

Vegetation Removal at Dolphin Sands

Frequently Asked Questions

February 2026

Why has Council contacted landowners about planning permits?

Following the recent fires, Council received enquiries about vegetation removal and earthworks occurring in the Dolphin Sands area. Some of these works require planning approval under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, particularly where coastal dunes and native vegetation are affected.

Does Council understand that clean-up needs to happen quickly after a fire?

Yes. Council recognises the importance of timely clean-up and recovery works to make properties safe and accessible. The Tasmanian Planning Scheme includes exemptions to allow certain works to occur without a planning permit.

Are any works exempt from requiring a planning permit?

Yes. Table 4.4 of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme provides exemptions for vegetation removal for safety or in accordance with other Acts. Whether an exemption applies depends on the type, scale and purpose of the works. The Vegetation Exemptions are provided overleaf.

What types of post-fire works are commonly exempt?

Depending on the circumstances, exemptions may apply to works such as:

- Removal of fire-damaged or hazardous vegetation for safety reasons;
- Clean-up of debris directly associated with the fire; and
- Minor works needed to reinstate existing lawful use or access

These exemptions generally apply where works are reasonable, minor and limited to clean-up or safety purposes.

What works are unlikely to be exempt?

A planning permit is more likely to be required for works such as:

- Large-scale vegetation clearance beyond immediate safety needs;
 - Earthworks that reshape or flatten sand dunes not associated with a Bushfire Hazard
 - Management Plan; and
- Works that permanently alter natural landforms or coastal systems

Why are dunes and vegetation regulated at Dolphin Sands?

Many properties at Dolphin Sands are affected by the Natural Assets Code and Priority Vegetation Overlay. These controls exist to protect coastal processes, manage erosion risk and support long-term environmental resilience, including recovery after fire.

What should I do if I'm unsure whether my works are exempt?

If you are uncertain, Council strongly encourages you to contact the Planning Team before starting works. Staff can quickly advise whether:

- A planning permit is required; or
- The proposed works are likely to be exempt under the Scheme.

What if works have already occurred?

If works have already been undertaken and you are unsure whether approval was required, please contact Council as soon as possible. Early contact allows Council to discuss the matter with you and determine the most appropriate next steps.

How can I get advice?

Council's Planning Team can be contacted on (03) 6256 4777 or by email at planning@freycinet.tas.gov.au.

Important note

This FAQ is provided as general guidance only. Each property and proposal is assessed on its own circumstances, and the category of work cannot be confirmed without consideration of the specific details of the works.

Table 4.4 Vegetation Exemption

	Use or Development	Requirements
4.4.1	vegetation removal for safety or in accordance with other Acts	<p>If for:</p> <p>(a) harvesting of timber, clearing of trees, clearance and conversion of a threatened native vegetation community, or the disturbance of a vegetation community in accordance with a forest practices plan certified under the Forest Practices Act 1985, unless for the construction of a building or the carrying out of any development associated with the construction of a building;</p> <p>(b) harvesting of timber or the clearing of trees, or the clearance and conversion of a threatened native vegetation community, on any land to enable the construction and maintenance of electricity infrastructure in accordance with the Forest Practices Regulations 2017;</p> <p>(c) fire hazard management in accordance with a bushfire hazard management plan approved as part of a use or development;</p> <p>(d) fire hazard reduction required in accordance with the Fire Service Act 1979 or an abatement notice issued under the Local Government Act 1993;</p> <p>(e) fire hazard management works necessary to protect existing assets and ensure public safety in accordance with a plan for fire hazard management endorsed by the Tasmania Fire Service, Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, the Parks and Wildlife Service, or council;</p> <p>(f) clearance within 2m of lawfully constructed buildings or infrastructure including roads, tracks, footpaths, cycle paths, drains, sewers, power lines, pipelines and telecommunications facilities, for maintenance, repair and protection;</p> <p>(g) safety reasons where the work is required for the removal of dead wood, or treatment of disease, or required to remove an unacceptable risk to public or private safety, or where the vegetation is causing or threatening to cause damage to a substantial structure or building; or</p> <p>(h) within 1.5m of a lot boundary for the purpose of erecting or maintaining a boundary fence, or within 3m of a lot boundary in the Rural Zone and Agriculture Zone.</p>
4.4.2	landscaping and	Landscaping and vegetation management within a private garden, public garden or park, or within State-reserved land or a council reserve, if:

	vegetation management	<p>(a) the vegetation is not protected by legislation, a permit condition, an agreement made under section 71 of the Act, or a covenant; or</p> <p>(b) the vegetation is not specifically listed and described as part of a Local Heritage Place or a significant tree in the relevant Local Provisions Schedule,</p> <p>unless the management is incidental to the general maintenance.</p>
4.4.3	vegetation rehabilitation works	<p>The planting, clearing or modification of vegetation for:</p> <p>(a) soil conservation or rehabilitation works including Landcare activities and the like, provided that ground cover is maintained and erosion is managed;</p> <p>(b) the removal or destruction of declared weeds or environmental weeds listed under a strategy or management plan approved by a council;</p> <p>(c) water quality protection or stream bank stabilisation works approved by the relevant State authority or a council;</p> <p>(d) the implementation of a vegetation management agreement or a natural resource, catchment, coastal, reserve or property management plan or the like, provided the agreement or plan has been endorsed or approved by the relevant State authority or a council; or</p> <p>(e) the implementation of a mining and rehabilitation plan approved under the terms of a permit, an Environment Protection Notice, or rehabilitation works approved under the Mineral Resources Development Act 1995.</p>