

Land Management Commitment Information Paper

Consultation

June 2024



The Land Management Commitment will support producers and landholders to demonstrate the sustainability credentials of their land management practices, including deforestation-free.

Purpose of the Information Paper



Provide context on emerging industry requirements

Supply chain and financial sector participants are increasingly making commitments to pursue deforestation-free supply chains. Without an Australian solution, producers are subject to international policy settings.

Support industry in developing a proactive solution

To address this risk, Cattle Australia (CA) is driving the development of a Land Management Commitment, which will meet international requirements while reflecting Australian natural land systems.

Promote transparency throughout development

To ensure that producers and landholders remain informed throughout development, the Information Paper provides an overview on key decisions, how the policy will likely work, and some example use-cases.

Capturing feedback to shape development

Accompanying the Information Paper is a questionnaire which aligns with the key sections and seeks feedback to shape the future development.

The Development Process

A robust governance structure has been established so that the Information Paper meets the needs of a diverse group of stakeholders while still ensuring producers and land holders interests are reasonably promoted and considered as the most impacted group.



Rockhampton Roundtable: [Cattle Australia Announces the Land Management Commitment - Cattle Australia](#)

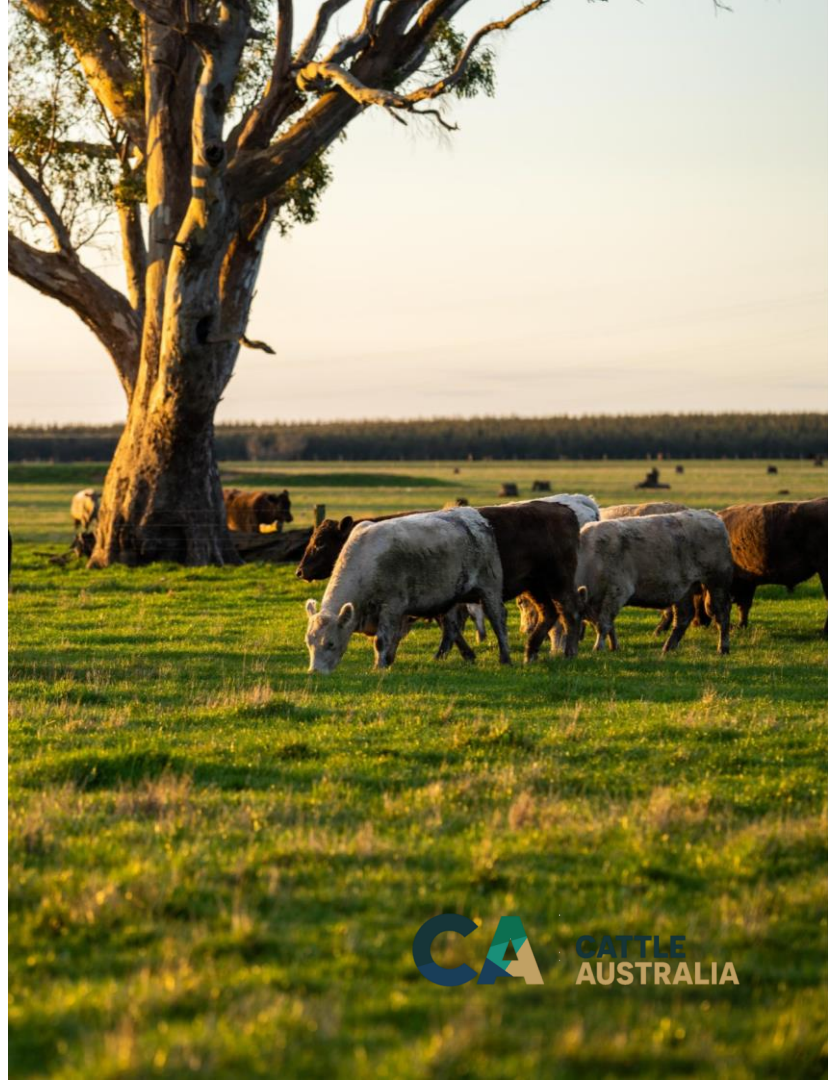
Guiding Principles Consultation: [Cattle Australia delivers draft principles of Land Management Commitment - Cattle Australia](#)

Consultation

All elements of this work remain in development and consultation is a way to shape final outcomes.

The Information Paper gives readers an update on the progress to-date so that they can provide informed feedback.

To achieve a solution that represents producer and landholder interests in a fair and equitable way, we ask that you please provide feedback by following the QR code.



Contents

Five core sections make up the body of the Information Paper and feedback is sought across all aspects



Three of the key focus areas where feedback is sought include:

1. [Section 2: Agricultural Use - Baseline and Classifications](#)
2. [Section 2: Forest Thresholds](#)
3. [Section 4: Australian Case Studies](#)

Background

The global and local context driving the need for a Land Management Commitment, and the objectives and guiding principles for the proposed Land Management Commitment.

Global Backdrop

- There is a global push to eradicate deforestation from company supply chains – policy settings have focused on primary forest areas, like the Amazon, where there is a clear boundary between forest and agricultural land.
- Action is being driven by market pressures (reputational concerns), disclosure frameworks, and government regulations and is undertaken in the context of global food security requirements and climate/biodiversity concerns.
- There is no agreed upon measurement and reporting approach that adequately considers the Australian landscape, which is resulting in supply chain participants setting their own definitions and data requests and driving inconsistency.
- Australian producers and landholders are the initial businesses that will be the focus of these emerging regimes.

Government regulations, reputational risk concerns, and disclosure requirements are causing the supply chain and financial sector to begin screening out commodities and businesses associated with deforestation



Objective

To support the agricultural industry in demonstrating its sustainability credentials, including being deforestation-free, Cattle Australia is developing an Australian Land Management Commitment that is appropriate to support the conduct of sustainable and responsible agricultural enterprises. This will recognise the Australian natural land system and the nation's need to develop land for agricultural and food production activities to meet global demand.

The policy will inform a voluntary credential that the supply chain should seek to align with. This will empower producers to make informed decisions regarding economic incentives for alignment without imposing any legal obligations.

The policy will use existing frameworks to highlight the sustainability credentials of Australian production systems, promote sustainable outcomes, market access, and provide competitive advantage over other jurisdictions.

Overview of the development of an Australian Land Management Commitment



Policy Development Guiding Principles

To promote intended outcomes through the development of the Land Management Commitment, Cattle Australia has consulted on, and incorporated feedback regarding, the below design principles which are used to inform decision making.

Reflects the Australian Ecosystem	The policy will reflect the unique Australian land management practices that drive positive environmental and economic outcomes. This will factor in the quality and function of a landscape, its historical use, and the benefits of active management.
Promoting Economic Outcomes	Promoting producer economic outcomes will be core to informing decision making. The final commitment will ensure a balance between optimal environmental outcomes, access to markets and financial services, and business resilience and profitability.
Is Simple to Use	The policy will seek to build on existing State, Territory and Federal definitions, legislation, and measurement and monitoring systems where possible. It will then provide clear guidance to end users on how to demonstrate alignment with the policy.
Consistently Applied by all Parties	Collaboration with the supply chain and financial sector is being undertaken to leverage an industry agreed definition and common method of verification. This will avoid a scenario where multiple definitions and monitoring approached create confusion and compliance burden for producers.
A 'Make Good' Mechanism	The policy will provide direction regarding alignment and seek to provide clarity around future land management practices, which facilitates producers and landowners being provided with informed insights on how they can achieve compliance while continuing to operate an economically sustainable enterprise.

Key Definitions & Frameworks

Detailing the definitions that are under consideration and the international frameworks that have been referenced throughout development.

Overview

Influential Frameworks

The Land Management Commitment draws on influential domestic and international frameworks. Demonstrating this alignment supports international credibility and will help to drive supply chain adoption. Some of the key influential frameworks include:

- **Australian Frameworks:** these differ from international ones but inform national measurement / monitoring systems, research endeavours and sustainability frameworks
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):** this United Nations agency coordinates and provides definitions and analysis on forest-related variables across 236 countries and territories
- **Accountability Framework initiative (AFi):** this independently developed framework provides flexibility for shaping regionally appropriate deforestation-free commitments and is used by the Science Based Targets initiative
- **European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR):** this is a European market access requirement; however, the structure and due diligence expectations provide insight in emerging regulation

Individually, these frameworks are not entirely suitable for recognising Australian agricultural practices; therefore, we need to interpret their definitions for the Australian context. There are four key definitions to note: “Agricultural Use”, “Forest”, “Natural Forest”, and “Deforestation”.

Four Key Definitions

See [Definitions Appendix](#) section for more detailed information

Focus Area	Agricultural Use	Under all international frameworks, <i>Forest</i> does not include “land that is predominantly under agricultural use”. There is little supporting material to clarify this definition and building out an Australian interpretation will be a central element of this work.
	Forest	Definitions of <i>Forest</i> will typically rely on three characteristics – land area (hectares); tree height (meters); and canopy cover (% of land area). <i>Forest</i> does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use.
	Natural Forest	Definitions of <i>Forest</i> do not provide a distinction between native vegetation and invasive species, they only look at land area, tree height and canopy cover. <i>Natural Forest</i> is <i>Forest</i> that is native to the local bio-region including species composition, structure, and ecological function.
	Deforestation	<i>Deforestation</i> is the loss of <i>Natural Forest</i> due to conversion to a different land use or severe and sustained degradation.

Reflecting the Australian Context

The key point of alignment across the FAO, AFi, EUDR and almost all other foundational international definitions of *Forest* is that:

It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural use.

The meaning of “land that is predominantly under agricultural use” is unclear and results in uncertainty for defining *Forest* and determining *Deforestation*. A key focus of this work is to provide clarity in a way that is internationally credible and fit-for-purpose in Australia.

With almost half of Australian forest being on land that can be considered under agricultural use, there is a challenge regarding the correct balance for this definition:

- Treating these areas as primary forest, not under agricultural use, would harm the economy and sustainability efforts unnecessarily. It could discourage producers from managing vegetation, crucial for nature-positive and sustainable agriculture. Not recognising land under agricultural use fails to encourage producers to transition to sustainability initiatives like sequestration or biodiversity.
- Conversely, applying no protections to vast areas of native forest on the basis that they could be considered under agricultural use is not aligned with the intent of deforestation-free frameworks and commitments being put in place. It would leave this work heavily exposed to policy interpretation adjustments.

An effective quantitative measure of land that is predominantly under agricultural use will need to strike a balance between the two extremes, where sustainable vegetation management practices are promoted while native forests are protected. An accepted definition needs to leverage quantitative, objective and internationally recognised data.



58 million ha of Australia’s native forests (approx. 44%) are situated on land boundaries that can be considered under agricultural use¹



There exist strong regulatory frameworks for vegetation management across Federal, State and Territory governments



Australia’s extremely diverse landscape features 89 distinct bio-regions, each with locally native species²



The broad array of land management practices adopted by producers and land holders reflect these diverse ecosystems and differing legislative frameworks

1 – AMPC, 2024

2 – Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2024

Agricultural Use | Baseline

Global frameworks have not clearly outlined the definition of “land that is predominantly under agricultural use”. This presents a need for Australia to provide leadership to shape this interpretation and effectively recognise our unique natural systems and land management practices in a way that remains internationally credible.

The proposed approach to determining an area’s agricultural use classification, within the Australian context, involves an assessment of the level of intervention in the landscape since a baseline date. This is an approach similar to that adopted by the Australian Land Use and Management Classification system.¹

Component 1

Baseline date of 1 January 1990

The baseline is the date from which an area of land will be assessed for its *Agricultural Use* classification. The 1990 baseline time point has been proposed due to considerations of data availability, remote sensing data quality, and timing relative to the broad-based State, Territory and Federal changes to vegetation management laws that were established through the 1990s.

Component 2

Subsequent land management practices

For areas that meet the threshold of a *Forest*, historic land management practices back to 1990 can be used to demonstrate that the agricultural use of an area has caused significant changes to the natural vegetation. Relevant activities could include ongoing weed control, regrowth clearing, infrastructure development and maintenance, drought fodder harvesting, vegetation thinning etc. These activities could be demonstrated via satellite imaging, evidence of permits, receipts for materials, and services used.

¹ – DAFF: Australian Land Use and Management Classification Version 8

Agricultural Use | Classifications

Global frameworks have not clearly outlined the definition of “land that is predominantly under agricultural use”. This presents a need for Australia to provide leadership to shape this interpretation and effectively recognise our unique natural systems and land management practices in a way that remains internationally credible.

Assessing the level of agricultural intervention applied to an area since the 1990 baseline enables it to be classified into one of three categories, this leverages AFi definitions but adjusts Classification 1 - Point 4 for the Australian context.

Classification 1 Agricultural Use

Significant Change to Natural Vegetation

Land where agricultural use has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990, including:

1. cultivation of temporary or annual crops that have a growing cycle of one year or less
2. cultivation of permanent or perennial crops that have a growing cycle of more than one year, including tree crops
3. cultivation of permanent or temporary meadows or pastures, for example by planting of non-native grasses and/or by agricultural management practices such as irrigation or fertilisation
4. raising of livestock on land characterised by significant change to natural vegetation
5. buildings, animal feeding operations, and other farm infrastructure
6. temporarily fallow land

Classification 2 Agricultural Use

Managed Natural Forest and Rangelands

Forest land where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist alongside ongoing agricultural use, including:

- Animals grazing under native forest where none, or only light, management practices have been undertaken e.g. occasional weed control.
- Animals grazing native pastures and forest areas that may include lightly wooded areas e.g. rangelands.

Classification 3 Not Agricultural Use

Primary or Regenerated Natural Forest

Forest Land that possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function, and has no history of agricultural use since 1990, including:

- Primary forest that has no history of agricultural use; or
- Regenerated (second-growth) forests that were subject to major impacts prior to 1990 (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging), but where the main causes of impact have ceased, and the ecosystem has recovered much of its species composition, structure, and ecological function.

Forest Thresholds

We're seeking your input to select the right thresholds for defining *Forest*.

- Biophysical differences exist in how '*Forest*' is defined between International and Australian frameworks. Australia employs a unique definition of *Forest*, where it is defined as having heights exceeding 2 meters and a canopy cover of 20% on an area of 0.2ha.
- The policy aims to be flexible enough to accommodate the distinctive features of Australian forests while also aligning with international expectations and standards. Designing the policy with adaptability in mind is crucial to addressing regional differences and evolving environmental circumstances.

What thresholds should be used to define *Forest* within the context of Australia?

Option 1

Australian & AFi Thresholds

- Reflective of Australia's native forests and ecosystems
- Aligned with existing national measurement and monitoring
- May not be accepted by the EUDR

Forest does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Land spanning more than 0.2 hectares with trees higher than 2 metres and a canopy cover of more than 20%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ.

Option 2

FAO, AFi & EU Thresholds

- Not supported by Australian forest scientific research
- Misaligned with existing national measurement and monitoring
- Aligned with global measurement and monitoring approaches

Forest does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of more than 10%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ.

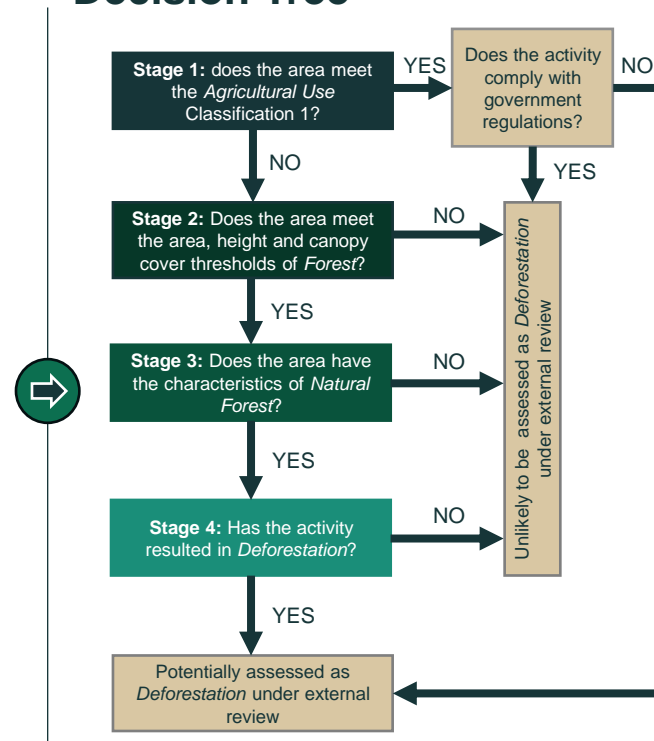
Policy Application

The policy delivers a credible methodology of protecting forest areas while facilitating sustainable land management practices, economic sustainability, and compliance with Australian land management laws.

Decision Tree | Definition Structure

Stage 1: Agricultural Use Classification	<p>An assessment of the landscapes <i>Agricultural Use</i> classification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land where agricultural use has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990; or 2. <i>Forest</i> land where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist alongside ongoing agricultural use; or 3. <i>Forest</i> Land that possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function, and has no history of agricultural use since 1990
Stage 2: Forest	<p>Forest does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of more than 10%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Forest does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Land spanning more than 0.2 hectares with trees higher than 2 metres and a canopy cover of more than 20%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ.</p>
Stage 3: Natural Forest	<p>Possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function.</p>
Stage 4: Deforestation	<p>Loss of natural forest as a result of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use; (ii) conversion to an agricultural plantation; or (iii) severe and sustained degradation.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Australian Case Studies

Case studies inform design considerations and demonstrate how the policy can be applied in practice to assess the risk of *Deforestation* associated with Australian land management practices.

The Purpose of the Case Studies

- Incoming regulations and supply chain due diligence expectations will rely upon traceability systems that use scalable satellite technology to flag areas at risk of *Deforestation*.
- Essential Australian land management practices can often involve activities which risk appearing as *Deforestation* events under satellite assessments.
- The case studies will help users to distinguish between the *Agricultural Use* classifications of land through the exploration of land management practices that are at heightened risk of being flagged as *Deforestation*.
- The case studies will then apply the deforestation assessment decision tree to support interpretation of the risk for being flagged as *Deforestation* and provide guidance to producers on how to mitigate this risk.

Regrowth

Weed Management

Remnant Vegetation

Drought Fodder

Natural Disaster

Infrastructure

Classification 1 | Significant Change to Native Vegetation

Land where agricultural use has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990, including:

1. cultivation of temporary or annual crops that have a growing cycle of one year or less
2. cultivation of permanent or perennial crops that have a growing cycle of more than one year, including tree crops
3. cultivation of permanent or temporary meadows or pastures, for example by planting of non-native grasses and/or by agricultural management practices such as irrigation or fertilisation
4. raising of livestock on land characterised by significant change to natural vegetation
5. buildings, animal feeding operations, and other farm infrastructure
6. temporarily fallow land

Case Study 1
Regrowth Clearing

Case Study 4
Drought Fodder

Case Study 2
Infrastructure

Case Study 5
Natural Disaster

Case Study 3
Weed Control

Case Study 1 | Regrowth Clearing

Clearing regrowth for maintaining existing land use

Large patches of grazed land on a cattle property in Queensland's brigalow belt are experiencing significant regrowth. The managed clearing of regrowth since 1990 has reshaped the landscape significantly.

Effective management of regrowth vegetation is crucial to balancing the ecological benefits with the productivity and profitability of the property.

Under Queensland's Vegetation Management Act 1999, landowners must follow guidelines to manage regrowth responsibly, ensuring sustainable land use and conservation of native habitats.

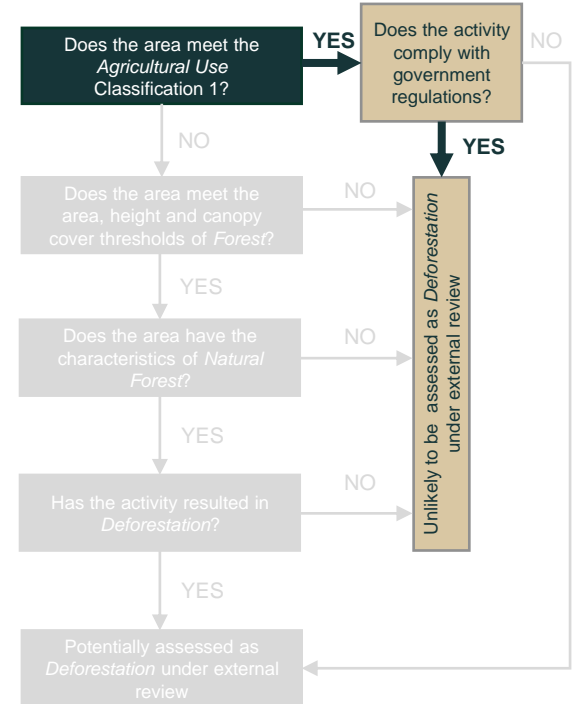
Stage 1 - The regrowth is in an area of land where *Agricultural Use* has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990.

The activity complies with applicable regulation.

Clearing the regrowth is not *Deforestation*

Re-clearing regrowth in an area where it has been cleared since 1990, done in accordance with relevant government regulations, is not *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 2 | Infrastructure

Maintaining an existing fence line

An existing fence line needs to be maintained on a property under pastoral lease in the Northern Territory. The vegetation regrowth is impeding the clear strip required on either side of the fence to protect it from damage caused by falling vegetation.

Under the Pastoral Land Act 1992, clearing that is reasonably necessary to maintain a fence for a pastoral purpose is allowed, provided that the clearing is not wider than 10 metres. As a result, 5 metres of vegetation has been cleared on each side of the fence to minimise harm.

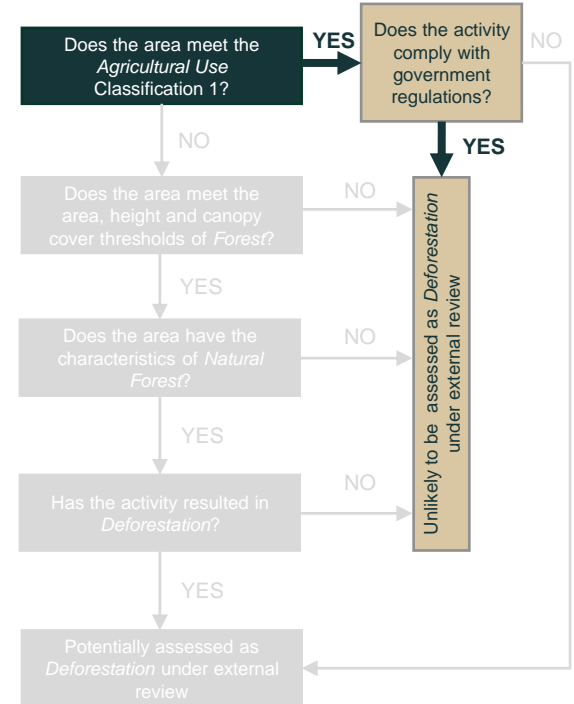
Stage 1 - The regrowth is in an area of land where *Agricultural Use* has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990.

The removal of vegetation is in line with relevant state regulation.

Clearing the vegetation is not *Deforestation*

Clearing encroaching vegetation on existing infrastructure, done in accordance with relevant government regulations, is not *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 3 | Weed Control

Native weed control

Large areas on a heavily stocked grazing land in the ACT are becoming overrun by dense growth of Cootamundra Wattle.

Cootamundra Wattle, native only to specific areas in NSW, has become an environmental weed in many parts of Australia, including the ACT. It competes with and impedes the regeneration of native vegetation, posing a serious threat to various ecosystems such as heathland, grassland, woodland, and riparian areas. Additionally, it impacts the productivity of the grazed area.

Cootamundra Wattle is a prohibited pest plant under the ACT Pest Plants and Animals (Pest Plants) Declaration 2015.

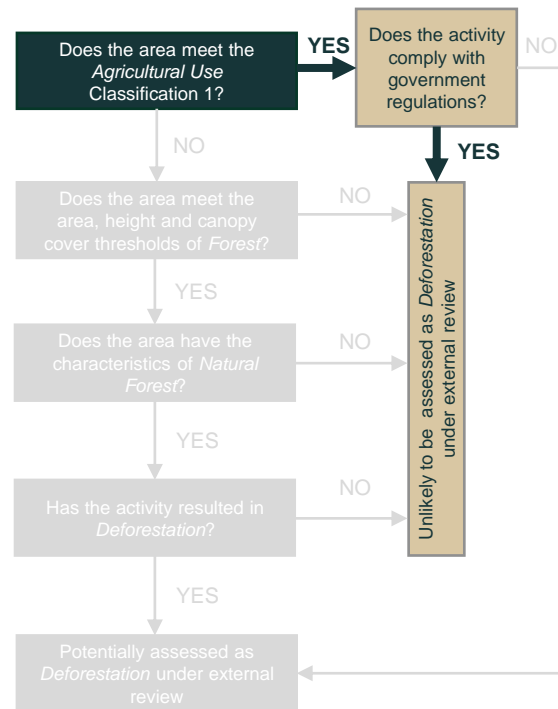
Stage 1 – The weed control is in an area of land where *Agricultural Use* has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990.

The activity complies with applicable regulation.

Controlling the weeds is not *Deforestation*

Controlling native and invasive weeds in an area where this has been ongoing since 1990, done in accordance with relevant government regulations, is not *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 4 | Drought Fodder

Mulga harvesting

A cattle property in Queensland's Mulga Lands Bioregion have historically selectively harvested for drought fodder since the 1990s.

The Queensland Government mandates selective harvesting for areas under 10 hectares.¹

The landholders selectively harvest 8 hectares of mulga, preserving 50% of fodder trees. Only mulga is harvested, leaving non-fodder species untouched except for access purposes.

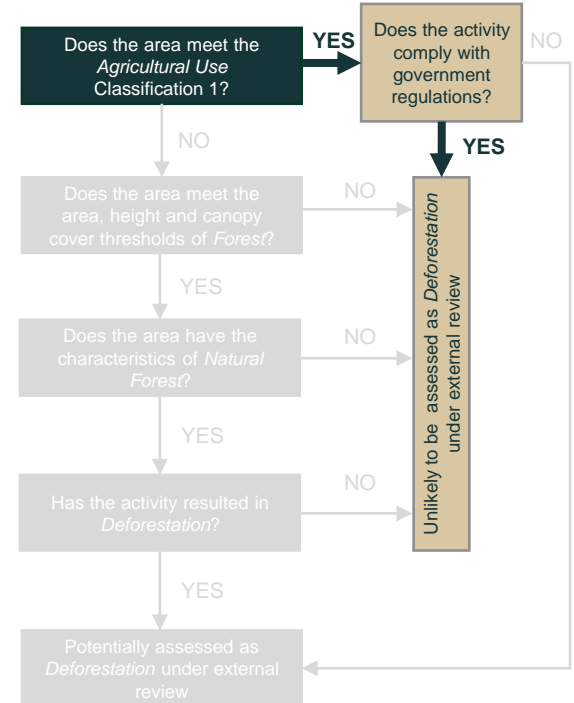
Stage 1 - The drought fodder is in an area of land where *Agricultural Use* has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990.

The activity complies with applicable regulation.

Harvesting the Mulga is not *Deforestation*

Harvesting vegetation for drought fodder from set-aside areas, done in accordance with relevant government regulations, is not *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 5 | Natural Disaster

Bushfire recovery

Bushfires have swept through a Victorian cattle property, where cattle is intensively grazed.

While the fire-resistant eucalypts survived in some areas, others were severely damaged. The estimated regeneration time is 5-10 years.

In NSW, pasture is often given time to regrow after rainfall (4-6 weeks or more, depending on rain events). Grazing management should consider accounting for the weakened pastures and aim to aid vegetation recovery.

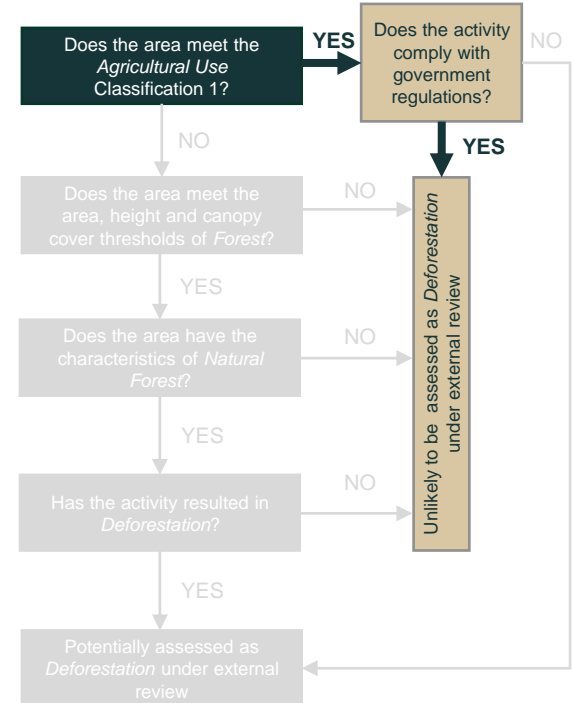
Stage 1 – The bushfire has impacted an area of land where *Agricultural Use* has caused significant change to natural vegetation since 1990.

The activity complies with applicable state regulation.

Resuming grazing of the area is not *Deforestation*

Resuming grazing of an area after a natural disaster, done in accordance with relevant government regulations, is not *Deforestation*. Consideration should be given to promoting vegetation recovery.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Classification 2 | Managed Natural Forest and Rangelands

Forest land where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist alongside ongoing agricultural use, including:

- Animals grazing under native forest where none, or only light, management practices have been undertaken e.g. occasional weed control.
- Animals grazing native pastures and forest areas that may include lightly wooded areas e.g. rangelands.

Case Study 1
Ongoing Grazing

Case Study 4
Weed Control 1

Case Study 2
Remnant Vegetation 1

Case Study 5
Weed Control 2

Case Study 3
Infrastructure

Case Study 6
Natural Disaster

Case Study 1 | Ongoing grazing

Grazing a managed natural rangeland

A landholding in Western Australia is made up of natural vegetation that meets the *Forest* thresholds, is grazed under, and is occasionally managed for weeds. Although the land is used for Agricultural purposes, the use of the land since 1990 has not caused a significant change to natural vegetation and is considered rangeland.

The landholder wants to continue using the land under their current approach.

No land clearing is allowed under State and Territory guidelines.

Stage 1 – The area has been grazed but there has been little other evidence of land management activities since 1990. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 2*.

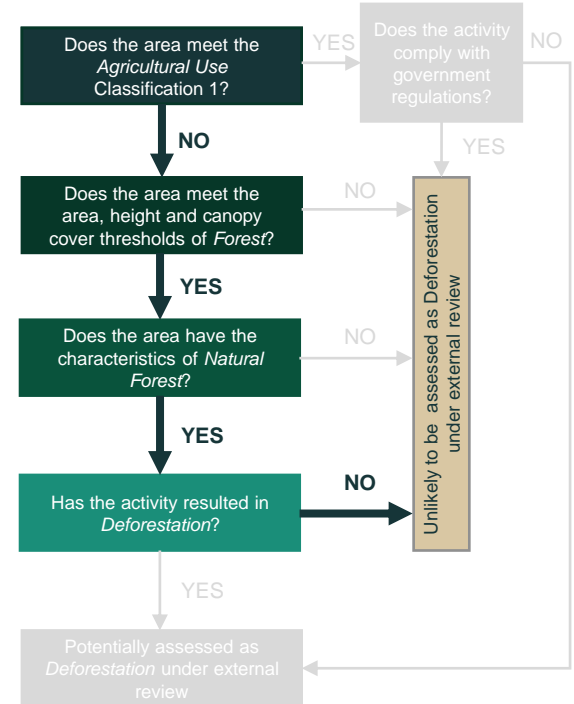
Stage 2 - The vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*

Stage 3 - The vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – As there is no changed impact to the vegetation, it has not been converted to *Classification 1*.

Grazing the area is not *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 2 | Remnant Vegetation

Clearing an area of remnant vegetation

A landholding in Western Australia is made up of natural vegetation that meets the *Forest* thresholds, is grazed under, and is occasionally managed for weeds. Although the land is used for Agricultural purposes, the use of the land since 1990 has not caused a significant change to natural vegetation and is considered a managed natural forest.

The landholder wants to clear significant amounts of remnant canopy vegetation within the managed natural ecosystem to increase the total area of grasslands moving forward.

Stage 1 – The area has been grazed but there has been little other evidence of land management activities since 1990. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 2*.

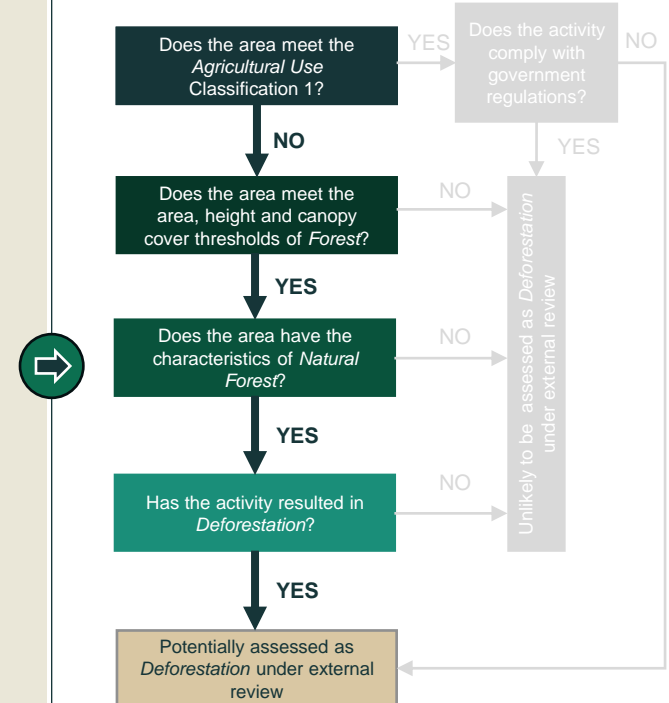
Stage 2 - The remnant vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*

Stage 3 - The remnant vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – Clearing the managed natural forest vegetation to increase grassland area is considered a conversion to *Classification 1*.

Potentially assessed as *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 3 | Infrastructure

Building a new fence line

An extensive Western Australian pastoral system has a relatively low carrying capacity but is actively managed for pastoral services. This requires the establishment of fencing, water and yard infrastructure to improve pasture and rangeland management to control for pasture utilisation, stocking rates and allowing the country to spell/rest and regenerate.

Establishing this infrastructure requires areas of land clearing but will improve herd efficiency and lower environmental impacts to the Manged Natural Forest.

A low per cent of total land area will be cleared for the infrastructure and this is calculated as a cumulative total, measured against the 1990 baseline.

Stage 1 – The area has been grazed but there has been little other evidence of land management activities since 1990. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 2*.

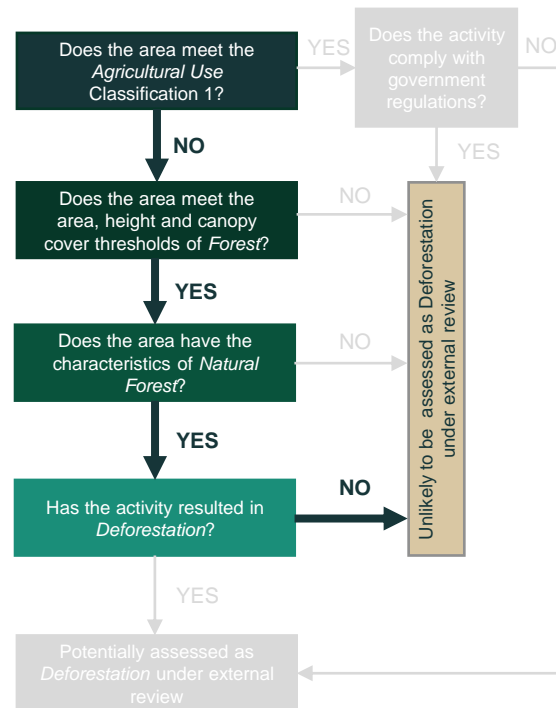
Stage 2 - The vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*

Stage 3 - The vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – The cumulative vegetation clearing represents an area which is negligible to the given size of the site and is not being done to convert the managed natural forest to *Classification 1*.

Clearing the vegetation is not *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 4 | Weed Control 1

Weed control; method 1

Large areas on a cattle property in Cobargo, NSW, are overrun by Lantana, an invasive noxious weed native to South America. Lantana's dense thickets displace native sclerophyll vegetation, endanger livestock with toxicity, and heighten fire risks, impacting ecosystem health and property productivity.

In Cobargo, these weeds are designated as Control Class 3 noxious weeds, a stricter classification than in most of NSW, where the control mandate specifies that 'the plant must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed'.

Stage 1 – The area has been grazed but there has been little other evidence of land management activities since 1990. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 2*.

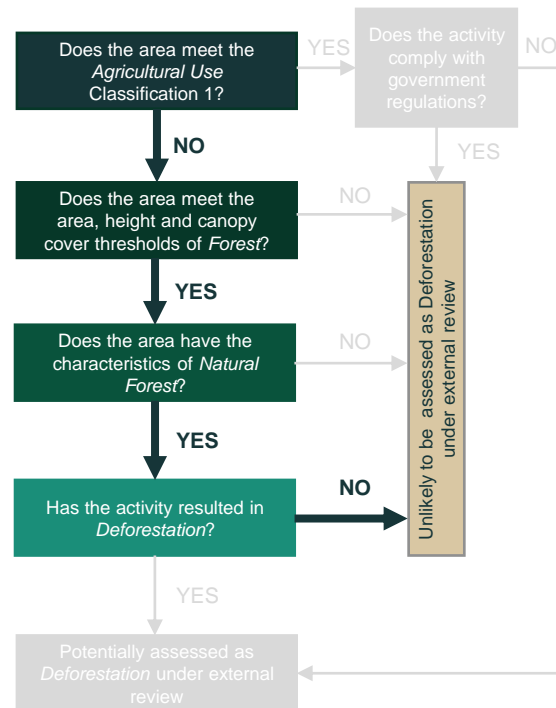
Stage 2 - The vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*

Stage 3 - The vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – The weeds were controlled in a way that maintains or enhances the species composition, structure and ecological function (e.g. slashing and selective herbicide)

Removing the weeds is not *Deforestation*.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 5 | Weed Control 2

Weed control; method 2

Large areas on a cattle property in Cobargo, NSW, are overrun by Lantana, an invasive noxious weed native to South America. Lantana's dense thickets displace native sclerophyll vegetation, endanger livestock with toxicity, and heighten fire risks, impacting ecosystem health and property productivity.

In Cobargo, these weeds are designated as Control Class 3 noxious weeds, a stricter classification than in most of NSW, where the control mandate specifies that 'the plant must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed'.

Stage 1 – The area has been grazed but there has been little other evidence of land management activities since 1990. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 2*.

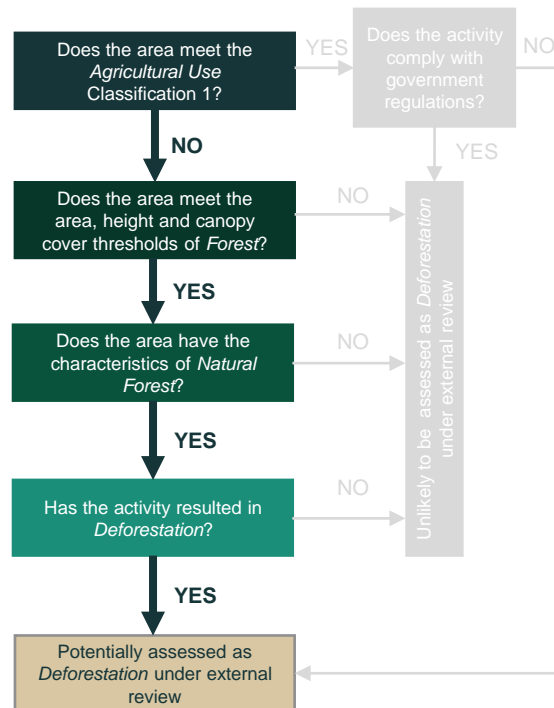
Stage 2 - The vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*

Stage 3 - The vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – The weeds were removed in a way that severely negatively impacted the species composition, structure and ecological function of the Natural Forest (e.g. use of non-selective herbicides that killed off the native sclerophyll vegetation)

Potentially assessed as *Deforestation*

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 6 | Natural Disaster

Bushfire recovery

Bushfires have swept through a NSW cattle property, burning large areas of remnant Box-Ironbark forest. Cattle were grazed under native forest where only light management practices were undertaken, such as occasional weed control.

While the fire-resistant eucalypts survived in some areas, others were severely damaged. The estimated regeneration time is 5-10 years.

Stage 1 – The area has been grazed but there has been little other evidence of land management activities since 1990. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 2*.

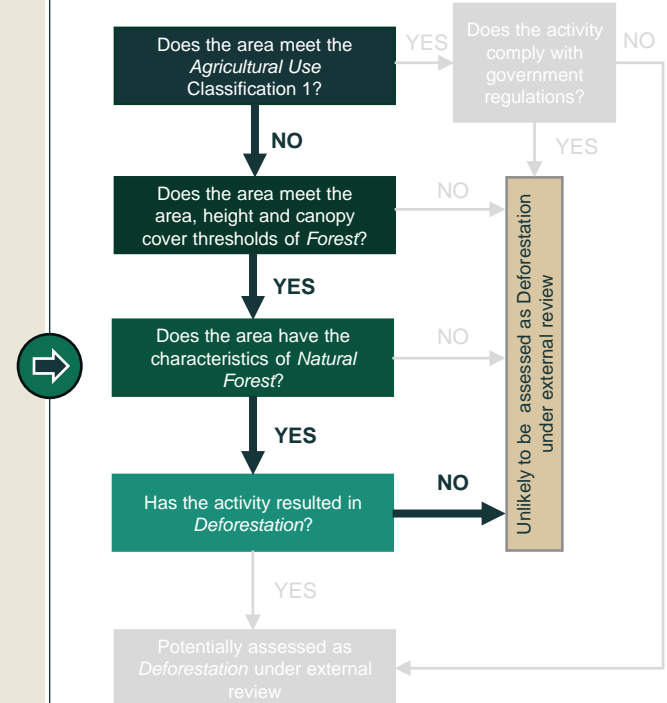
Stage 2 – Prior to the bushfire, the remnant forest met the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*.

Stage 3 – Prior to the bushfire, the vegetation had a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – Selective grazing may continue provided it does not prevent the recovery of the area.

Resuming grazing of the area is not Deforestation

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Classification 3 | Primary or Regenerated Natural Forest

Forest Land that possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function, and has no history of *Agricultural Use* since 1990, including:

- Primary forest that has no history of agricultural use; or
- Regenerated (second-growth) forests that were subject to major impacts prior to 1990 (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging), but where the main causes of impact have ceased, and the ecosystem has recovered much of its species composition, structure, and ecological function.

Case Study 1
Agricultural Use Conversion

Case Study 2
Natural Disaster

Case Study 1 | Agricultural Use Conversion

Conversion of Primary Natural Forest to Agricultural Use

An area of untouched primary forest has never been used for agricultural purposes. Any expansion of agriculture into this area of forest will be Deforestation.

Stage 1 - As the area has never been used for Agricultural purposes or been managed. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 3*.

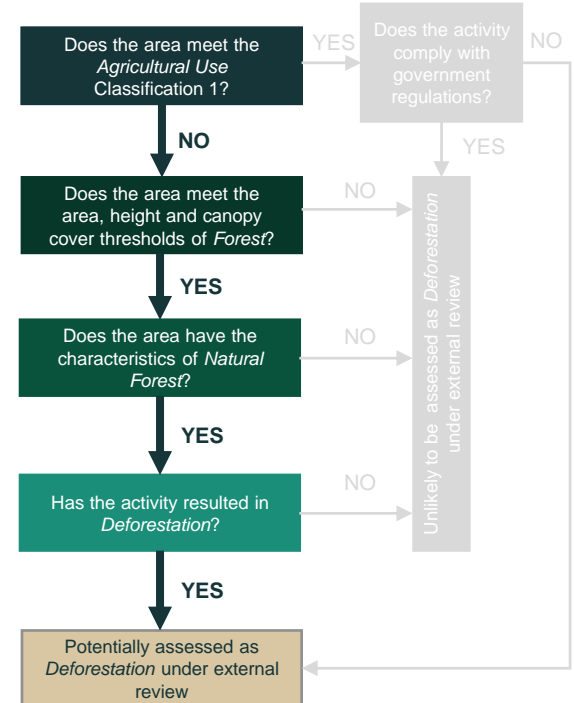
Stage 2 - The vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*.

Stage 3 - The vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 - Expanding *Agricultural Use* into the area of primary natural forest would be a conversion to *Classification 1* or *Classification 2*.

Potentially assessed as Deforestation

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Case Study 2 | Natural Disaster

Drought

Vegetation on a landholding situated in South Australia has been severely impacted by drought. The area in question has never been grazed, managed, or used for Agricultural purposes.

Reduced rainfall has limited the water intake of the vegetation leading to reduced tree growth, crown dieback and increased tree mortality.

Stage 1 - As the area has never been used for Agricultural purposes or been managed. Therefore, the area meets *Agricultural Use Classification 3*.

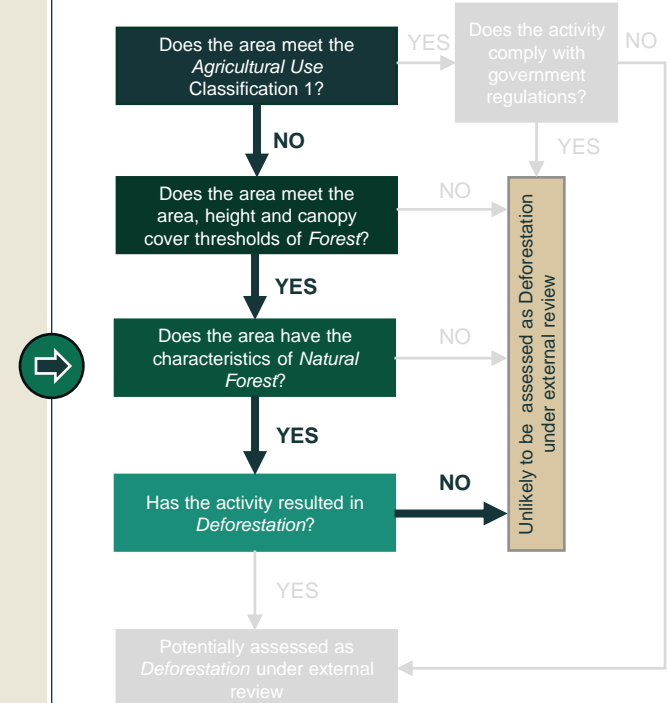
Stage 2 - The vegetation meets the height and canopy cover thresholds (>0.5ha & 5m & 10% or >0.2ha & 2m & 20%) to be classified as *Forest*.

Stage 3 - The vegetation has a mature ecosystem and high-quality biodiversity therefore it meets the definition of *Natural Forest*

Stage 4 – Provided that the area is left to regenerate, is not grazed or converted to another use, no *Deforestation* has occurred.

Deforestation has not occurred.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Make Good Mechanism

Reasoning for why a Make Good Mechanism is required

Proposed “Make Good” Mechanism



The 31 December 2020 Baseline refers to a cut-off date established by the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The EUDR sets December 31st, 2020, as the point after which *Deforestation* or *Forest Degradation* linked to certain commodities is illegal within the EU market. Commodities and their derivatives must be demonstrably deforestation-free after this date. It needs to be proven that supply chains haven't contributed to deforestation since this date.

The “Make Good” Mechanism will apply to *Deforestation* which has occurred after 31 December 2020.

Any activities which have occurred prior to the baseline date will not be considered as *Deforestation* under the policy. Any land management activities undertaken after 31 December 2020 that do not align with the requirements of the policy will flag as *Deforestation* and require rehabilitation before accreditation. The “Make Good” Mechanism will seek to clarify the rehabilitation activity that is required.

Provide Your Feedback

How to respond

All elements of this work remain in development and consultation is a way to shape final outcomes.

The Information Paper gives readers an update on the progress to-date so that they can provide informed feedback.

To achieve a solution that represents producer and landholder interests in a fair and equitable way, we ask that you please provide feedback by following the QR code.



Consultation until Sunday 23 June



Appendix

Detailed Definitions & Frameworks

Influential Frameworks

	Australia ¹	FAO ²	EUDR ³	AFi ⁴
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia's forests and forestry glossary, developed by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, is intended to serve as a comprehensive and authoritative reference for the interpretation and use of forest and forestry terms at the national level in Australia, by bringing together a common set of terms with consistent definitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Global Forest Resources Assessment is a periodic, comprehensive assessment of the world's forest resources. Analyses the status of forest-related variables like forest area, biomass, carbon storage, management practices, and biodiversity across 236 countries and territories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation aimed at curbing deforestation and forest degradation associated with consumption. Targets the import and sale of certain commodities within the EU, including cattle. Requires companies placing products on the EU market or exporting them to demonstrate their origins are deforestation-free, coming into effect on 30 December 2024 with retroactive application for 31 December 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition dedicated to promoting ethical practices within agriculture and forestry supply chains. Roadmap for setting goals, taking concrete actions, and reporting on progress to ensure that operations safeguard forests, other natural ecosystems, and human rights.
Jurisdiction	Australia	Global – US, UK, EU, Brazil	Any operator/trader placing commodities on the EU market.	Global
Application	National measurement/monitoring systems, commodity sustainability frameworks, research	Inconsistent and often left dependent on local authorities	Mandatory and regulated	Voluntary via adoption by supply chain and financial sector and used by the SBTi
Stakeholder Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian measurement systems Researchers and Scientists National sustainability frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments International Organisations Researchers and Scientists Companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply Chain Producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply Chain Financial Sector Industry groups Reporting initiatives

1 – Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2023

2 – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2024

3 – European Commission, 2024

4 – Accountability Framework Initiative, 2024

Agricultural Use | Significant Change to Native Vegetation

The definition of *Forest* excludes tree cover on land predominantly under agricultural or other land use.

Forest FAO/AFi/EU Definition

Forest does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of more than 10%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ.

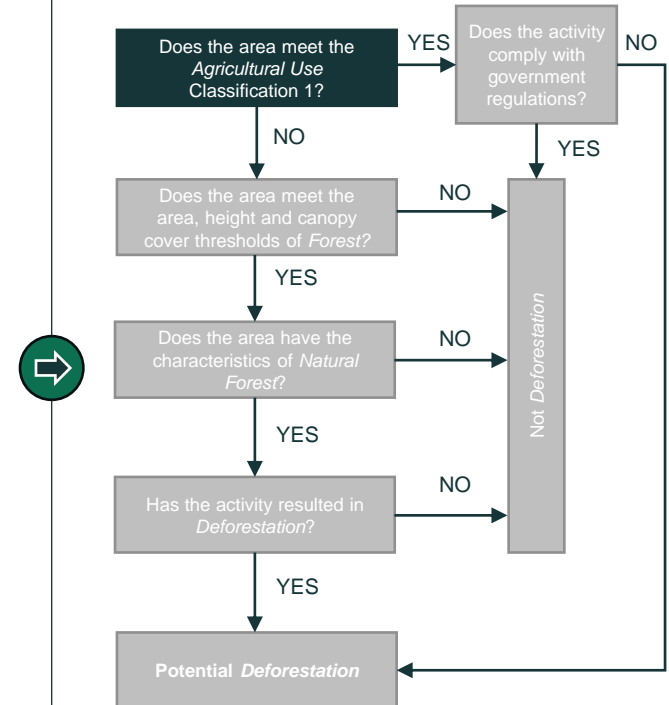
Agricultural Use AFi Definition

The use of land primarily for any one or more of the following:

1. cultivation of temporary or annual crops that have a growing cycle of one year or less
2. cultivation of permanent or perennial crops that have a growing cycle of more than one year, including tree crops
3. cultivation of permanent or temporary meadows or pastures, for example by planting of non-native grasses and/or by agricultural management practices such as irrigation or fertilisation
4. raising of livestock on land characterised by severe and sustained degradation
5. buildings, animal feeding operations, and other farm infrastructure
6. temporarily fallow land

Point 4 under the AFi definition of *Agricultural Use* is too strict for useful application within the Australian context where most agricultural use is on landscapes not characterised by severe and sustained degradation. To fit this definition for use in the Australian context, it has been adjusted to "4. raising of livestock on land characterised by significant change to natural vegetation". This better supports classifications when used in conjunction with *Managed Natural Forest and Rangelands*.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Agricultural Use | Managed Natural Forest and Rangelands

The definition of *Managed Natural Forest* is contained within AFI's broader definition of *Natural Forests*.

Managed Natural Forest AFI Definition

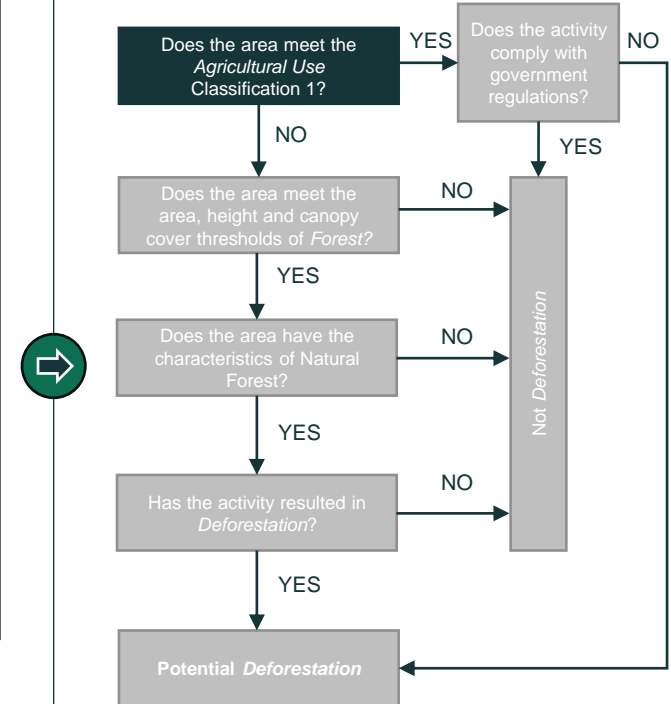
3. Managed natural forests where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist in the presence of activities such as:

- Harvesting of timber or other forest products, including management to promote high-value species.
- Low intensity, small-scale cultivation within the forest, such as less-intensive forms of swidden agriculture in a forest mosaic.

This definition is used within the Australian context to help classify the vast areas of pastoral activities on landscapes that have not materially deviated from their native state. Importantly, this includes areas of:

- Animals grazing under native forest where none, or only light, management practices have been undertaken e.g. occasional weed control.
- Animals grazing native pastures and forest areas that may include lightly wooded areas e.g. rangelands.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Forest

The EU/FAO/AFi and Australia use different height and canopy cover thresholds for *Forest*, which presents issues for consistent interpretation.

Forest FAO/AFi/EU Thresholds

Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of more than 10%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use.

Forest Australian/AFi Thresholds

Land spanning more than 0.2 hectares with trees higher than 2 metres and a canopy cover of more than 20%, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use.

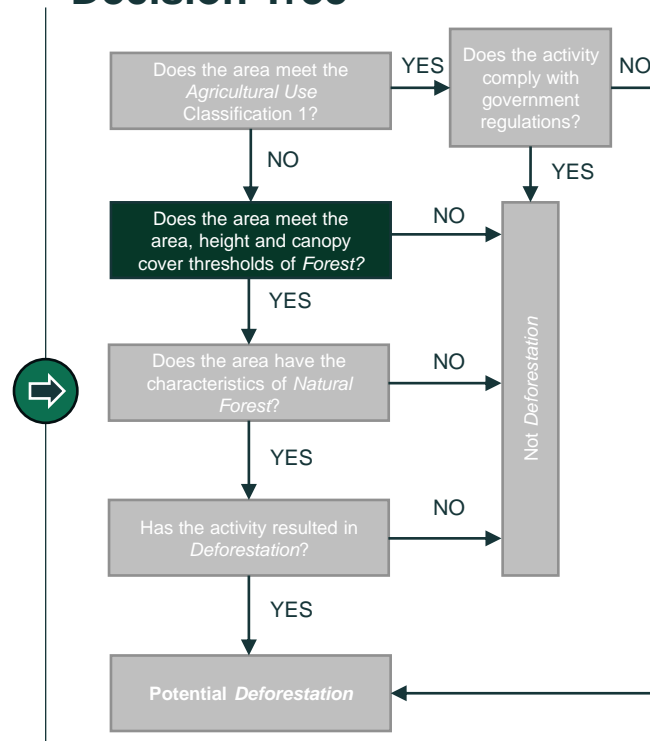
Feedback is sought on the most appropriate forest cover, height, and area threshold to be used in the policy. Key considerations across the two options:

- **Australia's thresholds:** informed by scientific research and are used in domestic sustainability frameworks and measurement systems. However, these thresholds are misaligned with international settings.
- **International thresholds:** support equivalency with the EUDR and more general alignment with international settings.

'or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ'

Even if the trees in an area aren't currently 5 (or 2) meters tall or don't have 10% (or 20%) canopy cover, they are still considered *Forest* if they have the potential to reach those thresholds when left undisturbed ("in situ"). This captures areas with young trees or those recovering from disturbances.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Natural Forest

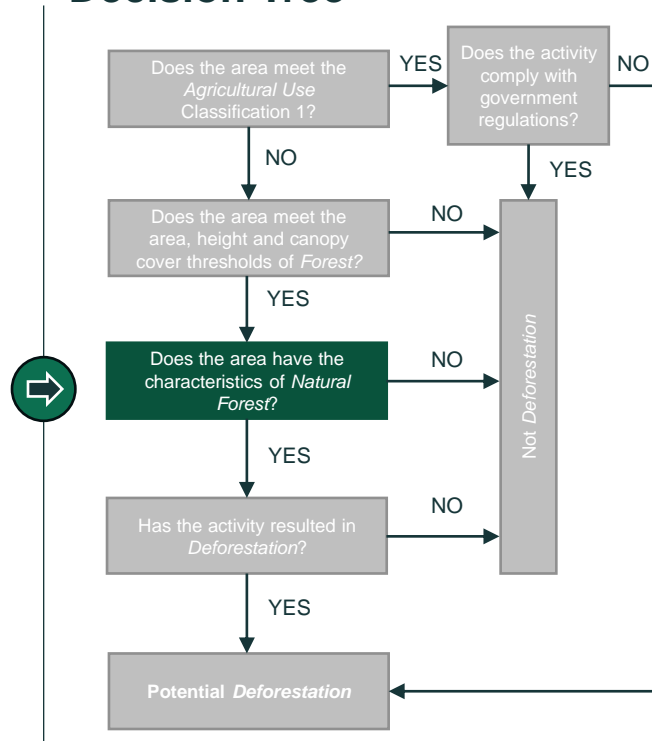
Natural Forest AFI Definition

Possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function.

Australia boasts a staggering 85% endemism in its plant life, and a significant portion (44%) of this native vegetation coexists with agricultural land. To address this distinctive landscape, Australia looks beyond just tree cover and adopts the Accountability Framework Initiative's (AFI) definition of *Natural Forest*.

A consideration of *Natural Forest* provides a way to account for Australia's rich biodiversity and High Conservation Value areas.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Primary and Regenerated Natural Forest

The definition of *Primary and Regenerated Natural Forests* is contained within AFI's broader definition of *Natural Forests*.

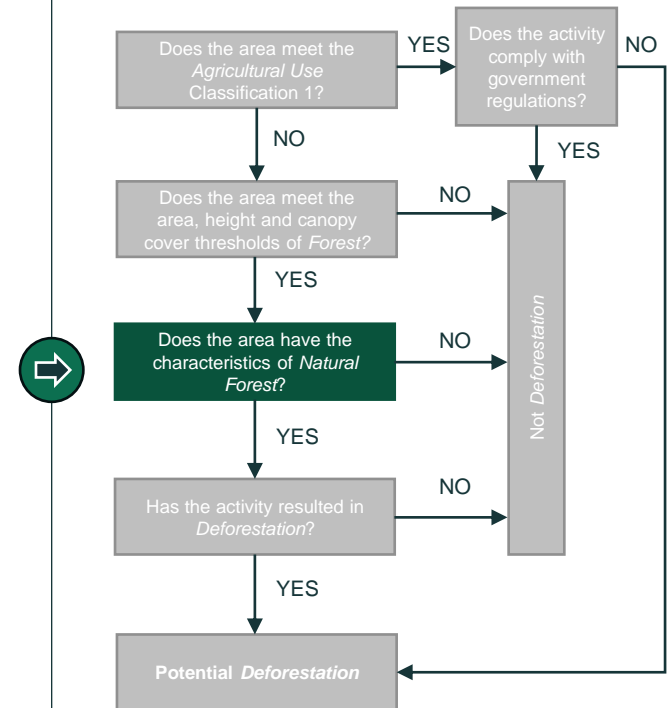
Primary Natural Forest AFI Definition

1. Primary forests that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent history.

Regenerated Natural Forest AFI Definition

2. Regenerated (second-growth) forests that were subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging), but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished and the ecosystem has attained much of the species composition, structure, and ecological function of prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems.

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Deforestation

Deforestation AFi Definition

Loss of *Natural Forest* as a result of:

- (i) conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use;
- (ii) conversion to a tree plantation; or
- (iii) severe and sustained degradation.

The FAO provides useful supplementary information to help with defining *Deforestation* within the Australian context:

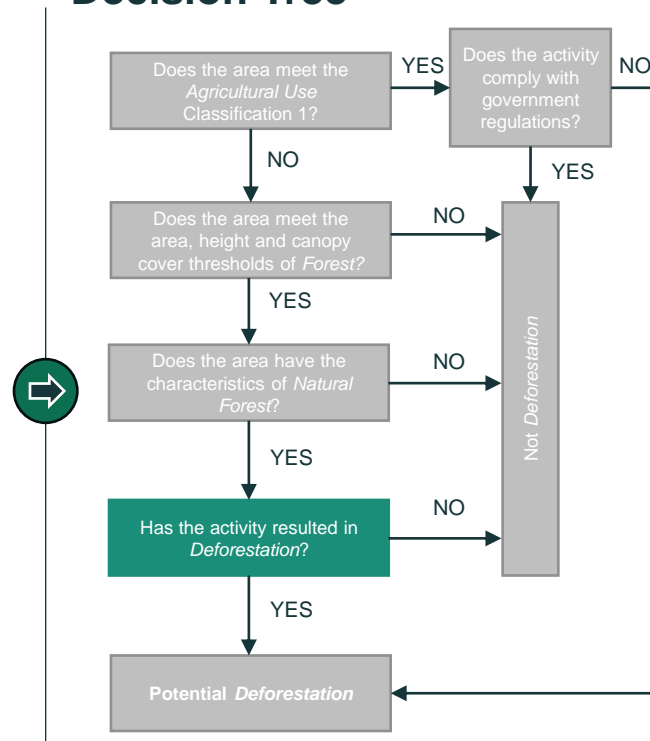
- Includes permanent reduction of the tree canopy cover below the minimum 10 percent threshold.
- The term specifically excludes areas where the trees have been removed as a result of harvesting or logging, and where the forest is expected to regenerate naturally or with the aid of silvicultural measures.
- The term also includes areas where, for example, the impact of disturbance, over-utilization or changing environmental conditions affects the forest to an extent that it cannot sustain a canopy cover above the 10 percent threshold.

Key Elements of EUDR Misalignment

The use of AFi definitions for *Natural Forest* and *Deforestation* result in minor deviation from the requirements set out in the EUDR, which are still being finalized with Guidance expected in July. The key differences include:

- *Natural Forest*: The EUDR does not allow for a distinction in forest quality, the core difference is that this would see tree plantations receiving the same protections as native forest. The EUDR would still allow for the management of invasive weeds.
- *Deforestation*: The EUDR only considers *Deforestation* to be the conversion of *Forest* to *Agricultural Use*, whereas this definition also includes the conversion to other non-forest uses (e.g. urban expansion)

Deforestation Assessment Decision Tree



Policy and Guidance Interaction

Policy and Guidance Interaction

Land Management Commitment

The Land Management Commitment will support producers and landholders to demonstrate the sustainability credentials of their land management practices, including deforestation-free.

The policy

Land Management Policy

Definitions

Agricultural Use

Forest

Natural Forest

Deforestation

Policy Application

Make Good Mechanism

The policy sets out the core requirements and will be the language that is used to achieve equivalence with international frameworks.

The guidance

Land Management Guidance

Background & Context

Australian Case Studies

Regrowth

Infrastructure

Weed Control

Natural Disaster

Drought Fodder

The guidance supports users of the policy with interpretation in the context of Australia's natural land systems and placing the requirements against the existing backdrop of regulations.

