

Property vegetation plan template

Native forest timber harvesting



December 2023 (Version 1.1)



Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

OFFICIAL

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1.0	December 2017	-	-
1.1	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated department name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realigned the approval pathway to allow an approved PVP, not yet made pursuant to Section 69 of the CFL Act, to be used as the permit application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2.1
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1. Property vegetation plan for native forest timber harvesting – introduction

1.1 Purpose and structure of this document

This document provides a template for preparing a property vegetation plan (PVP) for the removal of native vegetation for timber harvesting on private land. A PVP developed in accordance with this document is referred to as a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*. A *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* sets out the native vegetation to be removed for a timber harvesting operation, and the conditions that must be met when harvesting, and when regenerating the harvested site.

Sections 1 to 4 of this document provides an overview for the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* and background information relevant to completing the template.

The PVP template can be found at Appendix A.

1.2 Scope of a PVP for native forest timber harvesting

Clause 52.16 and 52.17 of all planning schemes in Victoria require a permit to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation. The *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (the Guidelines) governs how these permit applications are assessed, and how native vegetation removal that is permitted is offset. The Guidelines include specific arrangements for offsets for native forest timber harvesting (the Guidelines section 11.4). These arrangements specify that a native forest timber harvesting application can meet offset requirements for the area harvested via regeneration provided it includes an approved *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* that addresses the removal and offsetting of native vegetation. A DEECA approved *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* can accompany an application for a planning permit to remove native vegetation under Clause 52.16 or 52.17.

A PVP is a planning tool defined in Clause 73 of Victorian Planning Schemes as a 'plan which relates to the management of native vegetation within a property, and which is contained within an agreement made pursuant to section 69 of the *Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*.' The agreement containing the PVP is entered into by the landowner, Responsible authority and the Secretary

to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

A *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* includes details about all the native vegetation on a property and sets out what native vegetation is to be removed for the timber harvesting operation over an extended period. A *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* can provide long term certainty for landowners undertaking native forest timber harvesting operations. The PVP is not a commitment to retain all native vegetation on the property that is not part of the timber harvesting operation. If the landowner wants to undertake further native vegetation removal beyond what is specified for removal in the PVP then they must apply for a separate permit to remove this native vegetation or apply to have the PVP amended.

If an application for a planning permit to remove native vegetation for native forest timber harvesting is not accompanied by a DEECA approved *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*, then it is assessed and is required to be offset in the same manner as native vegetation removal for other purposes, in accordance with the Guidelines.

A *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* contains the same information as a Timber Harvesting Plan under section 3.1 of the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014 (the Code). A *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* can therefore act as a Timber Harvesting Plan under the Code and for the purposes of Clause 53.11 (Timber production) of planning schemes.

1.3 Preparing a PVP for native forest timber harvesting

A PVP must be prepared in consultation with the DEECA staff approving the avoid, minimise and offset requirements.

A streamlined permit application process will require consultation with the Responsible authority during the preparation of the PVP. This ensures the PVP addresses all the relevant provisions of the local planning scheme.

2. Planning and approvals of a PVP for native forest timber harvesting

2.1 Steps for developing a PVP for native forest timber harvesting

Those seeking to undertake native forest timber harvesting on private land need to do the following:

1. Complete a desktop assessment and arrange a pre-planning meeting.
2. Gather the information required to complete a planning permit application and a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*.
3. Develop a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* and have it approved by DEECA as

satisfying the avoid and minimise and regeneration requirements.

4. Apply for a planning permit.
5. If a permit is granted, make the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* pursuant to Section 69 of the CF&L Act.
6. Record the Section 69 agreement on property title that includes, the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*.

A description of each of these steps is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Steps for developing a PVP for native forest timber harvesting

Step	Description
1. Complete a desktop assessment and arrange a pre-planning meeting	Undertake a desktop assessment of the native vegetation to be removed for timber harvesting using DEECA systems and tools to understand the potential impacts on biodiversity and other values of native vegetation. Meet with the relevant Responsible authority (usually the local council) and a DEECA regional native vegetation representative for a pre-planning meeting to get an indication as to whether the permit application for timber harvesting is expected to be supported, provided it meets the conditions of this PVP template for native forest timber harvesting. The outcome of the pre-planning meeting is indicative only, responsible authorities reserve the right to object to any permit application.
2. Gather the information required to complete a planning permit application and a <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i>	Gather the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information that will form the content of the <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i>. This includes the maps and plans, and information needed to meet the avoid and minimisation and the regeneration requirements. • A report on all the native vegetation to be removed under the PVP from DEECA systems and tools (either NVR Map or Ensym) • Any other information required by the planning scheme in order to apply for the planning permit for timber harvesting. Note that the <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> and attachments addresses all the application requirements for a permit to remove native vegetation under Clauses 52.16 or 52.17, as set out in the Guidelines.
3. Develop a <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> and have it approved by DEECA as satisfying the avoid, minimise and regeneration requirements.	In consultation with DEECA, develop a <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> , and have it approved by the DEECA representative responsible for assessing if it satisfactorily addresses the avoid, minimise and offset requirements. The DEECA representative will not approve a <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> in cases where DEECA would be likely to object to the associated planning permit application to remove native vegetation.

Step	Description
4. Apply for a planning permit	Apply for a planning permit from the relevant Responsible authority. The approved <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> will form part of the planning permit application. The Responsible authority will consider the application to remove native vegetation in accordance with their planning scheme, to determine whether to grant a permit. There may be other requirements in the planning scheme in addition to the requirements specified in Clause 52.16 or 52.17. Where practical, multiple planning scheme requirements can be considered when developing a <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> to ensure that planning permit applications are streamlined.
5. Once permit is granted, make the PVP for native forest timber harvesting pursuant to S.69 of the CFL.	If a permit is granted it will include a condition to make the PVP pursuant to Section 69 of the <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987</i> . DEECA, the Responsible authority and the landowner must all be party to the agreement.
6. Record the S.69 agreement on property title that includes, the PVP for native forest timber harvesting	Once the PVP has been made pursuant to a Section 69 agreement, and before commencing timber harvesting operations, place a Section 69 agreement on property title that includes the <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> to ensure delivery, security and visibility of the regeneration offsets.

The landowner, Responsible authority and the Secretary to DEECA can, by agreement, amend or terminate a PVP. If a PVP was used to support and/or comply with a planning permit, the planning permit may also need to be amended.

2.2 Decision making about a PVP for native forest timber harvesting

When assessing a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* and issuing the associated planning permit, responsible authorities and DEECA will take the following information into account:

- the decision guidelines in section 7 of the Guidelines
- the level of confidence that the required regeneration offset will be achieved. This is the focus of assessing decision guideline 7 in the Guidelines, 'whether an offset that meets the offset requirements for the native vegetation to be removed has been identified and can be secured in accordance with the Guidelines.'
- how well the PVP addresses the matters set out in the *PVP template for native forest timber harvesting*

2.3 Conditions on planning permits that have attached PVP

Any planning permit that is issued with an attached PVP must apply for at least 10 years. Where a PVP outlines a plan, such as a timber harvesting operation that extends beyond 10 years, an application can be made to extend the permit before it expires. The Responsible authority will decide

whether to extend the permit, request changes to the PVP, or refuse the extension application.

The Responsible authority must include the following conditions on the permit:

- Before any native vegetation removal, the PVP must be made pursuant to Section 69 of the CF&L Act with the Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, the Responsible authority and the landowner are all party to the agreement.
- Before any native vegetation removal, the Section 69 agreement must be recorded on the property title.
- Regeneration reports must be submitted to the Responsible authority at intervals identified in the PVP.
- The Section 69 agreement must remain on the property title until the Responsible authority is satisfied the native vegetation condition has achieved the required forest regeneration standards.

2.4 Ensuring compliance with the planning permit and PVP

The Responsible authority is responsible for ensuring that planning permit conditions are met, including the conditions of the PVP, attached to the on-title agreement.

The main basis for determining compliance is the proponent's reporting. It is also expected that the Responsible authority would undertake any

additional compliance activities it sees fit, based on an assessment of the risk of the permit conditions and the PVP not being complied with.

2.5 Security requirements

The harvested and rehabilitated coupe must be protected by a security agreement on title, supported by legislation. The Section 69 agreement can be the on-title security agreement if parties to the agreement are DEECA, the Landowner and the Responsible authority. The Responsible authority, with support from DEECA is responsible for monitoring and enforcement.

Where there is a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*, it must be part of the on-title agreement. This is to ensure that the regeneration is undertaken in line with the PVP and the harvested coupe is not used for any other purpose until it has achieved the required forest regeneration standards.

The security agreement must stipulate that the harvested coups must be protected from controllable disturbance, including grazing by domestic stock. The only disturbances that are permitted are those detailed in the PVP, for example, subsequent timber harvesting.

If the property is sold to another landowner, the new landowner will be responsible for ongoing compliance with permit conditions, which include obligations under the PVP, as the planning permit relates to the property and the PVP it is attached to the security agreement with is registered on-title of the property.

The security agreement applies in perpetuity or until the Responsible authority is satisfied that the harvested coupe has regenerated and reached the same average condition score that it had immediately before it was harvested.

3. Content of a PVP for native forest timber harvesting PVP

A native forest timber harvesting permit application can be accompanied by a DEECA approved PVP, prepared in accordance with this document. A PVP for native forest timber harvesting must include the following:

- harvesting type descriptions
- maps and areas (extent) of coupes that meet thresholds for harvesting types
- a description of how the removal of native vegetation has been avoided and minimised
- offset requirements

A description of each of these components as they relate to a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* is provided below.

3.1 Harvesting type

A *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* must include an accurate description of the harvesting type that will be implemented. This can be done using the definitions below. Further detail about these harvesting types and associated calculations is included in the Code.

Clearfall harvesting

Clearfall harvesting is defined in the Code as harvesting where all merchantable trees, apart from those to be retained for wildlife habitat, are removed.

For the purpose of a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*, clearfall harvesting includes seed tree or shelter wood techniques where they do not meet the retention harvesting criteria. In other words, clearfall harvesting includes any even-aged harvesting technique where all live trees are removed (either in one or two stages), apart from a small number of trees (less than 10 per cent of the basal area of the original stand) that are retained to provide seed for regeneration or habitat.

Retention harvesting

Retention harvesting is where more than 50 per cent of the area harvested is within one tree length (or 60 metres in Ash forest) of retained habitat. The retained habitat must be more than 50 years old.

Retention harvesting is introduced as a mechanism that replicates the comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system at a small scale. Retention harvesting protects and enhances old-growth forest structures, maintains connectivity and supports recolonisation of harvested areas.

Selective harvesting

Selective harvesting is defined in the Code as harvesting that involves the felling of trees individually or in small groups at intervals indefinitely. Regeneration is established continually in the small patches that have been created between more mature trees, providing an uneven aged forest structure. For the purpose of a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*, selective harvesting must meet all of the following specifications:

- have no gaps larger than 20 hectares
- the cumulative area of all gaps must not be more than 33 per cent of the net harvested area
- more than 60 per cent of the area must be stocked with 50 per cent of the pre-thinning basal area.

Basal area is expressed as square metres per hectare (m²/ha). Basal area is the sum of the cross-sectional area of all trees in a stand measured at breast height (1.3 metres above ground).

Thinning

Thinning is defined in the Code as removal of trees with the aim of increasing the growth rate and/or health of retained trees and, in commercial thinning, obtaining timber from the removed trees that would otherwise die due to competition before final harvest. Thinning is a type of tending.

3.2 Coupe size

Coupe is the name given to an area of forest of variable size, shape and orientation from which timber is harvested in one operation. Coupe size is measured as the net harvest area of the coupe i.e. it does not include the area excluded from harvesting.

The coupe size for each harvesting type is set out below in Table 2. One permit application can include multiple coupes.

Table 2. Coupe size for harvesting types

Harvesting type	Coupe size
Clearfall harvesting	≤20 ha
Retention harvesting	≤40 ha
Selective harvesting or Thinning	≤120 ha

Map all coupes in the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* and include the extent and description of harvesting types for each coupe.

3.3 Avoid and minimise

The *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* must include measures for avoiding and minimising the impacts of the timber harvesting on biodiversity and other values of native vegetation.

Impacts on biodiversity

The *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* must include measures for avoiding and minimising the impacts of the timber harvesting on biodiversity. This includes avoidance of clearing in certain areas and requirements to retain certain native vegetation.

To achieve this, the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* must demonstrate compliance with the following, for the relevant harvesting type and Forest Managed Area (FMA):

- the biodiversity impact minimisation prescriptions contained in section 3.2.2 of the Code
- section 3.2.2 of the Private forest guidelines
- section 4 of the MSPs.

Impacts on other values of native vegetation

The *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* must also include measures for avoiding and minimising the impacts of the timber harvesting on other (non-biodiversity) values of native vegetation.

Land and water protection

This includes ensuring land and water protection through avoiding and minimising impacts on:

- water quality and waterway and riparian ecosystems
- soil erosion, salination, acidity, instability and water logging
- groundwater quality

This is achieved by demonstrating compliance with the water quality, river health and soil protection requirements contained in:

- section 3.2.1 of the Code and the Private forest guidelines
- section 3 of the MSPs.

Landscape values

Avoid or minimise impact on any landscape values identified in the relevant planning scheme.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Avoid removing any part of the native vegetation that is protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

3.4 Offset requirements

Where a planning permit application includes a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* the offset requirements for the harvested area and temporary infrastructure can be met through regeneration.

Temporary infrastructure are areas that are used for a timber harvesting operation and then allowed to regenerate, such as access roads.

Any permanent removal of native vegetation associated with timber harvesting must be offset in accordance with the standard offset requirements in the Guidelines. This native vegetation removal and associated offset requirements must be included in the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*.

The minimum requirements for regeneration that must be included in the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*¹ are detailed in:

- section 3.5 of the Code
- section 3.5 of the Private forest guidelines
- section 9 of the MSPs.

For thinning operations, offsets can be delivered through retention of a prescribed basal area, in the same location (coupe) as the native vegetation removed. This regeneration must meet the forest regeneration and management requirements contained in the Code, the Private forest guidelines and section 9 of the MSPs.

Regeneration and basal area surveys be completed by the applicant within three years of the completion of harvesting and reported to the Responsible authority.

Where stocking, health or early growth does not meet the required standards, remedial work must be conducted as soon as possible and within five years of the previous regeneration attempt to ensure adequate regeneration is achieved. Further stocking assessment must be undertaken within three years of any remedial treatment and the results reported to the Responsible authority to ensure that it has been successfully regenerated.

A successful regeneration offset is ultimately achieved when the coupe has the same average condition score that it had immediately before it was harvested (see section 4.1 for details for how the condition score is determined). This must occur before the coupe can be used for purposes other than an offset for timber harvesting. When this occurs the offsets condition of the planning permit

and associated PVP have been met and the on-title security agreement can be removed.

3.5 Reporting

The PVP stipulates the standard frequency and timeframes for a proponent to submit PVP reports to the Responsible authority. The frequency and timeframes may vary depending on the monitoring of regeneration and condition recovery. An example reporting schedule is as follows:

1. Report 1 within three years of harvesting to show the results of regeneration activities.
2. Report 2 within three years of report 1 to gauge success of regeneration
3. Report 3 within five years report 2 to monitor success of regeneration
4. Report every 10 years after the Report 3 to monitor success of regeneration until the security agreement is removed.

If at any point the regeneration does not meet the required standards, additional reports on the results of any remedial treatment are required.

Appendix A contains a PVP reporting template. The security agreement must stipulate that the PVP reporting template be completed by the proponent and submitted to the Responsible authority at intervals set by the Responsible authority, and relevant to the monitoring of regeneration and condition recovery.

The Responsible authority is responsible for reviewing these reports and taking action if they indicate that the requirements of the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* are not being met.

DEECA can provide technical assistance to responsible authorities reviewing these reports.

4. Information to support PVP

4.1 Native vegetation condition score

Native vegetation condition is represented by the condition score. The condition score is a measure that describes how close native vegetation is to its mature, natural state. It shows the current condition of a patch of native vegetation measured against the benchmark for the relevant Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) and indicates how well the native vegetation can sustain itself and the species that live in or depend on it.

The condition score of a patch of native vegetation can be determined by a certified native vegetation assessor completing a habitat hectare assessment, as described in *Native vegetation: sustaining a living landscape. Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual – Guidelines for applying the habitat hectares scoring method, Version 1.3.*¹

A map of modelled condition scores across Victoria has been developed from site assessed data. This is shown in the *Native vegetation condition map* and is used when native vegetation is not subject to a habitat hectare assessment.

Before harvesting, the condition score can be obtained from the *Condition* score layer (see NVR Map at [NVR Map \(mapshare.vic.gov.au\)](http://mapshare.vic.gov.au)) or from a habitat hectare site assessment undertaken by a certified assessor (see section 6.5 of the

Guidelines). After harvesting and regeneration the condition score can only be determined by a habitat hectare site assessment completed by a certified assessor.

4.2 Rare or threatened species habitat

To inform compliance with the biodiversity minimisation prescriptions (as set out in section 3.3) the following information about rare or threatened species habitats can be utilised. When developing a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* DEECA will state which of the following information is required to be provided:

- Species habitat mapped at the site in the Habitat importance maps including if any are highly localised habitats or important habitats for dispersed.
- Records of rare and threatened species observations in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas.
- Species surveys of the site.

4.3 Relevant documents and agreements

Table 3 describes documents and agreements relevant to the PVP for native forest timber harvesting.

Table 3. Relevant documents and agreements

Document or agreement	Description
Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014	<p>The Code provides direction for commercial timber harvesting operations from native forests and plantations on both public and private land in Victoria. It applies to timber harvesting in State forests, native forests on private land and plantations. The Code sets out the standards that will make the timber harvesting industry economically viable and compatible with the conservation of environmental, social and cultural values associated with forests.</p> <p>The Code provides detailed information of the requirements and mandatory actions for timber production for native forest on private land. When planning for native forest timber harvesting, the Code requires the assessment of the potential impact on soil, water quality, aquatic habitat, biodiversity and cultural values. A Timber Harvesting Plan is required to apply for a planning permit application for forest timber harvesting. A <i>PVP for native forest timber harvesting</i> operates as the Timber Harvesting Plan for native forest timber harvesting on private land.</p> <p>When undertaking native forest timber harvesting on private land, all relevant requirements in the Code must be complied with. The PVP template for native forest timber harvesting is document sets out how the Code can be implemented for native forest timber harvesting on private land.</p>

¹ Or its successor. The condition score is equivalent to the 'Habitat score' described in the manual.

Document or agreement	Description
Management guidelines for private native forests and plantations	The Management guidelines for private native forests and plantations (Private forests guidelines) is an associated document of The Code. The Private forests guidelines assists with interpretation of the Code as it relates to private forests and plantations and provides further information to comply with operational goals and mandatory actions, including reference documents that may assist forest managers. Section 3 is relevant to the PVP template for native forest timber harvesting, and provides the management guidelines for achieving operation goals or mandatory actions in native private forests harvesting.
Management standards and procedures for timber harvesting operations in Victoria's State forests 2014 (MSPs)	The MSPs is an incorporated document of The Code. It provides detailed mandatory operational instructions for timber harvesting operations in Victoria's State forests. Section 4 of the MSPs is relevant to the PVP template for native forest timber harvesting including standards and procedures for biodiversity conservation. It provides management actions for habitat retention and exclusion buffers for rare and threatened species and vegetation communities identified within Forest Management Areas. It also provides management actions to minimise the introduction of pests, weeds and diseases.
Property Vegetation Plan (PVP)	Clause 73 of Victorian Planning Scheme defines a PVP as a plan which relates to the management of native vegetation within a property, and which is contained within an agreement made pursuant to Section 69 of the <i>Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987</i> .
Section 69 of the Conservation, Forest and Lands Act 1987 (CFL Act)	Under section 69 of the CFL Act the Secretary to DEECA has the power to enter into an agreement with any landowner for the approval and management, use, development, preservation, conservation of land in the possession of the landowner or to give effect to the objects or purposes of a relevant law. PVP agreements do not constitute an agreement on title unless the PVP is specifically placed on the property title.

Appendix A Property vegetation plan: Native forest timber harvesting [template]

How to use this template

This template is designed to guide what should be included in a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting*. The *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (section 11.4) allow for a native forest timber harvesting application to meet its offset requirements for the area harvested via regeneration provided it includes a *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* that addresses the removal and offsetting of native vegetation. The *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* can accompany an application for a planning permit to remove native vegetation under Clause 52.16 or 52.17.

This template identifies text that is required to be used and other areas where text is required to be added by the developer of the plan. This is indicated as follows:

- [Grey text in square brackets] Text must be inserted. Change the font colour to black once text is inserted.
- Grey text in italics* Instructions on information that must be included. Delete the red instructional text once you have read and understood the requirements.
- Black text Use the text provided. Do not delete. This text must remain in the final *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* document.

1. Plan details

DEECA PVP approving officer

This timber harvesting proposal satisfactorily addresses the *PVP for native forest timber harvesting* requirements to minimise impacts on biodiversity (Section 6) and the offset requirement to regenerate the coupe (regeneration) (Sections 7).

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Property owner

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Plan prepared by

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This template provides property owners with a suggested format for a Property Vegetation Plan which can also act as a Timber Harvesting Plan. Remove all grey text and replace with site specific information.

2. Property details

Property details	
Property Name	
Site Address	
Standard Property Identifier/s	Allotment no., plan of subdivision, parish, council reference no. or billing no.
Municipality	
Catchment Management Authority Area	

Restrictions or land constraints	
Planning zone/s	
Planning overlay/s	
Other Relevant Planning Provisions	
Existing Restrictions on Title	<i>Instruments</i>
	<i>Caveats or Easements</i>

Landowner details		
Company Name		
Full Name/s of Landowner/s		
Postal Address		
Email		
Telephone Contact Numbers	(Bus)	(Mob)

Authorised agent details		
Company Name		
Authorised Agent Name		
Position		
Postal Address		
Email		
Telephone Contact Numbers	(Bus)	(Mob)

3. Property description

Base map

Include a base map showing aerial photography, road names, creek and drainage lines, property boundaries, and standard parcel identifiers. The base map must clearly identify all native vegetation existing on the property including a polygon(s) showing the areas to be harvested and regenerated.

All maps must be drawn to scale and be of a size (minimum A4 portrait or landscape) that provides clarity for the reader. All maps associated with the PVP must include clear, readable keys and geo-references for understanding.

Current land use and development history

Briefly describe the current use of the property and how it has been used in the past, focusing on the native vegetation areas of the property and the area to be harvested. Include the following about the area to be harvested/all native vegetation:

- Whether it has been harvested in the past and when
- Whether it has been grazed by domestic stock, if so, what has been the effect on understory species and the presence of weeds.

Natural disturbance history

Describe natural past disturbances including impacts of fire, flood or storms.

Soil type and erodibility

Describe the soils in the coupe area including the soil profile, texture, colour and structure of the soils and their relative stability i.e. their proneness to erosion. For example, the description might be, 'Heavy yellow clay, low erosion potential'. Any variation in soil type across the coupe should be noted.

Describe any existing erosion problems caused by stock or vehicle traffic.

Topography

Describe the topography of the property including features such as ridges, crests and hilltops, waterways, drainage lines, low lying areas, saline discharge areas, aspect (direction that any slopes face) and areas of existing erosion.

The topography and maximum slope of the area to be harvested and any access roads should be recorded under section 4.

Existing vegetation

Describe all native vegetation that is present on the property, specifying the native vegetation that is proposed to be harvested. Include the following:

- The Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) and its endangered status – either mapped or from a habitat hectare site assessment
- Whether it is dry or wet forest. Generally dry forests are found in areas that receive less than 700 mm of annual rainfall and wet forests typically receive more than 800 mm of annual rainfall
- The structure of the native vegetation, including the maturity of the forest, whether there are multiple structures present, the dominant age of trees to be harvested, whether the native vegetation shrub and ground cover layer is intact or has been modified.
- Any existing conservation areas.

Existing vegetation map

Include a map showing the native vegetation to be removed and retained including any conservation areas. This must include:

- the native vegetation to be removed for timber harvesting and temporary infrastructure
- any native vegetation to be permanently removed and requires a standard (non-regeneration) offset
- any native vegetation expected to be retained and the land use for those areas
- any native vegetation offsets or protected areas of native vegetation.

Note that information about the retained native vegetation informs part of the decision making about granting a permit for the removal of native vegetation and confidence in regeneration offsets. The PVP does not constitute a commitment to retain this native vegetation on the property. If any additional native vegetation is proposed to be removed in the future, then the landowner must apply for a planning permit, or apply to amend the PVP.

Landscape context

Describe biodiversity corridors and the value of the property from a landscape perspective.

Management issues and site constraints

Describe any threatening processes such as disease, pest plants, insects and animals affecting the property.

Document how native vegetation will be managed over the life of the PVP and what the objectives are for managing native vegetation. The landowner should appoint a qualified native vegetation assessor to assist.

Future vegetation management must consider land and soil types, natural hazards, and risks of land and water degradation.

Biodiversity information about the native vegetation to be removed

Include the NVR Map or Ensym (DEECA systems) generated reports for the native vegetation to be removed on the property. Provide separate reports for:

- each coupe of native vegetation to be removed for timber harvesting
- any native vegetation to be removed for temporary infrastructure
- any native vegetation to be permanently removed and requires a standard (non-regeneration) offset.

From the information in the reports populate the table below.

Native vegetation removed	Harvesting type	Extent (ha)	Condition score
Coupe 1			
Coupe 2			
etc.			
Permanent infrastructure area 1	n/a		
Permanent infrastructure area 2	n/a		
etc.			

4. Proposed use and development

Describe the reason for developing the PVP. Include a brief description of how the land is planned to be used and how this impacts on native vegetation.

Area of property	
Area of property	Total size of the property in hectares.
Net harvest area	Net area to be harvested in hectares. This includes any areas that are harvest and areas where native vegetation will be removed for infrastructure, but the area will be regenerated. This area does not include areas reserved from harvesting within the coupe boundary.
Permanent removal of native vegetation	Any areas where native vegetation will be permanently removed.

Harvesting and cartage	
Harvesting type	Permit applications accompanied by an approved PVP must accurately describe the harvesting type that will be employed using the definitions of clear fall harvesting, retention harvesting, selective harvesting and thinning.
Estimated volumes of timber to be harvested	Estimate the volume (in cubic metres or tonnes) of each type of wood product that is expected to be produced from the coupe (for example, 500 cubic meters sawlogs, 800 cubic metres pulpwood, 300 tonnes firewood).
Expected harvesting contractor	Name of the person / contractor / company who will carry out the harvesting operation.
Harvesting equipment	Description of equipment and techniques to be used to fell trees and extract the logs within the coupe (for example, chainsaw and skidder, harvester and forwarder or chainsaw and cable).
Expected scheduled harvesting period	From: anticipated commencement date To: anticipated completion date
Cartage contractor	Name of the person / contractor / company who will carry out log cartage from the coupe.
Proposed cartage route	Indicate the road route(s) by which the timber is to be carted, from the coupe to destination(s) or to entry onto a highway.

5. Timber harvesting conditions

The PVP needs to indicate how all the relevant provisions of the Code are to be applied to the particular harvesting area (coupes) for which it has been prepared. The operational goals, mandatory actions and guidance set out in the Code need to be considered, and appropriate responses explicitly documented in the PVP.

Conditions applied to harvesting operations covered by the PVP may need to exceed the minimum requirements outlined in the Code to reflect other statutory obligations (for example, planning permit conditions and state environmental protection policies), or to protect other environmental values as required by the Responsible authority.

The location and nature of many of the conditions that apply to the timber harvesting operation must be indicated on the coupe map. The notes in section 7 provide guidance on coupe map preparation.

The forest owner must arrange for the location of coupe boundaries, log landings and dumps, road alignments and other areas requiring special attention to be marked in the field as well as the coupe map before timber harvesting begins.

Any amendments made to the PVP after a permit has been issued by a Responsible authority should be noted in the amendment table (Supplementary template 2) and recorded on the coupe map as appropriate. A copy of the amended PVP should be lodged with the Responsible authority. If changes are material, the Responsible authority may request that an amendment to the permit be made, particularly if permit conditions need to be amended. The Responsible authority should refer the PVP to DEECA if changes to the PVP are expected to have a material impact on native vegetation and may require re-approval.

Protection of soil and water values

Waterways, water quality and soil protection	Indicate proposed measures to control timber harvesting operations in the vicinity of waterways to protect them and any associated riparian vegetation from disturbance and exposure that could reduce water quality. Outline proposed measures to protect and rehabilitate soils. Specify any restrictions that apply to harvesting and machinery in the vicinity of waterways i.e. buffer and filter strips.
Slope limitations and general topography	What is the general topography of the coupe and any access roads? Specify the maximum slope on which harvesting will be carried out in this coupe. Mark the location of any areas where the maximum slope is exceeded on the coupe map. The slope of the land is measured using a clinometer, or calculated from a large-scale contour map, and is expressed in degrees (e.g. max. 25°).

Roading

Road planning and design	Specify the type, location and design standards for any new or upgraded timber roads (including stream crossings) and road infrastructure (such as culverts, drains, batters, bridges and fords). Mark the location of existing, new or upgraded roads on the coupe map.
Road construction	Specify the construction methods of any new or upgraded timber roads and the location of any quarries and gravel borrow pits. Specify the design and drainage measures required to minimise soil erosion, mass soil movement, water quality deterioration and landscape impact. Mark the location of any quarries, pits or fill disposal areas on the coupe map.
Road maintenance	Specify any maintenance works to road surfaces, road edges and road drainage systems, required to protect the road foundation and to disperse and filter water before it enters streams.
Suspension of cartage	Specify any weather or road surface moisture conditions when roads are to be closed to timber traffic, to avoid threatening water quality or the integrity and serviceability of the road.
Road closures	Specify any rehabilitation measures to be taken where roads, bridges and culverts are to be closed, either temporarily or permanently.

Infrastructure

Log landings and dumps	Specify any conditions relating to the location, construction and maintenance of log landings and log dumps to minimise soil degradation and water quality deterioration. Specify the rehabilitation measures to be undertaken on the landings and dumps when the sites are no longer required. Mark the location of log landings and dumps on the coupe map.
Snig tracks and forwarding tracks	Specify any conditions relating to the location and use of snig and forwarding tracks to minimise adverse impact on soil and water quality. Outline the rehabilitation measures to be undertaken on snig and forwarding tracks at the completion of harvesting operations. Mark the location of major snig and forwarding tracks on the coupe map.
Site rehabilitation	Specify any site rehabilitation measures (in addition to those above) that are to be undertaken at the completion of the harvesting operation, particularly in relation to the treatment of harvesting debris.

Other operational measures

Wet weather and seasonal restrictions	Specify any conditions when timber harvesting operations (particularly snigging, forwarding and landing operations) must be restricted or stopped, when soils are wet and there is a risk to soil and water values (further to the suspension of cartage information).
Power line protection measures	Specify any conditions regarding harvesting operations near power lines (where required).
Protection of landscape values	Specify any measures to be taken to protect landscape values such as ridge lines that are visible from outside the property.
Fire protection measures	Specify any conditions regarding fire protection, including fire-fighting equipment required and restrictions to certain activities on days of extreme fire danger.
Other harvesting operational requirements	Specify any conditions relating to aspects of the harvesting operations not covered above. This could also include instructions to the harvesting contractor about matters not covered by the Code (such as maximum stump height or log grading standards).

6. Requirements to minimise impacts on biodiversity

The PVP must demonstrate how the biodiversity impact minimisation prescriptions contained in the Code, the Private forest guidelines and section 4 of the MSPs will be implemented. These must be shown on the coupe map as areas that are excluded from harvesting or where restricted timber harvesting will occur.

Where the MSPs require the establishment of a Special Protection Zone, harvesting must be excluded within the required buffer distance of the biodiversity value. Where the MSPs call for the establishment of a Special Management Zone, harvesting must be modified within the required buffer distance to ensure the intended biodiversity value is protected.

Forest Management Area boundaries are depicted in the DEECA's Forest Information Portal at

[Forest Information Portal \(ffm.vic.gov.au\)](http://ffm.vic.gov.au).

Set out how the requirements of the MSPs will be met for the vegetation type, harvesting type and relevant geographical region of the property and include the data sources or methods used to determine the values. This may include:

- habitat tree retention requirements
- required buffers around important native vegetation communities, rare or threatened species habitats and/or old growth
- management of the continuity and replacement of long-lived understorey species. For example, regeneration methods must suit the ecological requirements of the forest type, taking into consideration the requirements of sensitive understorey species and local conditions.

A typical process to determine whether subject biodiversity values identified in the MSPs are present is to:

- Undertake a desktop assessment for records (Victorian Biodiversity Atlas) or models of the species (Habitat Importance Models) or communities (Ecological Vegetation Class).
- If records or models of those values are present, undertake an on-ground assessment to confirm absence or presence.
- If the on-ground assessment verifies the values as present, apply the relevant retention, buffer or regeneration prescriptions of the MSPs.

7. Offset requirements - regeneration

PVPs must indicate how the harvested area will be regenerated and how the reporting requirements will be met. The regeneration/retention must meet the forest regeneration and management requirements contained in the Code, the Private forest guidelines and section 9 of the MSPs.

Section 9 of the MSPs details the survey method that must be used and documented to show that a coupe has successfully regenerated or maintained the required basal area. A time frame for conducting the surveys is also stipulated.

The PVP must outline the specific regeneration and/or retention of basal area measures required by the MSPs, for that particular vegetation type and harvesting type, and how they plan to be met, such as:

- stocking survey or basal area retention requirements and how they will be achieved, for example, is a regeneration burn required and who will conduct the surveys?
- what the seed sourcing requirements are and how will they be met, for example, is seed expected to be available on site or will it need to be outsourced?

Supplementary template 1 contains a PVP reporting template that includes a section for the proponent to report on regeneration requirements.

8. Offset requirements – standard

Any removal of native vegetation as part of the PVP that is permanent and cannot be offset with regeneration must be offset in accordance with section 5 of the Guidelines. Include in this section information about this native vegetation to be removed, the associated offset requirements and how those offsets are to be secured, as detailed in Application requirement 9 in section 6 of the Guidelines.

9. Statutory approvals and legal obligations

The landowner is responsible for undertaking due diligence to identify any legal obligations, permits, approvals or constraints that may apply to the land and/or proposed use and development. Due diligence should be done early in the planning process, so that landowners are fully aware of and able to meet all their legal requirements. All necessary statutory permits and approvals must be obtained before timber harvesting begins. Provide details of any other environmental or statutory compliance assessments and approvals.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 (P&E Act)

Describe any restrictions and note what approvals will be required to use or develop the land as described in this PVP. Describe how the PVP considers and implements the objectives of any planning provisions affecting the vegetation on the property, for the life of the PVP.

Under Clause 52.17 of all Victorian planning schemes, a planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation unless the removal is specifically exempt. The Guidelines is an incorporated document into all planning schemes and provides for alternative offset arrangements for native forest timber harvesting when an approved PVP is included in the permit application.

Other provisions of the local planning scheme may require a planning permit or adherence to Australian Standards or Codes of Practice. Where applicable, all planning scheme requirements should be considered when developing a PVP and addressed in the planning permit application.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act)

Some native vegetation is protected under the FFG Act, which is administered by DEECA. The PVP should be developed to address any required FFG Act approvals. The FFG Act permit approval process will, as far as practicable, be progressed at the same time as other required statutory approvals.

When FFG permit triggers are considered for a PVP, any relevant information required under the FFG Act or associated DEECA endorsed management plans must be included in the PVP. This could be the results of site assessment for quantities of species and age classes present on the subject land. This information will be used to determine if sustainable harvesting is achievable.

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act)

The main legislation covering noxious weed and pest animal management in Victoria is the CaLP Act. Under this Act species of plants and animals can be declared noxious weeds and pest animals. The CaLP Act is administered by DEECA.

The CaLP Act defines roles and responsibilities and regulates the management of noxious weeds and pest animals. Under this Act, all landowners have legal obligations for the management of declared noxious weeds and pest animals on their land, and must take all reasonable steps to:

- eradicate regionally prohibited weeds
- prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds, and
- prevent the spread of – and as far as possible eradicate – established pest animals.

Coastal Management Act 1995 (CM Act)

Key legislation guiding strategic and statutory planning for the Victorian coast includes the CM Act, which is administered by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. Coastal Crown land is generally all Crown land within 200m of the high tide mark and the seabed of Victorian coastal waters.

Under s 40(2) of the CM Act, the minister must have regard to:

- the Victorian Coastal Strategy, and
- any Coastal Action Plan applying to the land, and
- any relevant coastal recommendation, and
- the purposes for which the land was reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.

Where a coastal management plan has been prepared, it will be considered when assessing an application for CM consent.

Under section 61(3) of the P&E Act, the Responsible authority cannot issue a planning permit on coastal Crown land unless CM Act consent has been issued. All use or development of coastal Crown land by any party, including committees of management and municipal councils, can apply for CM Act consent through the relevant regional DEECA office.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places — defined in the EPBC Act as matters of national environmental significance. Species or communities protected under the EPBC Act should be identified when developing the PVP. The landowner will be responsible for obtaining required approvals under the EPBC Act. DEECA officers may assist in identifying any EPBC Act approvals requirements.

Environmental Effects Act 1978 (EE Act 1978)

The EE Act applies to any development project in Victoria that the minister decides has the potential to cause significant environmental effects at the regional or state level. The EE Act and the *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environmental Effects Act 1987* place responsibility on proponents to refer their own projects to the Environmental Effects Statement process.

Any other statutory approvals required, including relevant Code of Practice/Australian Standards

Describe any other required approvals or compliance with codes etc.

10. Coupe map

A map of the area to be harvested (coupe) must form part of the PVP. Supplementary template 3 contains a coupe map and legend template.

Map scale

Ideally, the chosen map scale is such that the area to be harvested occupies approximately 50–75 per cent of the page, when drawn on an A4 sheet. Often, this would mean a map scale of 1:10,000 or larger. A smaller scale map (down to 1:25,000) can be used for larger coupes that are uniform in nature. A map showing contours is preferable. In most instances, a satisfactory base map can be produced by enlarging the appropriate section from a 1:25,000 topographic map (Vicmap series).

Standard map information includes

- a north arrow
- the map scale
- the source of the map
- a legend showing the map symbols used to represent features and operational conditions.

Coupe and harvesting information

The Code stipulates that a Timber Harvesting Plan must include a map showing:

- the coupe location(s)
- the area(s) to be harvested
- areas excluded from harvesting within the coupe boundary, including areas reserved or specifically managed for biodiversity conservation, waterway protection (including any buffers or filter strips), or protection of cultural heritage values
- power lines
- new or upgraded roads and coupe infrastructure within the property.

Other information that may be useful includes:

- other areas excluded from harvesting, or to which special conditions apply
- existing roads and tracks (including roads to be used for log cartage)
- bridges and culverts
- designated crossings on waterways for machinery (including temporary crossings)
- quarries, pits and fill disposal areas
- soil erosion hazard classes of the coupe area
- fuel dumps and machinery servicing areas
- any existing or new firebreaks.

11. Required attachments

Title plan

Attach a current (within 60 days of lodgement for PPA or DEECA endorsement) title plan. Where there is a caveat or restriction on title, include all relevant information (copy of Trust for Nature covenant, s173 agreement, etc.)

Planning property reports

Attach current planning property report or written advice from Responsible authority describing relevant planning approval requirements.

Native vegetation condition score

Attach a map showing the condition score/s of the native vegetation to be harvested. If a habitat hectare site assessment has been undertaken to determine the condition score/s, attached this. A habitat hectare site assessment must be undertaken by a DEECA certified assessor.

Where a habitat hectare site assessment has not been undertaken include the mapped condition score shown in DEECA's *Native vegetation condition map* for the native vegetation to be removed.

Site Plan

Once a permit has been granted by the Responsible authority, provide Site plan of the coupes. This is required by the titles office and will form part of the Section 69 agreement as the on-title mechanism.

Supplementary template 1 – PVP reporting

The security agreement will stipulate the frequency and timeframes that a proponent must submit PVP reports to the Responsible authority. The timeframes and frequency should be relevant to the monitoring of regeneration and condition recovery, for example:

- Report 1 within three years of harvesting to show the results of regeneration activities.
- Report 2 within three years of report 1 to gauge success of regeneration
- Report 3 within five years of report 2
- Report every ten years after report 3 until the security agreement is removed
- Additional report after any remedial treatment.

The report must be signed, dated and submitted to the Responsible authority.

The report is a useful opportunity to make comprehensive comments and observations, giving a picture of the current condition of the site(s), issues identified, works undertaken and actions still required. Regularly monitoring vegetation condition, identifying issues and describing management actions helps assess the success of management.

This information will assist with the assessment of compliance with the agreement and provides useful information and data for future management advice.

Obligations of the landowner (compliance with section 6 of the Landowner Agreement) have been met and the obligations form is read, signed, dated and submitted with the reports.

Report Form			
Site Progress		Year One	
Landowner name		PVP Identifier	

Explain the reason for undertaking management actions which deviate from the PVP. Indicate if no actions are required and reason.

Management Action	Progress	
Revegetation	Current condition	Have the regeneration and / or retention requirements contained in the Code, the Private forest guidelines and section 9 of the MSPs been met? If so, supply required survey results.
	Actions taken	If not, what actions have been or will be taken to meet the required standards?
Exclude stock and other threats	Current condition	
	Actions taken	
Ensure that weed cover does not increase beyond initial level	Current condition	
	Actions taken	

PROPERTY VEGETATION PLAN: NATIVE FOREST TIMBER HARVESTING [TEMPLATE]

Management Action	Progress
Monitor for any new and emerging weeds and eliminate to less than 1 per cent cover	Current condition
	Actions taken
Retain organic litter	Current condition
	Actions taken
Control rabbits	Current condition
	Actions taken

Attachments

- obligations of the landowner form
- regeneration survey results
- detailed written observations
- photo point monitoring
- photographs of works undertaken
- receipts for works carried out, including by contractors
- log books of works carried out
- Receipts seeds/seedlings, provenance, table of species list & numbers
- Site log / table of plantings/germination & survival numbers by life form

I hereby declare that the supplied information is accurate.

Signed: **Date:**...../...../.....

Supplementary template 2 – PVP amendments

Amendment no.	Date	PVP section	Amendment

Amendments prepared by _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Supplementary template 3 – Coupe map



LEGEND:

Coupe boundary		Areas of 30° slope or greater			NORTH ↑
Streams, pools and wetlands		Log landings and dumps			
Drainage lines		Snig or forwarding tracks			Scale 1: _____
Existing roads and tracks		Designated crossings on waterways for machinery			
Roads to be constructed or upgraded		Areas excluded from harvesting			Map Source:
Bridges, culverts		Other special condition areas			

PROPERTY VEGETATION PLAN: NATIVE FOREST TIMBER HARVESTING [TEMPLATE]

Quarries, gravel and borrow pits		Fuel dumps, machinery servicing areas			Coupe ID:
Power lines		Firebreaks			
Soil erosion hazard classes		Other			

Glossary

Approved PVP for native forest timber harvesting – This is a PVP which has been assessed by DEECA and approved that it satisfactorily addresses the PVP requirements to avoid and minimise and offset via regeneration of the coup. It can then be submitted to the Responsible authority to support the permit application.

Avoid – A use or development has successfully avoided the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation when native vegetation is not removed and there are no impacts on biodiversity or other values.

Biodiversity – The variety of all life forms, the different plants, animals and microorganisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part.

Certified native vegetation assessor – A native vegetation assessor listed on DEECA's Vegetation Quality Assessment Competency Register. A certified native vegetation assessor must have current accreditation (less than two years old at the time the site assessment is completed).

Condition score – A score that describes how close native vegetation is to its mature natural state. The condition score is a value between 0 and 1. For the purposes of the Guidelines the condition score is the 'Habitat score', as described in the Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual, divided by 100 to achieve a value between 0 and 1.

Coupe size – A coupe is an area of forest from which timber is harvested in one operation. Coupe size is measured as the net harvested area of the coupe i.e. it does not include the area excluded from harvesting.

Habitat hectare - the condition of native vegetation is measured in habitat hectares. A habitat hectare score describes how close native vegetation is to its mature natural state as defined in a DEECA Ecological Vegetation Class benchmark.

Landholder – The owner, occupier, proprietor or holder of land.

Landowner – The owner of land.

Minimise – Locating, designing or managing a use or development to reduce the impacts on biodiversity and other values from the removal of native vegetation.

Native vegetation – Native vegetation is defined in Clause 72 of the Victoria Planning Provisions and all local planning schemes as 'plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses'.

No net loss – An outcome where the gain in biodiversity value (the offset) is equivalent to the loss in biodiversity value from the removal of native vegetation.

Offset – An undertaking to protect and manage native vegetation to compensate for impacts on biodiversity from the removal of native vegetation.

Permit – A legal document that gives permission for a use or development on a particular piece of land.

Property – Land under common occupation particularly for the purpose of rating, billing or habitation. Property is typically described by street addresses or a rate assessment number. A property can consist of one parcel, many parcels, or part of a parcel, where a parcel is the smallest unit of land able to be transferred within Victoria's cadastral system.

Referral authority – An authority that a permit application is referred to for decision under Section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. All referral requirements are specified in Clause 66 of planning schemes.

Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual – This is the Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004 published document titled *Native vegetation: sustaining a living landscape. Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual – Guidelines for applying the habitat hectares scoring method, Version 1.3* or its successor.

