



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 450/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Agincourt Resources Limited

1.3. Property details

Property: M53/123
M53/53
M53/997
Local Government Area: Shire Of Wiluna
Colloquial name: Wiluna Operations Haul Roads to Williamson Project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
21		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 561 (majority of vegetation under application): succulent steppe with low woodland; mulga over saltbush.	Vegetation associated with mining area is mulga low woodland/shrubland dominated by Acacia species particularly A. aneura. Other vegetation associations present	Very Good: Vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery 1994)	Description of vegetation to be cleared provided by supporting documentation with application (IN19998).
Beard vegetation complex 560: Mosaic: shrublands; bowgada scrub/succulent steppe; samphire	include Eremophila/Shenna shrublands. Early mining operations have degraded flora in Wiluna area. (Supporting documentation with application TRIM ref. No IN19998)		
Beard vegetation complex 18: low woodland; mulga (Acacia aneura). (Hopkins et al. 2001, Shepherd et al. 2001)			

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 in the area proposed to be cleared is typical of salt lakes in the area and the shores of salt lakes. Historically it has been grazed as it is part of a pastoral lease reducing the condition of the vegetation. (Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd 2002)

The majority of the vegetation under application consists of Beard vegetation association 561 which is estimated at ~100% of its pre-European extent of 5,544ha. Thus, given the small area applied to clear and its degraded condition, it is not likely that the clearing as proposed is at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Hopkins et al. (2001)
Shepherd et al. (2001)
Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd (2002)

(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**

The fauna of the Lake Way area was surveyed by CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research as part of the 'Lake Way

Uranium Project - Draft Environmental Impact Statement' 1981. In this report the indigenous fauna population is described as depressed in comparison with their diversity and numbers elsewhere, probably due to overstocking of the pastoral leases. It was also stated that the introduced species of feral cats and foxes were considered to be in sufficient numbers to affect the numbers and prospects of smaller indigenous animals. (Agincourt Resources Ltd 2005).

Methodology Agincourt Resources Ltd (2005)

(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

DoE database does not identify any Declared Rare or Priority Flora species within 10km of the area under application. A flora survey conducted in the local area did not identify any Declared Rare or Priority Flora (Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd 2002). The vegetation in the Wiluna mining area has been cleared and degraded over an extended period, therefore it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will impact on significant flora.

Methodology Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd (2002)
GIS Databases:
- Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - 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 records of Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) in the vicinity of the proposed clearing and no TECs were identified during consultant's field inspection (Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd 2002). The vegetation in the Wiluna mining area has been cleared and degraded over a period of time, therefore it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd (2002)
GIS Databases:
- Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 15/07/03

(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 State Government is committed to the National Objectives Targets for Biodiversity Conservation which includes a target that prevents clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30% of that present pre-European (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002, EPA 2000). The IBRA region (Murchison) and the two Beard vegetation associations, 28 and 204 within the area under application, all have over 80% vegetation remaining (Shepherd et al 2001). Therefore the clearing as proposed is not considered to be at variance with the Principle.

	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	Least concern	
Shire - Wiluna	No information available				
Beard vegetation associations					
561	5,544	5,544	100	Least concern	0
560	93,558	93,558	100	Least concern	0
18	24,675,970	24,659,110	99.9	Least concern	2

* Shepherd et al. (2001)

** Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)

Methodology Hopkins et al. (2001)
Shepherd et al. (2001)
Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)
EPA (2000)

(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 may be at variance to this Principle

On the southern most extent of the area under application is Lake Way, which is a large salt lake. The lake is not subject to Environmental Protection Policies. Vegetation associated with this salt lake forms part of the area under application. However, given the size of Lake Way, (approximately 24,500ha), and the amount of vegetation associated with the lake that is under application (approximately 21ha), it is unlikely that the

proposed clearing would have a significant affect on Lake Way.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- ANCA wetlands - CALM 08/01
- EPP, Areas - DEP 06/95
- EPP, Lakes - DEP 28/07/03

(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**

With an annual average rainfall of 300mm in the local area and the annual average evaporation rate of 3.8m there is little surface flow during normal seasonal rains. Thus erosion or appreciable land degradation from water flow is unlikely to occur.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- Evaporation Isopleths - BOM 09/98
- Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01

(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 have been identified near within 50km of the area under application.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- CALM Managed Lands and Waters - 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**

The area under application is not located in a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA). With an annual average rainfall of 300mm and an annual average evaporation rate of 3,800mm there is little surface flow during normal seasonal rains. The salt water lake, Lake Way, is the medium for the collection of surface water flow, therefore the proposed clearing is unlikely to have an affect on this salt water system.

The Groundwater salinities within the area to be cleared range from 1,000mg/L-3,000mg/L to 35,000mg/L and is considered to be brackish to saline to hypersaline. The magnitude of the proposed clearing of native vegetation is unlikely to have an impact on the regional groundwater given the magnitude of the regional groundwater province (>290 000 sq km) and the extent of native vegetation remaining.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSAs) - DOE 04/11/04
- Evaporation Isopleths - BOM 09/98
- Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01
- Lakes 1M - GA 01/06/00
- Groundwater Salinity, Statewide - 22/02/00

(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**

With an average annual rainfall of 300mm and an average annual evaporation rate of 3,800mm there is little surface flow during normal seasonal rains. It is only during major rainfall events that there is a likelihood of flooding for which Lake Way would act as a catchment medium. It is therefore unlikely, due to low annual rainfall, that the proposed clearing would have any impact on peak flood heights.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01
- Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02

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

Comments

The proponent has provided a letter from the Ngaanyatjarra Council, Native Title Unit detailing that there should be no heritage issues if the route of the haul road does not interfere with the no-go area and is located to the north or south of this 'no-go' area. Agincourt have moved the alignment of the haul road to be in compliance with this request.

Methodology Letter from Ngaanyatjarra Council

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Mining	Mechanical Removal	21	Grant	<p>The assessable criteria have been addressed and the clearing as proposed may only be at variance with Principle f.</p> <p>For Principle f, while a small portion of the area under application extends into Lake Way, given the small area and the large size of the lake, it is unlikely that the clearing as proposed will have a significant affect on Lake Way.</p> <p>Thus the assessing officer recommends that the permit should be granted.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Sites of Significance has been taken into account with consultations between the Agincourt Resources and the local aboriginal communities.</p> <p>The Williamson Project, which is the proposal to mine on Lake Way and includes the construction of the haul road, was submitted as a whole to the Environmental Impact Assessment Branch(EIA) of the DoE. The EIA Branch determined that the proposal did not require referral to the EPA. However, it was found during this process that there is not sufficient information for the Lake Way area as a whole. As more mining projects are likely on and around the lake, it is advised that further applications in this area should be considered for referral to the EPA for assessment.</p>

5. References

- Bennett Environmental Consulting Pty Ltd (2002) Vegetation of areas impacted by construction of a causeway to exploration drilling at Lake Way Wiluna Gold Mine. For Newmont Wiluna Operations
- 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.
- EPA (2000) Environmental protection of native vegetation in Western Australia. Clearing of native vegetation, with particular reference to the agricultural area. Position Statement No. 2. December 2000. Environmental Protection Authority.
- Hedde, E. M., Loneragan, O. W., and Havel, J. J. (1980) Vegetation Complexes of the Darling System, Western Australia. In Department of Conservation and Environment, Atlas of Natural Resources, Darling System, Western Australia.
- 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.
- 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.