Baseline Area Management Plan
AgForce Queensland
BASE LINE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

A BASE LINE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN (BAMP) is a plan to manage vegetation on a landscape scale having defined the outcome of the management activity, prior to the plan being initiated.

The BAMP has two components:

1. A PMAV (Property Map of Assessable Vegetation) based on using historical or contemporary evidence based data, such as explorer and early settler diaries, photographs, and satellite imagery, to redraw Regional Ecosystem (RE) maps and Regulated Vegetation Management maps. This PMAV defines the outcome of vegetation management activity.

2. An AMP (Area Management Plan) that sets out how vegetation management activity will be conducted.

A BAMP is in place for an initial ten years, is attached to the title of the land, but can be changed through the Development Application process.

Background

The Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA), despite its title, was introduced to Queensland to stop broadscale tree clearing. The VMA has not been well received, nor has it been a useful tool to assist landholders to manage vegetation with the flow on effects of managing soil, land and production.

The VMA has been manipulated politically with 38 amendments since introduction. The lack of a bipartisan political approach to vegetation management has confused and frustrated landholders and regional departmental staff to the marked detriment of good long term land management, biodiversity stability, trust and proactive relationships between landholders and the State, political cohesion, and ultimately, primary production.

For a long time AgForce has sought an outcome focused, landscape scale approach to vegetation management. This approach would provide greater certainty to land managers who would be able to manage their land to achieve an acceptable environmental outcome whilst maintaining a productive and profitable balance within the property.

Being able to demonstrate that they are managing vegetation to an agreed outcome, land managers would cease being targets for politically motivated changes to the prescriptive legislation and regulation that currently governs land management.

In 2016 when the VMROLA Bill was introduced to Parliament, Speaker Peter Wellington, challenged AgForce to not just oppose the Bill, but come up with a better way to manage vegetation in Queensland.

The BAMP is a proactive way to manage vegetation in this State that will lead to the betterment of both the environment and the productive base.
BAMP Process

PMAV:

1. **VMA, 1999:** “A PMAV is a map certified by the chief executive as a PMAV for an area and showing the vegetation category area for the area. The map may also show for the area the location of the boundaries of, and the regional ecosystem (RE) number for, each RE in the area.”

2. The PMAV process is used to change the vegetation boundaries shown on a Regulated Vegetation Management Map and the REs shown on a Vegetation Management Supporting Map.

3. Having obtained the documented evidence for a desired vegetation management outcome (e.g. historical photos or satellite imagery) the PMAV process is used to redraw and lock in the REs and vegetation categories according to the distribution and density of vegetation derived from historical or contemporary evidence.
   a. It is proposed that PMAV Categories A and X are not changed.

4. Changes to RE and vegetation categories could be substantial according to the evidenced vegetation changes over time. It is anticipated a landholder would select a point in time when the land was in balance with good grass and a complimentary coverage of timber, and would thus be at a time of greatest floristic diversity and be at its most productive. This could be in the past or it could be the current time for a landholder who has had the ability to maintain the integrity of the landscape.

AMP:

1. **An AMP is defined**¹ as follows: “An AMP provides an alternative approval system for vegetation clearing under the VMA, 1999. AMPs relate to particular vegetation categories and regional ecosystems. They list the purposes and clearing conditions that have been approved for areas covered by the plan.”

2. **An AMP is an agreement** with the State explaining how a landholder is going to manage the vegetation to achieve the outcomes set out in the PMAV. With a known outcome, a landholder should be granted considerably more freedom to achieve an agreed end result than currently exists under the Self-Assessable-Codes (SACs) and Development Permit system. For example, the AMP could state the minimum tree density to be maintained so the landholder does not have to wait for a threshold thickness before being able to thin; nor would a landholder be prevented from using an appropriate method to maintain the agreed management outcome.

The major benefit of a BAMP is that it is based on an agreed vegetation outcome between the State and the Landholder – the PMAV, and an agreed vegetation management process between the State and the Landholder – the AMP. Furthermore, if negotiations are conducted in good faith; are tailored to landholder specific needs; seek a sustainable balance of good environmental outcomes and production goals, a growing sense of trust between the landholder and State is able to develop.

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With trust comes confidence, long term planning, reduced administrative costs for Government, achieves better and more sustainable environmental outcomes, and better land management leading to more profitable outcomes for the landholder.

Costs
A PMAV costs $434.00
An AMP cost is dependent on property numbers, for 1-10 properties it is a $613.00 base fee, followed by $245.60 for each additional property, up to a maximum fee of $3070.00

Mapping and Imagery
If BAMP gains interest and traction from landholders there is likely to be high demands for information on the availability of photographic and satellite imagery. Moreover, with the need to redraw RE and Category mapping there could be an increase in demand for specialist assistance, such as from AgForce.

Outcome
The BAMP system has the capability for landholders to invest both their environmental credentials and their production orientated land management credentials in their land.

The BAMP system has the capacity for the Government to know the outcome of vegetation management activity in the State, bringing trust, confidence and administrative savings, while maintaining environmental integrity and moving agricultural production forward to the prosperity of all.

BAMP: The way forward for vegetation management in Queensland

- Landholders have long experienced that ecological health and effective primary production are co-dependent in a managed grazing system, with ecosystem services and biodiversity fundamental to sustainable tree-grass-native flora/fauna-stock densities.
- The vegetation management outcome for a landholder is defined, known, and documented and agreed to by the State and Landholder.
- The vegetation management activity to achieve the outcome is outlined, known and documented and agreed to by the State and the Landholder.
- PMAV and AMP negotiations conducted in good faith should cultivate a sense of trust (greatly lacking now due to Vegetation Management being a long-term political football) between State and Landholder. With trust comes confidence, long term planning certainty, reduced administrative costs for Government, better and more sustainable environmental outcomes, and better land management leading to more profitable outcomes for landholder.
- BAMP has been developed by Landholders (with skin in the game) to maintain or reinstate balance between ecological health and land productivity only to where it currently is, or was in the past, with commensurate tree distributions and densities.
- In different bio-regions or areas, the use of a template specific to vegetation mixes will improve consistency and simplicity, as well as greatly reducing the need for large DNRM costs with one-by-one applications and assessments.
- Local Queensland Government staff will add value to preparation of BAMP applications and in
assessment (e.g. Department of Agriculture and Forestry staff that have localised experience).

- Nothing is being invented or imagined in the BAMP process.
- Easy to monitor using EDS and audit against agreed parameters.
- Compared to current and proposed SACs for Thinning, Encroachment and Fodder Harvesting, only in the case of thinning is there a possibility of more trees being felled where there has been demonstrated thickening of trees over time.
- The BAMP approach is consistent with current Encroachment Clearing SAC
BAMP APPLICATION - Example

Vegetation management application form for an Area Management Plan

7. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Document 1:

Target tree and shrub species for encroachment and thickening control:

- Gidgee
- Needlewood
- Silver Cassier

Document 2:

Non-Target tree and shrub species during encroachment and thickening control:

- Whitewood
- Rosewood
- Leopardwood
- Boree
- Vine Tree
- Habitat trees

Document 3:

Methods of encroachment control:

- Two dozers and a chain
- Dozer and bar
- Dozer or loader and stick rake
- Root activated herbicide ground application
- Root activated herbicide aerial application
- Chainsaw, axe, stem injection

The encroachment control will cease when the baseline tree density is reached.

The encroachment control will cease where baseline tree dispositions are reached.

Where an area of dense timber, RE 4.9.16, is mapped within 500 M of an adjacent area of dense timber, then encroachment control will be adjusted to maintain connectivity between the two dense timber areas, even if it did not exist in the Base Line map.

Document 4:

Methods of thinning control:

- As above for encroachment but EXCLUDING root activated herbicide aerial application and use of two dozers and a chain.
Thinning will not exceed the Base Line densities and species distribution derived from the 1950s photography, ground truthed and nominated in Document 5.

**Document 5:**

Trigger thinning densities for Cat B remnant timber:

Method to establish density:

- 3 x 100M transect lines per hectare in representative timber for each mapped RE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Baseline Density</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xxx xxx</td>
<td>xx/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xxx xxx</td>
<td>xx/ha</td>
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</tbody>
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The stitched together images clearly show small clusters of vegetation, with large areas of open country.
The 2012 Satellite imagery shows extensive thickening and encroachment of vegetation across the same property.
Image 3. Current Regulated Vegetation Map

The dark blue areas indicate areas currently mapped as regulated vegetation under the Vegetation Management Act.
This image shows the current Regional Ecosystems (RE) mapped within the vegetation management supporting maps.
The Adjusted Vegetation Supporting Map is then used to develop a Baseline Area Management Plan Map, showing how each polygon intends to be managed.

For example, Image 6 contains large areas that intend to be managed for encroachment.