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A RESPONSIBLE NEW APPROACH TO LANDCLEARING

Environment Minister Karl Hampton today officially welcomed new land clearing guidelines set to protect all Northern Territory bushland for decades to come.

“The land clearing guidelines which came into effect on Friday are the next step towards our new native vegetation legislation and reflect a fundamental shift in land clearing policy in the Territory.” said the Minister.

“Our extensive native bushland is one of the Territory’s great natural assets, providing a home to our wildlife, clean water and storing huge amounts of carbon.”

Landclearing impacts our emission profile in two significant ways:

· we lose valuable carbon ‘sinks’ that absorb and store carbon emissions; and

· the burning of cleared bushland releases huge amounts of carbon into the atmosphere.

“This Government is committed to the Territory being a low land clearing jurisdiction – we need to contain land clearing if we want to keep our emissions in check.” said Minister Hampton.

Key changes between from the 2006 Guidelines include:

· A heavy onus on landowners to prove that their proposed land clearing applications are sustainable.

· Specific regulations for the Daly River region such as the 1km buffer zone;
· Requirements to ensure greenhouse gas emissions from landclearing are properly estimated;

· All applications above 200ha will be referred to the minister to determine whether additional investigations are warranted through an Environmental Impact Statement.

The guidelines also take an “adaptive management” approach developed by the Daly River Management Advisory Committee that ensures small carefully monitored steps can be taken to use our natural resources, with the results fed back to improve decision making.

“Land clearing is a development and just like any other development, applicants must be prepared to make some investment and do their homework to ensure the sustainability of their practices” said Mr Hampton

“This doesn’t mean no land clearing – but it needs to occur according to the best planning and scientific advice.” said Minister Hampton.

The revised guidelines are critical management tools for the period following the expiry of the Daly moratorium as the Government moves towards implementation of new native vegetations legislation that will set specific caps on the rate of clearing.


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