

**Talking Points –
Announcement of
2014-2015 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS),
Sunday 7 August, 11.30am
(Word count: ~~680~~710 words)**

Acknowledgements:

- Let me begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather, the Turrbal and the Yuggera peoples, and in doing so may I acknowledge all of our Elders, those that have passed and those that are still with us guiding us into the future.
- The Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS) is undertaken by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) as part of the Queensland Government's commitment to the monitoring of Queensland's woody vegetation change over time.
- Woody vegetation encompasses both woody remnant and woody regrowth vegetation, including native woodlands, timber plantations and exotic species.

- Using Landsat satellite imagery, the study detects changes in woody vegetation in Queensland to report annualised total woody vegetation clearing rates in hectares per year.
- Images captured approximately one year apart are compared, using a combination of automated and manual mapping techniques to produce a statewide map of land cover change.
- Expert visual interpretation is aided by supplementary information, including high resolution imagery and targeted field survey where required.
- The maps and statistics derived from SLATS support the Vegetation Management Act 1999, administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.
- SLATS has been running since the mid-1990s, and uses freely available imagery from the United States Geological Survey's Landsat satellite, which is jointly managed by NASA.

- The 2014-15 study found that 296,000 hectares of woody vegetation was cleared statewide in 2014-15, about the same as the 2013-14 period – 295,000 hectares.
- While much of this clearing was undertaken under permit or exemption, the overall clearing rate continues to be high and incidents of unexplained clearing are still occurring, so justifying the Palaszczuk Government's move to reinstate vegetation management controls in Queensland as part of its commitment to protect Queensland's rich biodiversity, decrease land degradation and sedimentation of the state's waterways, and safeguard the Great Barrier Reef.
- As a Government, it's incumbent on us to ensure good land management practices throughout the state and as such we are working with landholders, industry, rural communities, environmentalists and scientists on getting the balance just right between protecting our natural heritage and ensuring the state's agriculture and mining sectors continue to grow and prosper.
- The 2014-15 SLATS report found that 114,000 hectares per year of remnant vegetation was cleared statewide,

representing 38 per cent of the total woody vegetation clearing.

- This compares to a rate of 100,000 hectares per annum cleared in 2013-14, representing 35 per cent of the total woody vegetation clearing.
- 91 per cent of cleared woody vegetation was replaced by pasture with the remaining 9 per cent replaced by crop, forestry, mining, infrastructure and urban developmental.
- The Brigalow Belt and the Mulga Lands continued to record the highest tree clearing rates per annum of the state's 13 biogeographic regions, but there was also a significant increase in clearing rates in the Gulf Plains of Western Queensland and Mitchell Grass Downs of the north west of the state.
- What's interesting is that while the Brigalow Belt experienced about the same level of clearing as in 2013-14 – about 130,000 hectares per annum, clearing in the Mulga Lands decreased quite a bit: from 108,000 hectares in 2013-14 to 65,000 hectares in 2014-15.

- The Mitchell Grass Downs region went from a rate of 14,000 hectares per annum to 26,000 hectares while the Gulf Plains went from 4000 hectares a year in 2013-14 to 18,000 hectares in 2014-15.
- In the drainage divisions of the state, the Murray Darling and the North East Coast divisions continued to record the highest woody vegetation clearing rates in 2014-15.
- There was, however, a significant decrease in the clearing rates in the Murray Darling division between 2013-14 and 2014-15 – with 153,000 hectares per annum cleared in 2013-14 in comparison to 119,000 hectares in 2014-15.
- In the North East Coast, there was a slight increase: 111,000 hectares per annum in 2013-14 and 115,000 hectares in 2014-15.
- Clearing rates in the Great Barrier Reef catchment are similar: 105,000 hectares in 2013-14 in comparison to 108,000 in 2014-15.
- The full SLATS report of the Landcover change in Queensland 2014-15 will be available shortly on the Queensland Government's website, and SLATS data via

the Queensland Government's Spatial Catalogue:
QSpatial.

[ENDS]

DSIT RTI Release

**Talking Points –
Announcement of**

2014-2015 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS),

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- Woody vegetation encompasses both woody remnant and woody regrowth vegetation, including native woodlands, timber plantations and exotic species.

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- SLATS has been running since the mid-1990s, and uses freely available imagery from the United States Geological Survey's Landsat satellite, which is jointly managed by NASA.

- The 2014-15 study found that 296,000 hectares of woody vegetation was cleared statewide in 2014-15, about the same as the 2013-14 period – 295,000 hectares.

- This is a woody vegetation clearing rate that is nearly four times the 2009-2010 clearing rate of 78,378 hectares.

[Refer to Annual woody vegetation clearing rate in Queensland figure in the report]

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- While much of this clearing was undertaken under permit or exemption, the overall clearing rate continues to be high and incidents of unexplained clearing are still occurring, so justifying the Palaszczuk Government's move to reinstate vegetation management controls in Queensland as part of its commitment to protect Queensland's rich biodiversity, decrease land degradation and sedimentation of the state's waterways, and safeguard the Great Barrier Reef.
- As a Government, it's incumbent on us to ensure good land management practices throughout the state and as such we are working with landholders, industry, rural communities, environmentalists and scientists on getting the balance just right between protecting our natural

heritage and ensuring the state's agriculture and mining sectors continue to grow and prosper.

- The 2014-15 SLATS report found that 114,000 hectares per year of remnant vegetation was cleared statewide, representing 38 per cent of the total woody vegetation clearing.
- This compares to a remnant clearing rate of 100,000 hectares per annum cleared in 2013-14, when remnant clearing was representing 35 per cent of the total woody vegetation clearing.
- 91 per cent of cleared woody vegetation was replaced by pasture with the remaining 9 per cent replaced by crop, forestry, mining, infrastructure and urban developmental.
- The Brigalow Belt and the Mulga Lands continued to record the highest tree clearing rates per annum of the state's 13 biogeographic regions, but there was also a significant increase in clearing rates in the Gulf Plains of northern Western Queensland and Mitchell Grass Downs in of the north-west of the state.

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[ENDS]

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

DATE: Sunday 7 August

EVENT /FUNCTION: Announce findings of 2014-15 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS)

PURPOSE OF MEDIA: To promote announcement

ARRIVAL TIME: 11:30AM

DEPARTURE TIME: 12:30PM

ADDRESS/LOCATION: Ecosciences Precinct, 41 Boggo Road, Dutton Park, Brisbane QLD 4102

MEDIA CONTACT FOR EVENT: Dr MARK JACOBS, Acting Assistant Director General, DSITI (Mobile

Mr GORDON GUYMER, Director, Queensland Herbarium, DSITI (Mobile
Mr KEN BROOK, Director, Land Surface Sciences, DSITI (Mobile
Mr ANTHONY BROWN, Senior Communications Officer, DSITI (Mobile

MET BY ON ARRIVAL: Dr MARK JACOBS, Acting Assistant Director General, DSITI (Mobile

PARKING: Parking is available at the front of the building; in the cul de sac outside the Boggo Road Gaol, accessed via the driveway on Boggo Road.

DRESS: Business

MINISTER'S OFFICE ATTENDEES: NAME; COS (Mobile #)
NAME; Policy (Mobile #)
NAME; Media Advisor (Mobile #)

MP ATTENDEES: N/A

GUEST LIST: N/A

SPEECH/TALKING POINTS: YES: 5 minute speech at approximately 12 noon
TOPIC: 2014-15 SLATS overview
Please refer to attached speech

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: N/A

MC: N/A

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

OTHER SPEAKERS: To be advised

SEATING: N/A

ORDER OF EVENTS:

Please refer to attached run sheet

MEDIA IN ATTENDANCE: Minister's Office to organise

NOTES FOR MEDIA ALERT: Parking is available in the streets around the Precinct

VISUAL CONTENT:

OTHER NOTES:

INFORMATION ATTACHED:

1. Run sheet
2. Media Release
3. Talking Points
4. Q&As

NEXT APPOINTMENT: 00:00AM XXXX



Media release

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy
Minister for Small Business
Hon Leeanne Enoch MP

Queensland Govt audit finds tree clearing rates still too high

The Queensland Government today released its annual stocktake of the state's forests and woodlands, saying the clearing rates are still too high.

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy Leeanne Enoch said the Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS) found that 296,000 hectares of woody vegetation was cleared statewide in 2014-15, about the same as the 2013-14 period.

Ms Enoch said that while much of this clearing was undertaken under permit or exemption, the overall clearing rate was still too high and incidents of unexplained clearing were still occurring, justifying the Palaszczuk Government's moves to reinstate vegetation management controls in Queensland.

"As a Government, it's incumbent on us to ensure good land management practices throughout the state and as such we are working with landholders, industry, rural communities, environmentalists and scientists on getting the balance just right between protecting our natural heritage and ensuring the state's agriculture and mining sectors continue to grow and prosper," Ms Enoch said.

The 2014-15 SLATS report found that 91 per cent of cleared woody vegetation was replaced by pasture with the remaining 9 per cent replaced by crop, forestry, mining, infrastructure and settlements.

SLATS is undertaken by the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation as part of the Queensland Government's commitment to the monitoring of woody vegetation change over time.

"Using Landsat satellite imagery, the study detects change in woody vegetation in Queensland to report annualised total woody vegetation clearing rates in hectares per year," Ms Enoch said.

Images captured approximately one year apart are compared, using a combination of automated and manual mapping techniques to produce a statewide map of land cover change. Expert visual interpretation is aided by supplementary information including high resolution imagery and targeted field survey where required.

Ms Enoch said the maps and statistics derived from SLATS supported the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Woody vegetation encompasses both woody remnant and woody regrowth vegetation, including native woodlands, timber plantations and exotic species.

SLATS has been running since the mid-1990s, and uses freely available imagery from United States Geological Survey's Landsat satellite, which is jointly managed by NASA.

The Executive Summary of 'Land cover change in Queensland 2014-15' is available here -.....



Media release

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy
Minister for Small Business
Hon Leanne Enoch MP

And the full report at xxxxx

[ENDS] DD MMM.YYYY

Media contact: ADD NAME 04X XXX XXX

Approved		
Title	Name	Date