

NORTHERN TERRITORY CODES OF PRACTICE FOR FORESTRY PLANTATIONS

1. All clearing of vegetation in the NT, irrespective of land tenure, is now subject to approval under legislation. For all freehold and crown land this approval is provided under the Planning Act initially through an Interim Development Control Order and eventually through amendments to the NT Planning Scheme. For the remaining 47% of land which exists as Pastoral estate, the approval is provided under provisions of the Pastoral Land Act. All vegetation clearing applications are assessed according to statutory processes and for plantation forestry proposals both the NT Clearing Guidelines and the NT Code of Practice for Forestry Operations would be used in the assessment process.
2. Clearing proposals are assessed by a range of government agencies including the Office of Environment and Heritage. The referral of a plantation forestry proposal to this Office of Environment and Heritage would trigger the environmental assessment of the proposal under the NT *Environmental Assessment Act* and relevant Commonwealth legislation. The referral of a plantation forestry proposal is a requirement of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and would be made by the agency responsible for approving clearing either under the Planning Act or the Pastoral Land Act.
3. A plan of management will be prepared by the developer setting out work prescriptions that address the requirements of this Code of Practice. Any plan would need to take into account recommendations as specified under an approval granted under the *Planning Act* and would be subject to the approval of the Minister for the Environment.
4. The plan of management will detail procedures for monitoring compliance with work prescriptions that address the requirements of this Code of Practice. A committee comprising representatives of Departments of Business, Industry and Resource Development, and Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, together with a representative of the proponent will review and oversight compliance.
5. There will be no net loss of biodiversity values associated with new plantation development. Losses caused by development activities essential for the viability of the plantation enterprise will be compensated by expanded conservation activity in other areas. The plan of management will detail mechanisms to protect endangered or threatened species.
6. Soil quality will be protected by preventing erosion and mitigating processes which could lead to chemical and structural change. The risk of water pollution caused by soil erosion will be minimised.

7. Water quality, stream stability and habitat values will be maintained in the forest environment including the development area and adjoining lands.
8. A high standard of operational planning, clear work instructions, and adequately trained workforce will ensure effective and reliable implementation of complying management operations. Inspection of operations, keeping of adequate records, and periodic auditing of the system's performance will ensure the maintenance of standards and their continuous improvement.
9. The threat to water quality will be minimised by controlling the extent of road construction, and the number of stream crossings to that required for efficient plantation operations. Roads will be located and designed to minimise run-off and to facilitate effective construction and maintenance.
10. Permanent watercourse crossings will be located, designed, constructed and maintained so as to minimise disturbance during construction and to ensure stability in the long-term in order to minimise risks of degrading water quality and aquatic habitat. Temporary crossings will be sited, prepared and used so as to avoid exposure of dispersible soils and minimise the disturbance of banks. Temporary crossings will be rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for Soil Conservation.
11. Roads will be constructed to provide long-term stable traffic surfaces. Control measures will be implemented during the construction phase to protect against soil erosion and water quality degradation. Culverts and crossings will be installed to ensure long-term effective performance and to meet the needs of aquatic fauna.
12. Roads and their associated drainage systems will be maintained in effective functioning order to minimise risk of degradation of water quality.
13. Adverse impacts on soil, such as compaction, soil erosion and fertility loss, and degradation of water quality will be minimised during site preparation.
14. Forestry and associated operations will be conducted in such a fashion that they caused minimal disturbance of soil in buffers, in order to allow their effective and continuing functioning in filtering water pollution and preventing damage to aquatic habitat.
15. Chemical selection, rates and method of applications will assure healthy plantations, minimise risk to human health, and minimise adverse impacts on the environment.
16. Handling and storage of hazardous substances will be conducted to minimise risks to human health, site contamination, and off-site pollution, including adverse impact on flora and fauna.

17. Oils, fertiliser bags, empty chemical containers, unused chemicals, and other plantation and machinery waste will be removed off-site and disposed of by authorised disposal methods only in order to minimise risks to human health, site contamination, and adverse impacts on the environment.
18. Risks to life, property and the environment from wildfire will be minimised through adequate precautionary measures.
19. Sites with heritage and archaeological significance will be protected from disturbance by plantation activities.
20. Harmful pest outbreaks will be minimised by monitoring of plantation health and by timely implementation of control measures. Adjacent lands and forests will be prevented from degradation caused by the spread of weeds, pests and diseases.
21. Environmental disturbance associated with harvesting will be minimised by ensuring that operations are adequately planned, that clear work instructions are provided, and that supervision is effective.
22. The risk of water pollution caused by run-off from areas disturbed by harvesting machinery traffic, will be minimised during and after operations. The extent of adverse impacts on soils such as compaction caused by machinery traffic during wet weather will be minimised.
23. Turbid run-off from roads causing water pollution will be minimised.
24. Areas reserved for the protection of soil, water quality and maintenance of biodiversity will be protected and managed so that these environmental attributes remain functional in perpetuity.
25. Adverse impacts on neighbours and members of the public caused by employees, dust or safety hazards will be minimised.
26. The plan of management will provide for periodic reporting of compliance against the requirements of the plan and this Code and for ongoing monitoring. Breaches may result in action being taken under relevant legislation including the *Water Act*, the *Weeds Act*, the *Bushfires Act*, the *Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act*, the *Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* and the *Work Health Act*.