



Clearance of Common Reeds (*Phragmites australis*) & Bulrushes (*Typha domingensis*)

Native Vegetation Council Guideline under Regulation 8(16) of the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2017* |
1 July 2017

BACKGROUND

Common Reeds (*Phragmites Australis*) and Bulrushes (*Typha domingensis*) are often major components of freshwater wetlands in South Australia. They provide important habitat for birds and other native fauna, are important contributors to erosion control and can assist in pollution abatement programs.

In many areas, however, the distribution of these plants has increased due to sedimentation in watercourses and hydrological changes associated with weirs, barrages and other structures. There is now an increasing incidence of reeds and rushes colonising areas such as boat launching areas and designated pumping sites at locations such as along the River Murray. Encroachment of these native species into artificial drainage channels can also create problems.

The clearance of Common Reeds and Bulrushes can occur in accordance with the *Native Vegetation Regulations 2017*, regulation 8(16) provided that it complies with this guideline.



Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)



Bulrush (*Typha domingensis*)

NATIVE VEGETATION COUNCIL GUIDELINE

1. Subject to any other Act or Regulation, *Phragmites Australis* and *Typha domingensis* may be cleared where the clearance is of regrowth or colonising growth at:
 - existing boat ramps, pumping sites or other existing lawfully established sites where access to open water is essential for the functioning of those sites;
 - artificial channels lawfully established for water diversion or flood mitigation purposes where the clearance is necessary to maintain the design function of the channel; and
 - constructed farm dams where reed or rush species have become established over time.
2. **Notification** must be sent to nvc@sa.gov.au with application and property information, a description of the area, location and the proposed amount to be cleared - including a map and photographs.
3. In all cases the clearance of regrowth or colonising growth must be kept to the minimum needed for the designated operation of the site, and must not go beyond the boundaries of the area initially cleared at the site. Any proposed clearance in excess of 100 square metres must be referred to the Native Vegetation Branch and is not to proceed under this guideline unless endorsed by the Native Vegetation Council (NVC).
4. The method of clearance must be chosen so as to have minimum impact on the site and on adjoining native vegetation.
5. Any clearance of these species outside of the sites as designated above, or any clearance of other species associated with *Phragmites australis* or *Typha domingensis*, must be discussed with the Native Vegetation Branch and is likely to require the consent of the Native Vegetation Council by means of a clearance application.

Drought Circumstances

Reduced access to water during drought years places natural ecosystems, and the plants and animals they support, under greater stress and the risk of damage if they are not protected and carefully managed. At these times, clearance of native vegetation and associated habitats needs to be kept to an absolute minimum in order to maximise the potential for regeneration when higher rainfall and periods of greater water flow return.

Notwithstanding that principle, the Native Vegetation Council recognises that some clearance of reed and rush species may be necessary to allow for the continuation of existing lawful commercial activities. The following guideline applies during drought circumstances:

In periods of drought, where clearance beyond 100 square metres may be necessary to provide continued access to existing structures or water pumping facilities, clearance is permitted subject to:

- continued compliance with Points 3 and 4 above, **and**
- all other necessary approvals being obtained, **and**
- that any clearance undertaken to facilitate ongoing use of facilities during this abnormal period is permitted to regenerate when normal river flows and lake levels are re-established.

For more information

Native Vegetation Branch
Department of Environment,
Water and Natural Resources

T (08) 8303 9777

E nvc@sa.gov.au

www.environment.sa.gov.au/nativevegetation