Department of Environment
Government of Western Australia

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 343/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd**

1.3. Property details

Property: AML70/4
Local Government Area: Shire Of Ashburton
Colloquial name: Western Limb Proposed Waste Dump

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
9.85		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
Vegetation Association 82 - Hummock grasslands, low tree steppe; snappy gum over Triodia wiseana.	No Declared Rare Flora were located on site, however several priority species and two species of conservation significance were recorded. Of these, two of the priority species and the species of conservation significance all occur in the same small gorge.	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery 1994)	Botanical survey undertaken by 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**
A survey of the area to be cleared recorded four Priority Flora species and two species of conservation significance. Two of the priority flora and the conservation significance species occur on the same small gorge. Due to the density of flora of significant conservation value in this gorge, further mining activity has been excluded from this gorge area.

Methodology Pilbara Iron (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 likely to be at variance to this Principle**
From the information provided, it is unlikely that the overall area provides significant habitat for fauna. However, a small gorge has been identified as containing several flora species of conservation significance and is likely to be of value to fauna as well. This area has been protected from any vegetation clearing.

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**
Four species of Priority Flora were identified within the area to be cleared (Triumfetta leptacantha (Priority 4), Cynanchum sp. Hamersley (Priority 3), Indigofera ixocarpa (Priority 2), and Eremophila magnifica (Priority 4)). Two (T. leptacantha and C. sp. Hamersley) occur within a small gorge with two other species of conservation significance (Geijera salicifolia and Pandorea pandorana). This gorge will be protected from mining activities.

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 likely to be at variance to this Principle**
There are no known Threatened Ecological Communities within the area to be cleared.

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 Beard Vegetation Association 82 (Hopkins, et al., 2001) of which there is ~100% of the pre-European extent 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 likely to be at variance to this Principle**
The vegetation to be cleared is not associated with any major watercourse or wetland. Minor, non-perennial drainage lines cut through the area proposed for clearing.

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

(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 extent of vegetation to be cleared (9.85ha), its location in the landscape, and the areas management as part of a mining operation means that land degradation is unlikely to result from the vegetation removal from the site.

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 within close proximity to the area being 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 vegetation to be cleared is located within a valley, drained by a minor, non-perennial waterway. It is not within a Public Drinking Water Source. It is unlikely that the clearing will have an impact on surface water quality. It is also unlikely that the area of clearing will have a significant impact on groundwater within the local area.

Methodology GIS Databases: Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSAs) - 29/11/04, 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**
Flooding of the area occurs primarily in response to seasonal rainfall events. It is unlikely that the clearing of 9.85ha of vegetation will lead to increase in flood height or duration.

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

Planning instrument or other matter.

Comments

The area to be cleared is within mining lease AML70/4.

Methodology GIS Database: Mining Tenements - DOIR 1/09/03

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Mining	Mechanical Removal	9.85	**Grant**	Recommend approval without conditions.

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. 2004/60

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.