

The Secretary - Native Vegetation Committee  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA 2660

Dear Sir

I wish to present the attached submission for consideration in relation to the review of the Native Vegetation Act 2003.

Yours faithfully

Ian Scott

## AN ALTERNATIVE WAY TO REGULATE THE CLEARING OF RE-GROWTH

A major problem occurring on many grazing properties is the emergence of re-growth eucalypts, particularly stringybark and apple, in existing cleared and grazed land, when there has been insufficient stock grazed to eat the seedlings. This regrowth develops into bands of closely spaced, slender, small trees, many multiple trunked, and most of which will never reach full maturity due to competition for nutrients, sun, and growing space. These bands prevent the growth of pasture, and interfere with mustering and vehicle and machinery movement. They generally occur in the vicinity of groups of mature trees.

Section 9(2) of the Native Vegetation Act 2003 allows the clearing of re-growth which has appeared since 1 January 1990, without specific approval.

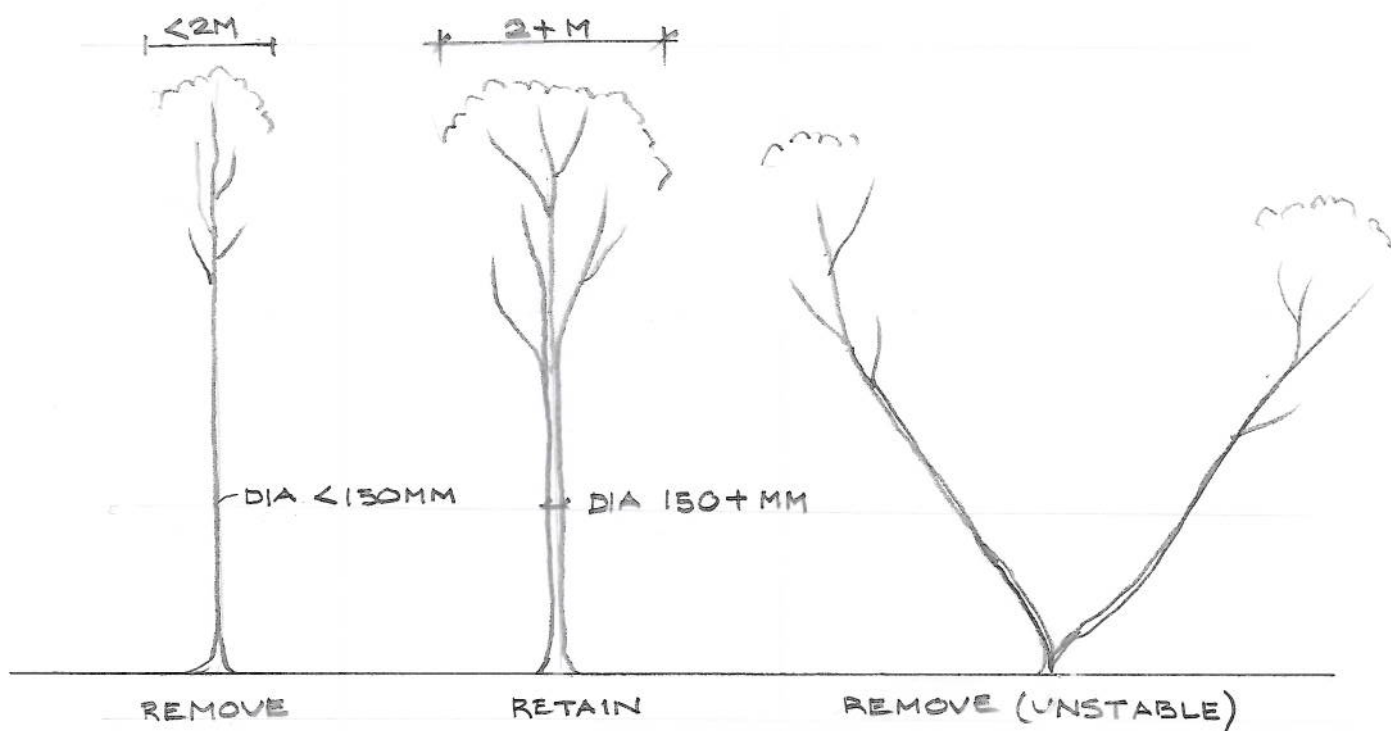
Defining re-growth by date is not practical; it is impossible to confirm the age of a eucalypt by counting the cambium rings, because their formation, and the diameter of the trunk, depends on seasonal conditions rather than time (unlike conifers). Furthermore, many re-growth trees, although older than 1/1/90, are smaller and more stunted than many post 1/1/90 trees which have had better growth conditions.

When small trees are closely spaced, it is not possible to pick out individual trees on a dated satellite photograph, and identified on the ground.

A more practical and more flexible alternative would be to define trees approved for removal by a combination of trunk diameter and crown diameter, so that unhealthy trees with a poor prognosis may be removed, whilst healthy trees which will develop into good specimens, must be retained. The latter will eventually replace the older, and dying trees. Suggested figures qualifying for removal might be:-

- maximum trunk diameter at eye height - less than 150 mm
- maximum crown diameter - less than 2M

Approval should also be extended to remove deformed, diseased and unstable trees, which will, in time, also interfere with the utilisation of the paddocks.

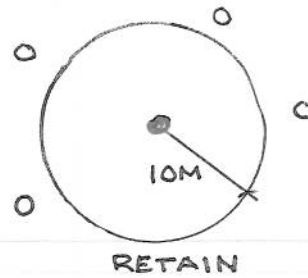
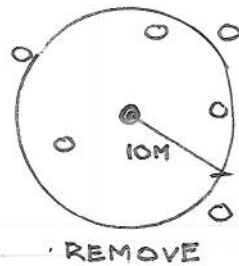


It should also be mandatory to retain certain trees, even if meeting the criteria for removal

(a) to ensure that the full range of existing species is retained.

(b) to ensure a minimum density of tree cover (there is a great advantage in tree cover, particularly with the trend towards dryer seasons, as it protects the pasture from sun and winds, and encourages the growth of microlena and similar grasses)

The latter could be specified as a circle of a maximum radius from the tree in question, which contains no other trees.



The above recommendations could be contained in a "performance specification" for the area after the removal of re-growth e.g. "The cleared area must still contain trees of the full range of species which previously existed, and of trunk diameters of 150mm or greater at eye height, and crown diameters of 2M or greater, and with a maximum distance between any two trees of 10M"

Clearing, or rather culling or thinning of re-growth in this manner, would allow sufficient re-growth to be removed for full utilisation of the paddock. It would also allow properties affected by this type of re-growth to take advantage of it in providing greater, and more lasting, tree cover than those which were over cleared in the past, and on which the sparse older trees are dying.

Ian Scott