



**The Hon Andrew Stoner MP**  
Deputy Premier of NSW

**The Hon Robyn Parker MP**  
Minister for Environment & Heritage

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday, 14 June 2013

### **NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO NATIVE VEGETATION REGULATION**

Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and Environment Minister Robyn Parker today announced that there will be significant changes to the way native vegetation is regulated in NSW.

This follows the release today of an independent report on native vegetation management by Joe Lane, following extensive consultation with regional stakeholders.

Mr Stoner and Ms Parker said the NSW Government will implement all of the report's 40 recommendations.

"The previous Government changed regulations that have resulted in a regulatory regime of native vegetation clearing that is complex, inefficient and overly prescriptive," Mr Stoner said.

"What we're announcing today is a sensible set of changes that will strike the right balance between conservation and efficient agricultural management.

"The recommendations made by Mr Lane maintain environment protection standards while removing unnecessary red tape so that landholders who want to do the right thing can get on with good management of their land."

The new regulation will be released by 1 September and become fully operational from the start of 2014 following public exhibition of the self-assessable codes.

Ms Parker said native vegetation is vital in supporting productive agriculture and helps to provide important services such as water filtration, erosion control and good soil health

"Careful management of our native vegetation is crucial as only 9 per cent of land across the state is in good natural condition, so we need to get this right in order to preserve our biological diversity and protect endangered species," Ms Parker said.

"Under the new regulation, farmers will be accountable for their actions but able to self-assess many of their proposed low impact clearing activities and will have access to a wider range of exemptions.

"The regulations announced today will let farmers get on with the daily management of their farms with supportive expert advice and a minimum of government interference.

The new arrangements will:

- Let farmers clear paddock trees, manage invasive native species and thin native vegetation using self-assessable codes, saving farmers time waiting for approval;
- Deliver faster and simpler assessment of property vegetation plans through a revised Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology;
- Adopt a state-wide list of invasive native species allowing a common sense and equitable approach to management;
- Stop the deterioration of native pastures, allowing the sustainable management of native grass species under a new exemption; and
- Eliminate the dual-consent problem by eliminating the need for a property vegetation plan where landholders have development consent.

The new regulation will be supported and implemented by Local Land Services and a rigorous ongoing compliance and enforcement regime to prevent illegal clearing.

“These changes are not about winding back environment protections or returning to the bad old days of broad-scale land clearing,” Ms Parker said.

“The current legislative framework for native vegetation and biodiversity has become a patchwork of laws that is fragmented, often rigid and overly complex, creating inconsistent regulatory standards across different sectors.

“These laws have become harder to understand and ineffective through successive amendments and other reforms over the past decade.

“While the reforms announced today will address most of the community’s concerns there is more to do in order to build a modern regulatory framework to actively work with farmers to better protect our unique landscapes.

“The Government’s current transformation of the planning system provides an ideal opportunity to reform the legislative and regulatory framework governing native vegetation and biodiversity management.

“We will develop a modern legislative regime that delivers better environment protection whilst facilitating sustainable economic and agricultural development.

“Most importantly, the laws governing land use, biodiversity conservation and development must go hand in hand, and that is why any changes to the native vegetation legislation will build on the broader changes the NSW Government is making to the State’s planning laws.

“This is a complex change that requires careful planning, comprehensive research and detailed analysis, that draw on best policy practice from around the world and strong consultation with stakeholders to ensure that we develop the best possible new laws.”

The Independent facilitator’s report is available at [environment.nsw.gov.au](http://environment.nsw.gov.au)