

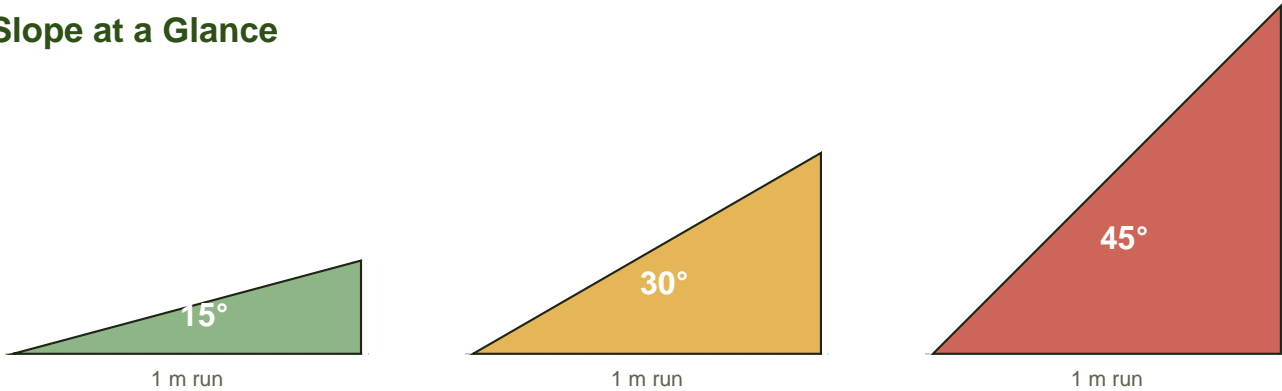
# Slope Mowing Guide

What works on 15°+, 30°+, and beyond — for Northern Rivers acreage

## Why It Matters

Most acreage in the Northern Rivers has slope. Steep blocks are where mowing goes wrong: rollover risk on ride-ons, contractors refusing to quote, autonomous units stuck or stranded, and dangerous DIY attempts. Picking the right approach for your slope category isn't optional — it's the difference between a routine job and a hospital trip.

## Slope at a Glance



Three reference angles drawn over a 1 m horizontal run. Steeper = exponentially more dangerous, not linearly.

## How to Measure Your Slope

- **Phone clinometer app** — most are free; sight along the slope line and read the angle.
- **Rise/run rule** — measure 1 metre horizontal, then how much the ground rises in that distance. 0.27 m rise ≈ 15°, 0.58 m rise ≈ 30°, 1 m rise ≈ 45°.

**Borderline measurement?** Plan for the steeper category. Mowers don't ask permission before tipping.

## Slope Categories

Slope	Feel	Equipment that works	Notes
0–10° (gentle)	Walkable in any direction without effort	Any ride-on, push mower, standard autonomous	The default acreage scenario
10–15° (moderate)	Noticeable when walking up; comfortable down	Most rated ride-ons, autonomous with slope-rated wheels	Many consumer ride-ons hit their limit at 15°
15–25° (steep)	Walking up gets work; descending feels slippery	Purpose-built slope ride-ons, tracked autonomous, remote-control mowers	Standard ride-ons no longer safe — rollover risk rises sharply
25–35° (very steep)	Hands-on-knees territory going up	Tracked or winched autonomous, remote-control slashers, brushcutter	Operator-on-board is the most dangerous setup
35–45° (severe)	Need to lean into the slope to stand	Specialised remote/tracked equipment only, or manual brushcutter	Treat as professional-only. No DIY ride-on

45°+ (1:1)	Climbing, not walking	Ropes, manual brushcutter, vegetation strategy change	Often the right answer is “let it be” — choose groundcover that doesn't need mowing
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## Safety Rules That Don't Bend

- **Mow across, not up-down**, on any slope — gives you control if you slip.
- **Never reverse-down** a slope on a ride-on. Most rollovers happen in reverse.
- **Wet slope = no slope**. A 20° wet slope behaves like a 30° dry one.
- **ROPS and seatbelt** — non-negotiable on any ride-on near steep ground.
- **Walk the slope first** — every time. Hidden holes and edges turn into accidents.
- **One way out** — if a slope only has one exit route, you're stuck if anything fails.

## What Autonomous Buys You on Slope

- **No operator on board** — rollover risk doesn't translate to injury.
- **Lower centre of gravity** than a ride-on for equivalent footprint.
- **Programmable boundaries** — can be told to stop short of the steepest sections.
- **Slow-and-steady cutting** — better finish on uneven ground than a fast ride-on pass.

Trade-off: setup investment is higher, and not every model handles steep terrain. Slope rating varies across manufacturers — check the spec, then check it again on your actual ground.

## What Not to Attempt

- Ride-on at 25°+ unless explicitly slope-rated by the manufacturer (most aren't).
- Brush-cutting alone on a 30°+ slope without anchored footing.
- Pushing a walk-behind mower up a wet steep face — the most common acreage injury.
- Hiring a contractor who won't walk the slope first — they'll refuse on the day or do something dangerous.

### What's the right setup for your slope?

Every steep block is different — average slope, worst sections, vegetation density, access from the top vs the bottom, what's at the bottom if something rolls. This guide is a starting point. For a property-specific assessment of your slopes and what equipment is realistic, get in touch with a local operator who's mowed Northern Rivers terrain.

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