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| Conservation work exemption |
| Application to rely on the exemption |

## Instructions

This template is designed for small scale property-based biodiversity improvement activities. For large or complex improvement proposals contact the Native Vegetation Regulation team directly to discuss the most appropriate application process including information that may be required in the application.

Completing all sections of this application will address the criteria necessary to seek written agreement from the Secretary to DELWP to rely on the *Conservation work* exemption in Clauses 52.16 and 52.17 of local planning schemes. Each section should be completed as accurately and explicitly as possible so the purpose, impact and expected biodiversity improvements are conveyed clearly. This application should be completed with consideration of the guidance document titled *Conservation work exemption – Application guidance June 2021*.

Applicants must:

* **Step 1** – Consult with the regional DELWP Natural Environment Program (NEP) team to discuss the proposal and obtain in principle support.
* **Step 2** - Prepare an application (this template), along with any supporting information, and submit to the Native Vegetation Regulations team at Nativevegetation.support@delwp.vic.gov.au. The team may request further information or seek clarity on the application.
* **Step 3 –** If approved, you will be supplied with written agreement to rely on the Conservation work exemption to remove native vegetation as per the application.

**Note**: This exemption only applies to Clauses 52.16 and 52.17 of local planning schemes. The following may still apply:

* Permit requirements under planning scheme overlays.
* Obligations under other pieces of legislation e.g. the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

## Landowner and property details

Complete the landowner and property details below. Contact details will only be used to correspond with the applicant.

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| Details |
| Landowner name |  |
| Contact details |  |
| Property address/works location |  |
| Property name (if applicable) |  |
| Local government |  |
| Catchment management authority |  |
| Ecological vegetation class/s |  |
| Identify any conservation agreements or covenants covering the area to be treated. |  |
| Extent of area(s) to be treated and benefited. Attach a map of the property indicating the location of the works. | Treated area extent (ha) | Benefit area extent (ha) |
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| Type of works to be undertaken (*e.g. removal of overabundant understory species, name species*) |  |

## 1. Primary purpose of work

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| Current condition |
| Describe the area/ecological function proposed for improvement. If relevant, describe past land uses or events which contributed to the current ecological state. Attach images of the area to illustrate the current condition of the vegetation.  |
| *(Insert Text Here)* |
| Overall biodiversity objective  |
| Overall biodiversity improvement must be the primary objective of the native vegetation removal. Clearly explain the biodiversity benefits you hope to achieve in the benefit area by removing the native vegetation. If applicable, relate it to any relevant conservation management plan (e.g. Conservation covenant) which may cover the property. |
| *(Insert Text Here)* |

## 2. Avoid and minimise impact to off target native vegetation

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| Avoid removal and minimise impacts |
| Describe the native vegetation that will be retained (e.g. stems >30cm DBH), and any measures put in place to avoid unintentional impacts on that vegetation. |
| *Insert Text Here)* |

## 3. Comparison assessment

Describe the level of impact from the proposed removal of native vegetation, and the expected benefit from that removal. Expected improvements must outweigh the proposed impacts.

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| Impact from removal |
| Describe the extent of proposed native vegetation removal by identifying what native vegetation will be removed. If relevant, state impacts to:  |
| * The size of the area(s) in hectares to be treated
* Vegetation layer to be impacted (understorey, canopy)
* Plant species to be removed
* Species status in the area (i.e. environmental weed)
 | * % cover to be removed
* Stems per hectare to be removed
* Hollow bearing trees to be removed
* Wildlife species impacted
 |
| *(Insert Text Here)* |
| Expected benefit to biodiversity values |
| Describe the direct and indirect benefits expected from the native vegetation removal. Expected benefits may be immediate or long term. If relevant state:  |
| * The size of area (ha) to benefit
* Improvement in condition through alignment with EVC benchmark (understorey, canopy)
* Expected benefit to wildlife species
* Any % reduction in environmental weeds
 | * Canopy cover/trees to benefit
* Habitat values to increase (i.e., woody debris cover)
* Other ecosystem functions or biodiversity values to benefit.
* Increased species diversity
 |
| *(Insert Text Here)* |

## 4. Native vegetation removal plan

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| Work plan |
| Describe your native vegetation removal methodology, including removal techniques, mitigation measures, timing of works, person/organisation performing the work, and whether the activity will be carried out over an extended time. * Insert an aerial image map (with legend) clearly identifying the boundary of the native vegetation removal (treatment area)
* Attach any conservation management plan which may already exist for the property or works.
 |
| *(Insert Text Here)* |

## 5 Post treatment assessment

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| Post treatment assessment  |
| Describe if any monitoring is proposed post vegetation removal which will evaluate whether the anticipated objective has been or is on track to be achieved. Explain if any further actions will be taken if removed native vegetation re-emerges in treated areas. |
| *(Insert Text Here)* |

## 6 Attachments

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| Attachments |
| The following pieces of information (if relevant) should be included with your application. This information will assist in the assessment of your application: |
| * Aerial image of property identifying treatment area(s)
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| * Photos showing current condition of the treatment area
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| * Conservation agreement(s) or management plan(s) associated with the property (if relevant)
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| * Any other information to support your application
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