



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 3117/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Hamersley Resources Limited

1.3. Property details

Property: Temporary Reserve 70/4192 pursuant to *Iron Ore (Rhodes Ridge) Agreement Authorisation Act 1972*.

Local Government Area: Shire of East Pilbara

Colloquial name: Rhodes Ridge Camp expansion project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
21.53		Mechanical Removal	Camp expansion and associated works

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 19 September 2013

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description

Vegetation within the application area has been mapped at a 1:250,000 scale as Beard Vegetation Associations:

- 18: Low woodland; mulga (*Acacia aneura*); and
- 29: Sparse low woodland; mulga, discontinuous in scattered groups.

GHD undertook a vegetation survey of the original application area (CPS 3117/1) in April 2008. The following six vegetation units were identified within the permit area (GHD, 2008):

1. Mosaic of spinifex with Acacias and spinifex with Eucalyptus;
2. Mixed woodlands or shrublands: Acacia shrubland and occasional Eucalyptus over mixed grassland (post-burn);
3. Mixed woodlands or shrublands: Degraded sandplain - Acacia shrubland over mixed grassland (post-burn);
4. Acacia aneura woodlands or shrublands;
5. Heavily disturbed; and
6. Minor flowlines.

A vegetation survey conducted by Mattiske during 2010 included the area covered by the amendment application (CPS 3117/2). The following two vegetation associations were mapped within the amendment application area (Rio Tinto, 2013):

RR-S1: Hummock grassland of *Triodia epactia* with pockets of *Triodia basedowii* and *Triodia pungens* with emergent *Corymbia hamersleyana*, *Eucalyptus gamophylla*, *Eucalyptus leucophloia* over *Acacia aneura* var. *aneura*, *Acacia pruinocarpa*, *Acacia rhodophloia*, *Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, *Psyrax latifolia* and *Grevillea berryana* over *Acacia adoxa* var. *adoxo*, *Acacia arida*, *Acacia tenuissima*, *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Acacia bivenosa*, *Acacia distans*, *Acacia hilliana*, *Eremophila latrobei* and *Eremophila forrestii* subsp. *forrestii* over range of annual species on gravelly soils on lower slopes (Rio Tinto, 2013); and

SA-M5: Low Woodland of *Acacia aneura* var. *aneura* to a Tall Shrubland of *Acacia pyrifolia*, *Acacia bivenosa*, *Acacia ancistrocarpa* and *Acacia maitlandii* with occasional emergent *Eucalyptus xerothermica*, *Corymbia aspera*, *Psyrax latifolia* and *Acacia citrinoviridis* over *Gompholobium polyzygum*, *Rulingia luteiflora*, *Themeda triandra*, *Triodia epactia* and *Triodia pungens* on sandy soils on flats on edges of major creeklines. This vegetation type represents the majority of the amendment application area (Rio Tinto, 2013).

Clearing Description

Rhodes Ridge Camp Expansion Project.

Hamersley Resources Limited proposes to clear up to 21.53 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 40 hectares, for the purpose of a camp expansion. The project is located approximately 45 kilometres northwest of Newman, in the Shire of East Pilbara.

Vegetation Condition

Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery, 1994);
to
Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994).

Comment

The vegetation condition rating is based on information reported by GHD (2008) and Rio Tinto (2013). The application area has a number of weeds present, and there are areas disturbed by existing roads and infrastructure (GHD, 2008). The project includes lay down areas, changes to intersections, modification of the refuelling area, a water bore, and access roads (GHD, 2008; Rio Tinto, 2013). Clearing will be by mechanical means.

Clearing permit CPS 3117/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) on 11 June 2009, authorising the clearing of 20 hectares of native vegetation within a permit boundary of approximately 34.3 hectares. An application to amend this permit was received by DMP on 8 July 2013. The amendment application requested an extension of the duration of the permit by five years, an increase of 1.53 hectares in the amount of clearing authorised, and an increase of approximately 5.7 hectares in the size of the permit area.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

Hamersley Resources Limited has applied to amend clearing permit CPS 3117/1 to increase the amount of clearing authorised by 1.53 hectares to 21.53 hectares, increase the size of the permit area by approximately 5.7 hectares to approximately 40 hectares, and extend the duration of the permit by five years (to 2019).

The proposed amendment will add a new area to the permit, located immediately to the southeast of the existing permit area. The new area is for additional works related to the existing Rhodes Ridge exploration camp, for the installation of a new water supply bore and associated access road (Rio Tinto, 2013).

The vegetation types found within the amendment application area are the same as those found within the original permit area (GIS Database). Flora and fauna surveys conducted in recent years in adjacent areas demonstrate that the vegetation associations and fauna habitat types found within the amendment application area are well represented in the surrounding areas (Rio Tinto, 2013). No flora, fauna or fauna habitats of conservation significance have been found within the amendment application area (Rio Tinto, 2013).

The proposed amendment has been assessed against the clearing principles. The proposed clearing of an additional 1.53 hectares of native vegetation is unlikely to have any significant additional environmental impacts.

Methodology Rio Tinto (2013)
GIS Database:
- Pre-European Vegetation

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

Comments

There is one native title claim over the area under application (GIS Database). This claim (WC05/6) has been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant group (GIS Database). However, the tenure has been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore, the granting of a clearing permit is not a future act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There are no registered Sites of Aboriginal Significance within the application area (GIS Database). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Sites of Aboriginal Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Environment Regulation (formerly the Department of Environment and Conservation) and the Department of Water, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

The clearing permit amendment application was advertised on 29 July 2013 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum, inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received.

Methodology GIS Database:
- Aboriginal Sites of Significance
- Native Title Claims - Determined by the Federal Court
- Native Title Claims - Filed at the Federal Court
- Native Title Claims - Registered with the NNTT

4. References

- GHD (2008) Report for Expansion of Rhodes Ridge Camp Area. Unpublished report for Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd, Western Australia.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Rio Tinto (2013) Statement Addressing the 10 Clearing Principles. Constructing Water Supply for the Rhodes Ridge Camp. Rio Tinto Iron Ore. Perth, Western Australia.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (now DEC), Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage (federal based in Canberra) previously Environment Australia
DEP	Department of Environment Protection (now DEC), Western Australia
DIA	Department of Indigenous Affairs
DLI	Department of Land Information, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DoE	Department of Environment (now DEC), Western Australia
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources (now DMP), Western Australia
DOLA	Department of Land Administration, Western Australia
DoW	Department of Water
EP Act	Environmental Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Federal Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
RIWI Act	Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914, Western Australia
s.17	Section 17 of the Environment Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{Atkins, K (2005). *Declared rare and priority flora list for Western Australia, 22 February 2005*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia} :-

- P1** **Priority One - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations which are under threat, either due to small population size, or being on lands under immediate threat, e.g. road verges, urban areas, farmland, active mineral leases, etc., or the plants are under threat, e.g. from disease, grazing by feral animals, etc. May include taxa with threatened populations on protected lands. Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
- P2** **Priority Two - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
- P3** **Priority Three - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from several populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in need of further survey.
- P4** **Priority Four – Rare taxa:** taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed and which, whilst being rare (in Australia), are not currently threatened by any identifiable factors. These taxa require monitoring every 5–10 years.
- R** **Declared Rare Flora – Extant taxa (= Threatened Flora = Endangered + Vulnerable):** taxa which have been adequately searched for, and are deemed to be in the wild either rare, in danger of extinction, or otherwise in need of special protection, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.
- X** **Declared Rare Flora - Presumed Extinct taxa:** taxa which have not been collected, or otherwise verified, over the past 50 years despite thorough searching, or of which all known wild populations have been destroyed more recently, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.

{Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2005} [Wildlife Conservation Act 1950] :-

- Schedule 1** **Schedule 1 – Fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct:** being fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 2** **Schedule 2 – Fauna that is presumed to be extinct:** being fauna that is presumed to be extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 3** **Schedule 3 – Birds protected under an international agreement:** being birds that are subject to an agreement between the governments of Australia and Japan relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 4** **Schedule 4 – Other specially protected fauna:** being fauna that is declared to be fauna that is in need of special protection, otherwise than for the reasons mentioned in Schedules 1, 2 or 3.

{CALM (2005). *Priority Codes for Fauna*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia} :-

- P1** **Priority One: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on threatened lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, active mineral leases. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P2** **Priority Two: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, vacant Crown land, water reserves, etc. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P3** **Priority Three: Taxa with several, poorly known populations, some on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from several localities, some of which are on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P4** **Priority Four: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and which are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These taxa are usually represented on conservation lands.
- P5** **Priority Five: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are not considered threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.

Categories of threatened species (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

- EX** **Extinct:** A native species for which there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died.
- EX(W)** **Extinct in the wild:** A native species which:
(a) is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; or
(b) has not been recorded in its known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite exhaustive surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form.
- CR** **Critically Endangered:** A native species which is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- EN** **Endangered:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered; and
(b) is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- VU** **Vulnerable:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered or endangered; and
(b) is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- CD** **Conservation Dependent:** A native species which is the focus of a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered within a period of 5 years.