Brush Cutter			
Business Name:		ABN:	
Business Address:			
Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:	

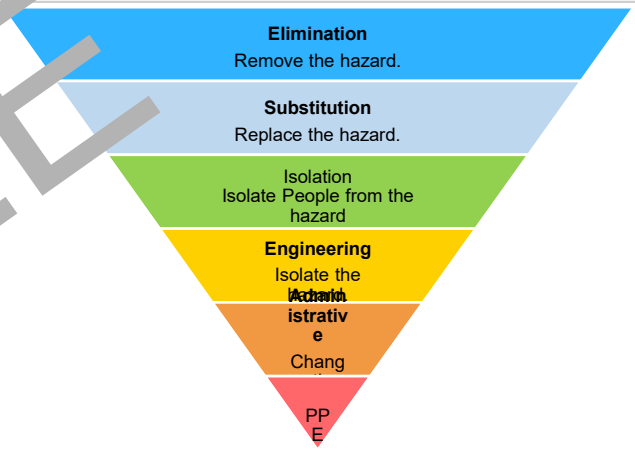
THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU OF THE PROJECT		
Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (WHS Regulation), a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) is required to ensure that a RISK ASSESSMENT is prepared before the proposed work starts.		
Full Name:		
Signature:	Title:	Date:

CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS	SCOPE OF WORKS
Client:	
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Project Manager:	
Contact Phone:	
Date Risk Assessment supplied to Project Manager:	

RISK MATRIX

LIKELIHOOD	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC	SCORE	ACTION
ALMOST CERTAIN	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE		
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED
POSSIBLE	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	3H HIGH	Rev before work
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACU	2M MO RATE	Ensure control measures in place.
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 H	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS



Risk Rating & Required Action:

4A	Stop work. The risk is intolerable. E inate the hazar redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or hi er-level authorisati is required.
3H	Review and approve additional c rols b ask arts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
2M	Ensure all nominated controls are in ace and effe ive. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.
1L	Proceed, following standard operating procedures Monitor and keep records.

Consequence Scale:

Consequence	People (injury/illness)	Project / Assets	Compliance / Reputation
Catastrophic	Fatality or permanent total disability	project shutdown	Significant regulator intervention; criminal prosecution
Major	Serious injury/illness (hospital > 5 days)	critical delay	Improvement notice; major media coverage
Moderate	Medical-treatment injury; lost-time > 1 day	moderate delay	Minor breach; adverse client comment
Minor	First-aid only, no lost time	negligible delay	Isolated non-conformance
Insignificant	No injury	no schedule impact	Deviation caught and corrected on site

Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:
Remember to apply controls in the preferred order shown by the coloured pyramid:

1. **Eliminate**
2. Substitute
3. Isolate
4. Engineering
5. Administrative
6. PPE

Always document **why** a lower-order control is accepted if elimination or substitution is not reasonably practicable.

aligned with Safe Work Australia's Managing the risk of fatigue at work *(2023) and ISO 45001:2018 clauses 6–8.*

JOB STEP	POTENTIAL HAZARDS	IR	CONTROL MEASURES	RR
SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
1. Procurement, Design and Suitability of Brush Cutters and Slashers	• Selection of brush cutters or slashers that are not fit for purpose for the vegetation type, terrain or duration of use, increasing likelihood of mechanical failure and operator exposure to vibration, kickback and flying debris • Procurement of equipment without mandatory safety features (e.g. compliant guards, dead-man throttle, anti-vibration mounts, harness lugs, chain/steel guards on slasher heads) leading to higher risk of serious injury • Lack of documented specification and approval process for purchasing powered plant, resulting in inconsistent safety standards across sites • Failure to ensure new equipment complies with relevant Australian Standards, manufacturer instructions and WHS Regulation requirements for plant • Inadequate consideration of noise levels, emissions and vibration exposure when specifying equipment, leading to difficulty complying with exposure standards • Acquisition of incompatible accessories, blades, heads, harnesses or guards that increase the risk of mechanical failure or ejected parts	High	• Develop and implement a formal plant procurement procedure that requires WHS review and sign-off for all new brush cutters and slashers, aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation (plant provisions) • Specify minimum safety and compliance requirements as purchase criteria, including Australian Standards where applicable, mandatory guarding, throttle lock-off, dead-man control, anti-vibration systems and noise/vibration performance • Require suppliers to provide written verification of compliance with relevant legislation, Australian Standards and manufacturer guidelines, including provision of safety data, manuals and service schedules for each model • Establish a pre-purchase risk assessment template for powered vegetation equipment that considers terrain, vegetation type, frequency of use, environmental conditions, noise, vibration and manual handling impacts • Standardise plant models and approved attachments across the organisation to simplify training, spare parts, maintenance and risk control verification • Include contractual requirements for suppliers to provide initial training or familiarisation, manufacturer-approved accessories and appropriate personal protective equipment recommendations • Record all purchased plant in a central plant register, including serial numbers, safety features, intended use, and any limitations or restrictions identified in the risk assessment	Medium
2. Governance, WHS Duties and Roles for Brush Cutter and Slasher Operations	• Unclear allocation of WHS responsibilities between officers, PCBUs, managers, supervisors and workers in relation to brush cutter and slasher use, maintenance and supervision • Lack of documented plant safety policy or procedure specific to powered vegetation equipment, leading to inconsistent practices across sites • Inadequate consultation with workers and health and safety representatives	High	• Establish a written plant safety policy covering brush cutters and slashers that aligns with WHS Act 2011 and sets clear expectations for management, supervision and workers • Define and document WHS duties and delegations for plant management (officers, line managers, supervisors, maintenance personnel and operators), including responsibilities for training, inspections, maintenance and incident follow-up • Integrate brush cutter and slasher risks into the organisation's WHS management system, including risk registers, audit tools, consultation forums and management review processes • Implement a structured consultation process with workers and health and safety representatives when developing or reviewing plant-related procedures and risk assessments • Ensure officers receive periodic briefings or training on plant-related WHS duties and key risk indicators for powered vegetation equipment, enabling informed due diligence	Medium

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
	about brush cutter and slasher hazards and controls • Poor integration of brush cutter and slasher risks into the organisation's broader WHS management system, limiting oversight and continuous improvement • Failure of officers to exercise due diligence in verifying that adequate resources, systems and monitoring are in place for plant safety • Contractor management arrangements that do not clearly define WHS expectations and responsibilities for plant, training, supervision and incident reporting		• Develop contractor management procedures that explicitly address plant safety expectations, verification of competency, provision of equipment, and reporting of incidents and near misses involving brush cutters and slashers	
3. Training, Competency and Authorisation Systems	• Inadequate formal training on brush cutter and slasher hazards, control measures and safe systems of work, leading to unsafe practices becoming normalised • Absence of a structured competency assessment process before workers are allowed to operate equ… independently • Failure to recogn… the incr… isk for young, new or i… ced workers, or those with limited English literacy, when dealing with powered plant • No system for refresher training or re-assessment following incidents, equipment changes or introduction of new attachments • Reliance on informal "buddy" training without clear learning outcomes, competency criteria or records • Insufficient training for supervisors to effectively monitor and correct unsafe behaviours related to brush cutters and slashers	High	• …velop and implement a formal brush cutter and slasher training program that covers hazard identification, risk controls, organisational procedures, environmental considerations and emergency response requirements • Implement a competency-based assessment process for all operators, using standardised checklists and documented criteria, with successful participants issued written authorisation to operate specific plant types • Maintain a central training and competency register for all workers and contractors who operate brush cutters or slashers, including expiry or review dates and the scope of their authorisation • Introduce refresher training at defined intervals and after any incident, near miss, major equipment upgrade or procedure change, focusing on identified gaps and recurring issues • Tailor training materials to suit diverse literacy and language needs, using visual aids, demonstrations and plain-English procedure summaries where appropriate • Provide supervisors with targeted training on their responsibilities for overseeing plant operations, conducting field verification of controls and intervening when unsafe practices are observed	Medium

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
4. Planning, Job Design and Environmental Risk Management	• Lack of a formal pre-job planning process for brush cutting and slashing activities, leading to work occurring in unsuitable weather, terrain or traffic conditions • Inadequate assessment of environmental hazards such as slopes, hidden obstacles, loose debris, stones, wire, rubbish, traffic interfaces and public access areas • Work scheduling that results in excessive duration of continuous use, causing fatigue, musculoskeletal strain and over-exposure to vibration and noise • Insufficient controls for remote or isolated work when brush cutters or slashers are used on rural properties, road verges or reserves • Failure to plan for separation distances and exclusion zones between operato and other workers, vehicles or membe of the public • Inadequate planning f action wit other plant (e.g. mo rs, tractors, vehicles) working i the same area	High	[redacted]	Medium
5. Plant Registration, Inspection and Preventive Maintenance Systems	• Absence of a comprehensive plant register capturing all brush cutters, slashers and attachments, resulti n missed inspections and i tent maintenance • No formal preventive maintenance schedule, causing increased likelihood of mechanical failure, fuel leaks, damaged guards, faulty throttles or broken harness points • Inconsistent or informal pre-use inspection practices, leading to operation of equipment with known defects • Lack of documented criteria for tagging out or removing defective equipment	High	[redacted]	Medium

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
	from service and authorising its return to use • Insufficient record-keeping for services, repairs, part replacements and modifications, making it difficult to identify recurring safety issues or trends • Use of unauthorised modifications or aftermarket parts that compromise the structural integrity, guarding or safety features of brush cutters and slashers		[redacted]	
6. Personal Protective Equipment and Health Monitoring Systems	• Systemic over-reliance on PPE without higher-order controls being applied, leading to persistent high residual risk • Inconsistent issue, selection or enforcement of PPE for brush cutter and slasher tasks (e.g. eye and face protection, hearing protection, gloves, cut-resistant leg wear, high-visibility clothing) • No process for fit, comfort and suitability assessment of PPE, resulting in poor compliance or incorrect use • Failure to monitor potential health impacts associated with prolonged noise, vibration, exhaust emissions and manual handling demands • Inadequate arrangements for replacement, cleaning and storage of PPE, causing degradation of equipment performance • Absence of organisational guidance for managing workers with pre-existing medical conditions that may be aggravated by vibration, noise or physical demands of brush cutting and slashing	[redacted]	[redacted]	Medium
7. Site Access, Public Interface and Traffic Management Systems	• No formal system to manage interaction between brush cutter or slasher operations and vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians, particularly along roadsides, car parks or shared paths • Inadequate controls to prevent members of the public entering the work	High	[redacted]	Medium

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
	area and being struck by debris or coming into contact with equipment • Poor signage, barricading or delineation of work zones, resulting in confusion for other workers and road users • Insufficient planning for vehicle access, parking and reversing around brush cutting or slashing activities • Lack of coordination with clients, local councils or road authorities regarding timing and controls for verge or roadside works • Inconsistent supervision or monitoring of work zones, especially when teams are split or working along extended road corridors		[redacted]	
8. Documentation, Procedures and Information Management	• Incomplete or outdated written procedures for brush cutter and slasher use, maintenance, storage and emergency response • Lack of alignment between documented procedures and work practices and manufacturer instructions, creating confusion and unsafe shortcuts • Poor accessibility of procedures, manuals and risk assessments for workers in the field, especially when work is remote or mobile • Failure to integrate brush cutter and slasher risk controls into broader organisational documents such as inductions, site rules and contractor requirements • Insufficient version control and review of documentation after incidents, changes in legislation or introduction of new equipment • Workers relying on verbal instructions and informal practices instead of current written guidance	Medium	[redacted]	Low
9. Incident Reporting, Investigation and	• Under-reporting of near misses, minor injuries and equipment failures involving	Medium		Low

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
Continuous Improvement	brush cutters and slashers, leading to missed opportunities for prevention • Inconsistent or low-quality incident investigations that do not identify root causes or systemic issues such as training gaps, maintenance failures or planning deficiencies • Lack of trend analysis for plant-related incidents across sites, resulting in repeated similar events • Poor communication of incident learnings, corrective actions and procedural changes to workers and contractors • Failure to verify implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions arising from plant-related incidents • No clear triggers for escalating significant incidents or patterns of risk to senior management or officers		[redacted]	
10. Emergency Preparedness and Response Systems	• Absence of clear organisational procedures for responding to injuries, fires, fuel spills or equip[illegible]ilures associated with brus[illegible]utters and slashers • Inadequate first a[illegible]ov[illegible]s or supplies at locations where brush cu[illegible]g or slashing is undertaken, particular[illegible]n remote or dispersed worksites • Lack of communication equipment or protocols for summoning assistance when working alone or in small crews • Workers unaware of local emergency access routes, property numbers, GPS references or meeting points for emergency services attendance • No system for testing and reviewing emergency plans specific to outdoor vegetation management tasks • Inconsistent training of workers and supervisors in responding to serious incidents, including amputations, eye	Medium	[redacted]	Low

JOB STEP	POTENTIAL HAZARDS	IR	CONTROL MEASURES	RR
SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
	injuries, hearing damage or contact with live services			

EMERGENCY RESPONSE – CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ensure to have an Emergency Management Plan in place as well as adequate numbers of trained first aid staff with easy access to fully stocked first aid kits, rescue equipment, material safety data sheets, adequate access to emergency communication equipment and fire-fighting equipment suitable for all classes of fire and ignition sources.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES OF PRACTICE. DELETE THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES FOR ANY STATE THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE

Queensland & Australian Capital Territory
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
Legislation QLD: https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws
Codes of Practice QLD: https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice
Legislation ACT: https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations
Codes of Practice ACT: https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice

New South Wales
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2025
Legislation NSW: https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation
Codes of Practice NSW: https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-of-codes-of-practice

Northern Territory
Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011
Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011
Legislation NT: https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws
Codes of Practice NT: https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/forms-and-resources/codes-of-practice

South Australia
Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)
Legislation for SA: https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/legislation
Codes of Practice for SA: https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/codes-of-practice#COPs

Tasmania
Work Health and Safety Act 2012
Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012
Work Health and Safety (Transitional) Regulations 2012
Legislation for TAS: https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations
Codes of Practice for TAS: https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice

Details of permits, licenses or access required by regulatory bodies (add or delete as required):

- Permits from local council
- Authorisation to commence work
- Any required documents.

Victoria
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
Legislation VIC: https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations
Codes of Practice VIC: https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/compliance-codes-and-codes-practice

Western Australia
Work Health and Safety Act 2020
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022
Legislation Western Australia: https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/legislation
Codes of Practice WA: https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/codes-practice

Safe Work Australia Links
Law and Regulation (All States): https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation
Model Codes of Practice: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-publications/model-codes-of-practice

Model Codes of Practice

- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Confined spaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Welding processes
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Demolition work
- Excavation work
- Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- How to manage work health and safety risks
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace
- Construction work