analysis was required.

OBPR advised that the proposed amendments are considered to be machinery in nature and that no further assessment is required under the guidelines.