

# RUN SHEET

<b>EVENT NAME:</b>	Launch of 2014-15 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study	<b>DATE:</b>	Sunday 7 August
<b>VENUE:</b>	Ecosciences Precinct, 41 Boggo Road, Dutton Park, Brisbane QLD 4102		

<b>TIME:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>
11.25am	Acting Premier arrives at front entrance to Ecosciences Precinct and is greeted by Mark Jacobs and Gordon Guymer
11.26am	Acting Premier is escorted to lifts and takes lift to Level 2.  Mr David Lee, Advisor, Office of the Premier, will inform media that there is an opportunity to do overlay on Level 2 and that announcement will be made on Ground Floor in Seminar Room.
11.28am	Acting Premier is escorted to Remote Sensing Centre on Level 2.  Mr Dan Tindall, Principal Scientist, Remote Sensing Centre, will show Acting Premier Poster on SLATS Process, explaining the science behind the project.  Two work stations will be set up: one with rolling satellite images and one showing processes involved in putting SLATS together. Mr Dave Harris, Principal Scientist, SLATS, DSITI will be on hand to explain the science involved behind SLATS to the Acting Premier.  Opportunity for media to do overlay and photographs.
11.36am	Mr David Lee, Advisor, Office of the Premier, will inform media that announcement will take place on ground floor.  Mr Anthony Brown, Senior Communications Officer, DSITI will escort media to venue for media call.
11.36am	Dr Mark Jacobs will present the Acting Premier with a gift – canvas print of satellite imagery of Queensland.
11.38am	Acting Premier is escorted to lifts on Level 2. Takes lift to ground floor.
11.38am	Media call to take place in Giraween Seminar Room on ground floor.  Backdrop: on slide – satellite imagery  PLEASE NOTE: The room will contain a lectern supplied by the Office of Premier and Cabinet and a row of six chairs on the eastern side for media.
11.40am	Media call begins.  PLEASE NOTE: Acting Premier takes up position at lectern. Dr Gordon Guymer and Mr Dan Tindall stand behind Acting Premier.
11.40am	<b>TO CAMERA.</b>  Acting Premier launches 2014-15 SLATS report.

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<b>VENUE:</b>	Ecosciences Precinct, 41 Boggo Road, Dutton Park, Brisbane QLD 4102		

<b>11.45am</b>	<b>Questions from media</b>  PLEASE NOTE: Dr Gordon Guymer and Mr Dan Tindall from DSITI are on hand to answer any technical questions that may be asked.
<b>11.48am</b>	Acting Premier is escorted her cars.
<b>12 noon</b>	<b>Media call ends</b>

DSITI RTI Release



## Media release

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

### **Audit finds Queensland 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 a rate of 296,000 hectares per annum 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.

"As a Government, it is 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 urban development.

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 the United States Geological Survey's Landsat satellite, which is jointly managed by NASA.

**The full SLATS report of the Landcover change in Queensland 2014-15 will be available soon from the Queensland Government's website, and SLATS data from the Queensland Spatial Catalogue: QSpatial.**



## Media release

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

**[ENDS] DD MMM YYYY**

**Media contact: ADD NAME 04X XXX XXX**

DSIA RTI Release

## Launch of 2014-15 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study

### Q&As

**Q: What does SLATS actually measure**

SLATS maps woody vegetation clearing across the state.

**Q: How does SLATS map woody vegetation clearing?**

SLATS scientists use Landsat satellite imagery approximately 1 year apart to detect and map changes in woody vegetation due to clearing.

**Q: What is in the 2014-15 SLATS report?**

The 2014-15 SLATS Report provides details about how much clearing there has been in the state, and where the clearing has occurred for the 2014-15 period. The report also provides a comparison of the 2014-15 clearing rate with clearing from previous years. Further details on the methodology used by the SLATS scientists are also provided in the report.

**Q: Is the SLATS Report and data publicly available?**

Yes, the SLATS report will be available on the Queensland Government website. The SLATS mapping will also be available through the Queensland Spatial Catalogue, QSpatial. We are also providing regional summary data through the Queensland Government Open Data Portal.

**Q. What is SLATS used for?**

For Government, it is extremely important in terms of providing us with the key information we need to make sound policy decisions based on objective science. The information also has implications for other government applications, including regional ecosystem mapping updates, protection and management of the Great Barrier Reef, State of environment reporting and biodiversity conservation and planning.

**Q. Can you use SLATS to legitimately compare woody vegetation change across Queensland from year to year?**

Yes. The SLATS data provides an accurate method of identifying areas of tree and shrub loss for each year. It is valid to compare the amount cleared in one period to another period.

**Q. How accurate are the tree clearing rates shown in the SLATS report?**

SLATS land clearing mapping involves a rigorous process of automated land cover change detection integrated with visual checking of satellite imagery.

Changes mapped by the automated detection processes are checked and edited by experienced remote sensing scientists. As such, there is a high level of confidence in the clearing rates contained in the SLATS Report.

**Q. What about the early detection of emerging woody growth and low cover wooded vegetation – does SLATS pick up those? And if not, are the figures therefore skewed**



**and landholders have a point when they say you can't talk about increasing vegetation loss across Queensland based on the SLATS data?**

A. SLATS maps the loss of woody vegetation. Provided the cover of the regrowth is sufficient to meet the operating definition of woody vegetation, it will be mapped if it is cleared. The manual checking and editing performed by remote sensing scientists ensures that we have a high degree of certainty about the SLATS clearing data. Questions about the ability of scientists to map regrowth and areas with low vegetation cover relate to an entirely different product developed through a different set of largely automated methods.

**Q. What's your response to this argument put by landholders that an additional 430,000 hectares of "woody growth" emerged between 2012 and 2014, according to your own SLATS data?**

In reporting the clearing figures, SLATS also provides estimates of tree density and extent to provide context for where the clearing is occurring and the range of vegetation densities of that are being cleared. These estimates of tree density and extent are produced through a separate and largely automated process. Accurately mapping the natural fluctuation in woody extent each year is technically difficult. For example, approximately half of the state is characterised by low woody vegetation cover and automated detection of woody vegetation in these areas is at the limits of Landsat's detection capability. Changes in seasonal conditions can lead to large differences in the estimates of woody vegetation extent. Comparing the woody extent product between years is not a reliable way to get an estimate of net change in woody vegetation. This also means it is not a valid way to estimate an increase or decrease in the number of trees.

**Q. So are you saying that SLATS gives an accurate summary of the amount of woody vegetation removed each year, but not the amount that is gained through regrowth, encroachment and thickening? Are you doing anything to address this?**

Yes, we have accurate information on losses, but not accurate information on gains.. The government's scientists are looking at new technologies that complement Landsat's satellite imagery, including the European Space Agency's recently launched Sentinel 2 satellite to improve our mapping capabilities.

**Q. 91% of cleared vegetation was replaced by pasture – what does that mean? Is this of concern?**

The report gives an indication of the purposes for which woody vegetation was cleared. The possible replacement land cover types are determined in the visual interpretation stages of the SLATS process. For example, woody vegetation that has been cleared for pasture supports grazing. Other possible reasons for clearing are for cropping, horticultural purposes, mining or for imminent urban development.

**Q. 29% of clearing detections had been previously detected as cleared one or more times since 1988 – what does that mean exactly?**

A. This means that since SLATS reporting has begun, the areas of clearing identified in the 2014-15 period, have previously been detected as cleared one or more times since 1988.

# MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

THE HON. LEEANNE ENOCH MP  
Minister for Innovation, Science and the  
Digital Economy and  
Minister for Small Business

**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:** noon

**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 11.30am  
**TOPIC: 2014-15 SLATS overview**  
*Please refer to attached speech*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** N/A

**MC:** N/A

# MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

THE HON. LEEANNE ENOCH MP  
Minister for Innovation, Science and the  
Digital Economy and  
Minister for Small Business

**OTHER SPEAKERS:** No

**SEATING:** N/A

**ORDER OF EVENTS:** *Please refer to attached run sheet*

**MEDIA IN ATTENDANCE:** Deputy Premier'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



**Talking Points –  
Announcement of  
2014-2015 Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS),  
Sunday 7 August, 11.30am  
(Word count: 670 words)**

**Acknowledgements:**

- Let me begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather 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.
- This justifies 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 is 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 in 2013-14, when remnant clearing was representing 35 per cent of 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 Queensland and Mitchell Grass Downs in the west of the state.
- 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 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]