1. On 7 April 2009, the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade announced his intention to introduce a three month moratorium on the clearing of all native vegetation within 50 metres of a watercourse in priority reef catchments and endangered regrowth vegetation in rural areas across the State. This delivers on commitments to protect endangered regrowth vegetation and landscapes that badly need trees to perform their ecological function and address tree clearing impacting on the Great Barrier Reef.
2. The Moratorium commenced at the beginning of 8 April 2009 and will be in place for a period of three months, although it may be extended by Ministerial Gazette Notice for another three months. During the moratorium the Government will consult with peak stakeholder groups on improving the vegetation management laws in regard to regrowth clearing.
3. Most activities that are currently exempt under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* will apply to the regrowth vegetation protected by the moratorium. These include: the use of fire to reduce fire hazard; clearing of fire management lines and fire breaks; clearing to protect life and property in a fire situation; clearing for mining and transport infrastructure; clearing for a forest practice; and clearing under existing permits. Another exemption will be clearing in ‘Category X’ areas on a Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) certified by the Department of Environment and Resource Management. This preserves the rights of landholders under PMAVs as committed in the 2004 amendments to the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*.
4. The Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill 2009responds to two election commitments of the Government. It protects riparian vegetation in priority reef catchments as part of a suite of measures, including references to tree clearing, to protect the Great Barrier Reef and it protects endangered regrowth vegetation which continues to be cleared in rural areas across the State. Current science indicates that retention of vegetation either side of a watercourse on riparian areas can assist with improving bank stability and reducing pollutants within a water system. Endangered vegetation has been the most affected by past broadscale clearing practices and is most in need of efforts that encourage recovery.
5. Cabinet approved the introduction of the Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill 2009 into the Legislative Assembly.
6. *Attachments*
* [Vegetation Management (Regrowth Clearing Moratorium) Bill 2009](Attachments/Veg%20Management%20Regrowth%20Bill.pdf)
* [Explanatory Notes](Attachments/Veg%20Managment%20Ex%20Notes.pdf)