



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 121/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: MPI Nickel Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Leases M53/949, L53/139, M53/55, M53/35, and M53/100
Colloquial name: Wedgetail Underground Nickel Mine

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
22.5		Mechanical Removal	Mining

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Beard Vegetation Association 18- Low woodland; mulga (Acacia aneura)	Predominantly Acacia aneura open low woodland A/B over +/- Eucalyptus kingsmillii open tree mallee over Eremophila forrestii/E foliosissima open low scribe C over Eragrostis eriopoda low grass on sandy loam plains (SKM 2004).	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery 1994)	Vegetation and flora surveys were carried out in both dry and wet seasons and recorded a total of 273 species. One of the surveys identified a Priority 1 species (Gnephosis arachnoidea), which has subsequently been removed from the Priority schedule. Vegetation units were mapped and described and were found to be regionally common with no significant conservation values. 16 vegetation communities were identified for the mining lease (TRIM IN17653, SKM (2004)).

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

(a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**

The proposal is not at variance with this principle as flora surveys have not identified areas of outstanding or high biodiversity for the areas proposed to be cleared.

Methodology Onshore Environmental Consultants (April 2004)

(b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**

Native vegetation that will be impacted by mine infrastructure does not support significant habitat for fauna. Locally significant habitats have been identified by Ninnox Wildlife Consulting (1994) and these are located outside the project area and will not be impacted.

Methodology Ninnox Wildlife Consulting (1994)

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, significant flora.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**

No rare flora has been recorded within or near to the project area.

Methodology GIS database: Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 13/08/03.
Onshore Environmental Consultants (April 2004).

(d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a significant ecological community.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

No threatened ecological communities have been recorded within or near to the project area.

Methodology GIS databases:

- Threatened Ecological Community Database - CALM 15/07/03.
- Threatened Plant Communities - DEP 06/95.
- Onshore Environmental (April 2004), Minenco (1995).

(e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Comments Proposal is not at variance to this Principle

The Wedgetail project area is not located within the extensive agricultural land use zone. The project area occurs on the Lake Way pastoral station, south of Wiluna and has only been impacted by grazing (as opposed to broad scale clearing).

	Pre-European area (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Remaining %*	Conservation status**	% in reserves/CALM-managed land
IBRA Bioregion- Murchison	28,206,195	28,206,195	100		
Beard veg type- 18	24,675,970	24,659,110	99.9	Least concern	4.8
Beard veg type- 107	3,348,249	3,348,249	100	Least concern	3.1
Beard veg type- 204	234,593	232,975	99.3	Least concern	5.6

* Shepherd et al. (2001)

** Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)

Methodology Shepherd et al. (2001).

GIS database: Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01.
Sinclair Knight Merz (2004).

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The project area is bordered by Camel Creek on the west and Lake Way to the east. Vegetation associated with Camel Creek will not be impacted. A diversion ditch and berm will be erected between the creekline and the project area to provide flood protection for the box cut. Lake Way is located approximately 5km to the east. An outfall pipeline to the Lake will be established to discharge dewatering water. The discharge point will be located at a suitable distance from the Lake shoreline to avoid potential impacts on shoreline vegetation.

Methodology Reports: Golder Associates (1993, 2004a, 2004b), Onshore Environmental Consultants (April 2004, May 2004), Osborne (2004)

(g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

A surface water assessment, including conceptual design was undertaken for the project area by Golder Associates (2004). The conceptual design has incorporated surface water controls to minimise erosion and land degradation.

Methodology Golder Associates (2004a and b)

(h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.

Comments Proposal is not at variance to this Principle

No conservation areas exist adjacent or near to the project area.

Methodology GIS database - CALM Managed Lands and Water - CALM 01/08/04.

(i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

A surface water assessment, including conceptual design was undertaken for the project area by Golder Associates (2004). Conceptual design has incorporated surface water controls to minimise erosion and land degradation.

Methodology Golder Associates (2004a and b)

(j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence of flooding.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

Clearing will be minimised to the smallest area possible and only for the purposes of establishing mine infrastructure. The project area is located near to Camel Creek and diversion ditches and berms are proposed to direct flood waters around the project area. The project area is not located in the headwaters of the Honeymoon Well subcatchment, but is located at the base of the catchment. Therefore, clearing is not anticipated to cause or exacerbate the intensity of flooding.

Methodology SKM (2004)

(k) Planning instrument or other matter.

Comments Proposal is not at variance to this Principle

The proposal is not at variance with any planning instrument or other matter as other approvals needed are being sought or have been obtained.

Methodology SKM (2004)

4. Assessor's recommendations

The recommendations of the Department of Environment to the CEO of the Department should be made consistent with the outcomes of the assessment by each of the agencies. Any conditions on the approval should also be outlined. These may be developed in consultation with such other agencies as required.

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Mining	Mechanical Removal	22.5	Grant	Recommend that the permit be granted.

5. References

- Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002) Biodiversity Action Planning. Action planning for native biodiversity at multiple scales; catchment bioregional, landscape, local. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria.
- Golder Associates (1993) Report on hydrogeological investigations Wedgetail deposit. Honeymoon Well Prospect via Wiluna, Western Australia. Unpublished report prepared for CRA Limited. Department of Environment record number TRIM IN17653.
- Golder Associates (June 2004a) Report on conceptual design of surface water management measures around Wedgetail mine. Unpublished report prepared for MPI Mines. Department of Environment record number TRIM IN17653.
- Golder Associates (June 2004b) Report on Honeymoon Well mine water discharge. Initial assessment of impacts on Lake Way. Unpublished report prepared for MPI Mines. Department of Environment record number TRIM IN17653.
- Keighery, BJ (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia./
- Minenco (1995) Honeymoon Well Nickel Project. Draft Notice of Intent. Unpublished report prepared for CRA Limited and Outokumu Exploration Australia Pty Ltd Joint Venture.
- Ninox Wildlife Consulting (1994). Survey Report. A fauna assessment of the Honeymoon Well project area. April and September 1993 surveys. Unpublished report prepared for Minenco Pty Ltd. Department of Environment record number TRIM IN17653.
- Onshore Environmental Consultants (April 2004) Honeymoon Well Nickel Project. Flora and Vegetation Survey Wedgetail Deposit. M53/336, M53/100, M53/55, M52/35, M53/36, MLA53/458, MLA53/949. Unpublished report for MPI Mines. Department of Environment record number: TRIM IN17653.
- Onshore Environmental Consultants (May 2004) Honeymoon Well Nickel Project. Literature Review: Ephemeral Salt Lake Systems and Mine Water Discharge. Unpublished report for MPI Mines. Department of Environment record number: TRIM IN17653.
- Osborne JM (2004) Preliminary Macro-biota Investigation Lake Way April – June 2004. Unpublished report by Curtin University of Technology for MPI Mines. Department of Environment record number: TRIM IN17653.
- Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.
- Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) (2004) Application for a Clearing Permit. Wedgetail Underground Nickel Mine. Unpublished report produced for MPI Mines. Perth Western Australia. Department of Environment record number TRIM IN17653