

Veg laws made simple at AgForce workshops

Government vegetation management laws were 'de-mystified' for landholders in Childers, Mundubbera and Kingaroy last week at a series of free AgForce Projects workshops.

The workshops helped more than 60 local producers understand the Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VMA) and apply for a Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) to guarantee long term security over the management of vegetation on their property.

AgForce Projects principal project officer Alina Butler said all landholders are encouraged to work with AgForce Projects to lock in a PMAV to secure the best long-term management strategy for their property.

"A PMAV gives producers greater control over the activities they can and can't do on their property by securing cleared land or disputing incorrectly mapped areas."

All attendees were given copies of their most up-to-date Regional Ecosystem (RE) and Regrowth Maps and taken through the options available for managing native vegetation.

"Anyone who wants to be managing vegetation on their property needs to have access to these maps and understand what classifications are over their property," she said.

"If landholders disagree with the classification of vegetation and can provide evidence that the land was cleared after 31 December 1989, they can work with us to appeal the assessment through a detailed PMAV.

For landholders who are happy with the classifications, a 'lock it in' PMAV is still important to ensure future map changes don't affect your vegetation management."

Mundubbera producers Jesse and Valmae Dolding found the workshop particularly helpful in disputing vegetation marked as 'remnant' on their map, which was in fact cleared under a broad scale clearing permit issued in 2004.

"It is good for landholders like us to know that even though our maps are incorrect, a detailed PMAV can change this and guarantee the land remains as Category X," Mrs Dolding said.

"We now know how to contest the classifications over our property and how to lock in a detailed PMAV."

Mrs Butler said for landholders like Mr and Mrs Dolding, the incorrect classification will affect the way they manage their property and it is definitely worth disputing.

"Landholders can use either satellite imagery, receipts from contractors, photos or even diary entries to prove when clearing took place, and possibly overturn a classification. The more information you have about what has happened on your property the easier it will be to lock in a detailed PMAV," she said.

The workshops also outlined various exemptions under the VMA for activities like weed control and explained why GPS technology is a critical part of property planning.

"Property mapping and GPS technologies are both powerful tools to help landholders manage vegetation. To dispute vegetation classifications, landholders need to map out the areas on their property and provide GPS coordinates to assist in the application and for ground truthing."

Further vegetation management workshops will be held in Rolleston, Moura and Taroom from 20-22 September. For details about other upcoming free AgForce Projects workshops please visit <http://www.agforward.org.au/>

Workshops are delivered free to all producers through AgForward, an initiative of AgForce within its project division, funded by the Queensland Government.

To attend a workshop or express your interest in holding a workshop in your area, please contact Paddy Roe on (07) 3238 6048 or [email](mailto:paddy.roe@agforce.org.au) or visit www.agforward.org.au/calendar.htm and download a registration form. Registrations are required 10 days before the event.

For comment call Sue Dillon on (07) 3236 3100 or 0417 760 481

Media contact: AgForce Projects Communication Officer Madeline Cooper (07) 3238 6060 or 0488 002 091.