



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 305/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: ASHBURTON LOCATION 54 (Lot No. 54 PANNAWONICA PANNAWONICA 6716)
Local Government Area: Shire Of Ashburton
Colloquial name: Pannawonica Airstrip (extension)

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
40		Mechanical Removal	Building or Structure

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
Beards Vegetation Association #173 - Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; kanji over soft spinifex and T. wiseana on basalt (Hopkins et al., 2001).	Much of the area proposed for clearing has been previously disturbed. Two Priority 3 flora species were identified in the area to be cleared, <i>Abutilon trudgenii</i> and <i>Sida</i> sp. Wittenoom, yet both species have been recorded numerous times throughout the Pilbara, particularly on disturbed ground (Pilbara Iron, 2004).	Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery 1994)	No Declared Rare Flora were located within the survey area (Pilbara Iron, 2004). Two alien species, <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> and <i>Aerva javanica</i> , were discovered within the survey area, which are commonly found on disturbed areas within the Pilbara region (Pilbara Iron, 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 likely to be at variance to this Principle The vegetation of the site comprises lower storey native species with some weed species present, such as <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> , <i>Aerva javanica</i> , <i>Malvastrum americanum</i> and <i>Ocimum minimum</i> (Basil) (Pilbara Iron, 2004). The area to be cleared is heavily disturbed from previous mining activities and the existing golf course (Pilbara Iron, 2004). There are no Environmentally Sensitive Areas present within or in close proximity to the application area, therefore it is unlikely to represent an area of outstanding biological diversity.
Methodology	Pilbara Iron, 2004; GIS Database: - Environmentally Sensitive Areas - DOE 22/10/04

(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 likely to be at variance to this Principle As the areas to be cleared have been previously disturbed, it is unlikely that the vegetation represents significant habitat for fauna (Pilbara Iron, 2004). The type of vegetation in the application area is regionally abundant, so it is unlikely the fauna will be impacted upon by any major disturbance or loss of habitat (Pilbara Iron, 2004).
Methodology	Pilbara Iron (2004)

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

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

A survey of the area proposed to be cleared was undertaken by Pilbara Iron (2004). No Declared Rare Flora were located. Two Priority 3 species were recorded in the area to be cleared, *Abutilon trudgenii* and *Sida* sp. Wittenoom, yet both species have been recorded numerous times throughout the Pilbara, particularly on disturbed ground (Pilbara Iron, 2004).

Methodology Pilbara Iron (2004);
GIS Database: Declared Rare and Priority Flora Lists - CALM 13/08/03

(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 at variance to this Principle

There are no known occurrences of Threatened Ecological Communities within the area proposed for clearing.

Methodology GIS Database: Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 15/7/03

(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 vegetation to be cleared is Beards Vegetation Association #173 (Hopkins et al., 2001) of which there is ~100% of the pre-European extent still remaining (Shepherd et al., 2001).

Methodology Hopkins et al. (2001);
Shepherd et al. (2001);
GIS Database: Pre-European Extent - DA 01/01

(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 at variance to this Principle

The vegetation to be cleared is contained within the Fortescue River and Robe River catchment areas, but is not associated with any major watercourses or wetlands.

Methodology GIS Databases:
-Hydrography, linear - DOE 1/2/04
-ANCA Wetlands - CALM 08/01
-Hydrographic Catchments - Catchments - DOE 3/4/03

(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

The likely land degradation risks posed by the clearing of vegetation are minimal as the areas are already heavily degraded. Erosion will be confined and minimised within the area of the borrow pit and the airstrip will be maintained to eliminate erosion (Pilbara Iron, 2004).

Methodology Pilbara Iron, 2004

(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

There are no conservation areas adjacent to the areas proposed to be cleared.

Methodology GIS Database: CALM Managed Lands and Waters - 1/06/04

(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

The primary area to be cleared is drained by a minor, non-perennial creek. It is unlikely that the clearing will have a significant impact on the water quality within this creek or will result in changes to the groundwater table.

Methodology GIS Database: Hydrography, linear - DOE 1/2/04

(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

The average annual rainfall of the area is ~400mm, which falls predominantly over the December to March period. It is unlikely that the removal of 40ha of vegetation will have a significant influence on the run-off and flood regimes in the local area.

Methodology GIS Database: Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01

Planning instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

Neither the Shire of Ashburton or the Pilbara Native Title Service provided comments on the proposed clearing application.

Methodology

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Building or Structure	Mechanical Removal	40	Grant	Assessable criteria have been addressed and no objections were raised. The Assessing Officer therefore recommends that the permit should be granted.

5. References

- Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.
- Keighery, BJ (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Pilbara Iron (2004) Botanical Survey Advice No. 2004/47 Environmental Department Document No. 103683
- Pilbara Iron (2004) Botanical Survey Advice No. 2004/65 Environmental Department Document No. 103790
- 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.