



© BRIANO / WWF-AUS



PERVASIVE INACTION ON NATIONAL CONSERVATION LAW OVER TREE-CLEARING IN QUEENSLAND, 2013-16

December 2017

In *Pervasive inaction on national conservation law over tree-clearing in Queensland*¹ (August 2017 release), we reported 742,858ha on 7,917 properties in Queensland with actual or *intended* clearing of threatened species habitats, threatened ecological communities or in Reef Catchments, but for which there was no evidence of referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (“EPBC Act”).

In this update, we improve on this analysis:

- We extend the period covered from 2013-15 to 2013-16 by including clearing data recently released by the Queensland Government for the period 2015-16;
- We only include areas that have been cleared, excluding yet-to-be-detected approved or notified clearing, which will be the subject of a later update;
- We tighten the potentially significant impact criteria.²

Results

A total of 298,707 ha of remnant or advanced regrowth bushland was cleared with potentially significant impacts on threatened species, ecological communities and the Great Barrier Reef on 7,220 properties in the three years from 2013 to 2016 following major weakening of the state tree-clearing controls, but for which no evidence of referral or approval under the EPBC Act was found on the public register.³ Although pasture for livestock accounts for over 90% of tree clearing in Queensland, there has not been a single referral for approval of pastoral tree clearing in the past ten years.

The EPBC Act matters potentially significantly impacted without evidence of referral or approval include:

- 12,211 ha cleared within 50m of a Great Barrier Reef watercourse or wetland, and
- 70,648ha cleared of nine listed endangered or critically endangered ecological communities (TECs), with the largest losses being for endangered brigalow (41,596ha), and
- habitats for 115 threatened species (15 mammals, 16 birds, 5 frogs, 8 reptiles and 71 plants).

Areas proposed for clearing under Queensland’s *Vegetation Management Act*, but not yet reported as cleared have been separated out and will be the subject of a later brief.

A map of properties, downloads of shapefiles and description of methods are found at

<https://sites.google.com/view/pervasiveinaction>

¹ <http://www.wwf.org.au/ArticleDocuments/360/pub-briefing-pervasive-inaction-on-national-conservation-law-over-tree-clearing-14jul17.pdf.aspx>

² 1ha or more of a mapped known-to-occur habitat OR 2ha or more of a mapped likely-to-occur habitat of a threatened species cleared OR 1ha or more of a threatened ecological community cleared OR 1ha or more cleared within 50m of a Great Barrier Reef catchments watercourse or wetland AND Including only clearing of remnant and advanced regrowth woody vegetation (25 years old or more, 11% FPC or more, not under intensive or cropping land use).

³ <http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/referralslist/>