



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6429/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Redstone Minerals Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Miscellaneous Licence 52/157
Local Government Area: Shire of Meekatharra
Colloquial name: Warrawanda Creek Project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
0.8		Mechanical Removal	Access Road

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 19 February 2015

2. Background

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 associations have been mapped for the whole of Western Australia and are useful to look at vegetation in a regional context. The following Beard vegetation associations are located within the application area (GIS Database): 29: Sparse low woodland; mulga, discontinuous in scattered groups; and 216: Low woodland; mulga (with spinifex) on rises.	Warrawanda Creek. Redstone Minerals Pty Ltd (Redstone) has applied to clear up to 0.8 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 1.96 hectares, for the purpose of access road construction. The proposed clearing is located approximately 14 kilometres south-east of Newman, in the Shire of Meekatharra.	Very Good: Vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994).	Vegetation condition was based on available aerial imagery and converted to the Keighery scale by the assessing officer.

3. Assessment of application against Clearing Principles

Comments

According to available databases, no Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or Priority Ecological Communities (PECs) occur within the application area (GIS Database). Using a 20 kilometre search radius, Naturemap (DPaW, 2015) returned records for 162 bird, 28 mammal, 77 reptile, seven amphibian and 10 invertebrate species. In addition, records were returned for a total of 347 flora species (DPaW, 2015). However, most records were concentrated within the ranges north of Newman. This is not representative of an area containing high floristic or faunal diversity, but may also be a function of low sampling effort surrounding the application area. Amongst the fauna species recorded, 13 are listed as Migratory, and an additional five are Threatened or Priority fauna (DPaW, 2015). None of these species are likely to depend on habitat within the application area for foraging, roosting, denning or breeding.

Four Priority flora species were identified in the surrounding area by Naturemap (DPaW, 2015). Based on distribution and records for the species, *Brachyscome* sp. Wanna Munna Flats (S.van.Leeuwen 4665) (Priority 1) and *Eremophila rigida* (Priority 3) may occur within the general area of the proposed clearing (Western Australian Herbarium, 2015), however these species have a relatively broad distribution and are unlikely to be impacted by the clearing of 0.8 hectares.

Based on aerial imagery and available databases, vegetation within the application area is well represented in the surrounding region (Government of Western Australia, 2013; GIS Database). Given the availability of similar habitat outside the application area, and the small area to be cleared, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact habitat that is significant for the persistence of any flora or fauna species.

The proposed clearing is for the purpose of constructing an access track to mining operations within Warrawanda Creek (Austwide, 2015). The application area comprises the portions of the proposed access track that cross riparian vegetation and are therefore not exempt from requiring a clearing permit. Three minor, non-perennial watercourses are intersected by the application area (GIS Database). Through the removal of riparian vegetation, the proposed clearing has the potential to cause minor water erosion and increase sedimentation within these watercourses following rainfall. Localised erosion of watercourses may also disrupt water flow, impacting downstream vegetation. Impacts to surface water and downstream riparian vegetation may be minimised by the implementation of a watercourse management condition.

The application area experiences an arid climate, with an average annual rainfall of approximately 318 millimetres (Desmond et al., 2001; BoM, 2015). The removal of 0.8 hectares of native vegetation is not likely to alter the incidence or intensity of flooding within the application area.

The nearest conservation area is the Collier Range National Park, which is an A Class Reserve located approximately 109 kilometres south of the application area (GIS Database). From this distance, it is highly unlikely that the proposed clearing will impact on the environmental values of the Collier Range National Park.

The application area occurs within the Sylvania, Divide and River land systems (GIS Database). The Divide land system has some potential for wind erosion to occur following the removal of vegetation, and both the Sylvania and River land systems are moderately susceptible to erosion following the removal of vegetation within watercourses (Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004). Furthermore, the Naturemap database indicates that seven weed species have been recorded in the surrounding region (DPaW, 2015). Invasive flora species can decrease the biodiversity value of an area, as they out-compete native vegetation for available resources, contribute to land degradation and increase the frequency and intensity of fires (DEC, 2011). Potential impacts to biodiversity within and nearby the application area as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a weed management condition.

The assessment of the application identified that the proposed clearing is at variance to Principle (f), not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (g), (i) and (j), and is not at variance to Principles (e) and (h).

Methodology Austwide (2015)
BoM (2015)
DEC (2011)
Desmond et al. (2001)
DPaW (2015)
Government of Western Australia (2013)
Van Vreeswyk et al. (2004)
Western Australian Herbarium (2015)
GIS Database:
- DEC Tenure
- Hydrography, linear
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Rangeland Land System Mapping
- Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered

Planning instrument, Native Title, RIWI Act Licence, EP Act Licence, Works Approval, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

There is one native title claim over the application area (GIS Database). This claim (WC2005/006) has been registered with the Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant group (GIS Database). However, the mining 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 located in the area applied to clear (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, the Department of Parks and Wildlife 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 application was advertised on 26 January 2015 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. There were no submissions received.

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

4. References

- Austwide (2015) Supporting information with clearing permit application CPS 6429/1, prepared by Austwide Mining Title Management Pty Ltd on behalf of Redstone Minerals Pty Ltd.
- BoM (2015) Climate Statistics for Australian Locations. Climate Statistics for Australian Locations. A Search for Climate Statistics for Newman Aero, Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology.
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_007176.shtml (Accessed February 2015).
- DEC (2011) Invasive Plant Prioritisation, Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth.
- Desmond, A., Kendrick, P., Chant, A (2001) Gascoyne 3 (GAS3 - Augustus subregion). In A Biodiversity Audit of Western Australia's 53 Biogeographical Subregions in 2002 (eds J. E. May & N. L. McKenzie). Department of Conservation and Land Management, WA.
- DPaW (2015) NatureMap: Mapping Western Australia's Biodiversity. Department of Parks and Wildlife.
<http://naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au/default.aspx> (Accessed February 2015).
- Government of Western Australia (2013) 2012 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of October 2012. WA Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Van Vreeswyk, A.M.E., Payne, A.L., Leighton, K.A., Hennig, P (2004) An inventory and condition survey of the Pilbara Region, Western Australia, Technical Bulletin No. 92 Department of Agriculture Western Australia, South Perth.
- Western Australian Herbarium (2015) FloraBase - The Western Australian Flora. Department of Parks and Wildlife.
<http://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/> (Accessed February 2015).

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DPaW and DER)
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DotE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DotE)
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (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
PEC	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
RIWI Act	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
s.17	Section 17 of the <i>Environment Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DPaW (2013) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia}:-

T **Threatened species:**
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna or the Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).

Threatened Fauna and Flora are further recognised by the Department according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List criteria. For example Carnaby's Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* is specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* as a threatened species with a ranking of Endangered.

Rankings:

CR: Critically Endangered - considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

EN: Endangered - considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

VU: Vulnerable - considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

X **Presumed Extinct species:**
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 2 of the Wildlife

Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).

- IA Migratory birds protected under an international agreement:**
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
Birds that are subject to an agreement between governments of Australia and Japan, China and The Republic of Korea relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction.
- S Other specially protected fauna:**
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- P1 Priority One - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from one or a few collections or sight records (generally less than five), all on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, Shire, rail reserves and Main Roads WA road, gravel and soil reserves, and active mineral leases and under threat of habitat destruction or degradation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes.
- P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from one or a few collections or sight records, some of which are on lands not under imminent threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, unallocated Crown land, water reserves, etc. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes.
- P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from collections or sight records from several localities not under imminent threat, or from few but widespread localities with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them.
- P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring:**
- (a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.
 - (b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that do not qualify for Conservation Dependent, but that are close to qualifying for Vulnerable.
 - (c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.
- P5 Priority Five - Conservation Dependent species:**
Species that are not threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.

Principles for clearing native vegetation:

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (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.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.
- (d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.
- (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.
- (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (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.
- (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.
- (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.