



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6694/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: IronRinger Resources Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Exploration Licence 80/4770
Local Government Area: Shire of Halls Creek
Colloquial name: Killarney Project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
0.75		Mechanical Removal	Mineral Exploration

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 17 September 2015

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description Beard vegetation associations have been mapped for the whole of Western Australia and are useful to look at vegetation in a regional context. Two vegetation associations has been mapped within the application area (GIS Database):

91: Hummock grasslands, sparse tree steppe; snappy gum over soft spinifex.
837: Grasslands, short bunch grass savanna low tree; snappy gum over arid short grass on plains.

No biological surveys of the application area have been conducted however Matisse Consulting (Matisse) conducted a flora and vegetation survey approximately 35 kilometres north-east of the application area (Matisse, 2004). The following vegetation types were identified from the flora survey:

Hummock Grasslands

HG1: Hummock grassland of *Triodia bitextura* and *Triodia bynoei* with emergent *Eucalyptus brevifolia*, *Corymbia confertiflora*, *Corymbia opaca*, *Eucalyptus pruinosa*, *Bauhinia cunninghamii* over *Acacia argyraea* and *Acacia hemignosta*;

HG2: Hummock grassland of *Triodia bitextura* and *Triodia bynoei* with emergent *Corymbia confertiflora*, *Corymbia opaca*, *Eucalyptus brevifolia*, *Eucalyptus pruinosa*, *Bauhinia cunninghamii* and *Terminalia canescens*;

HG3: Hummock grassland of *Triodia bitextura* and *Triodia bynoei* with emergent denser pockets of *Terminalia canescens* and *Cochlospermum fraseri*, with the occasional *Corymbia confertiflora* and *Eucalyptus brevifolia*;

Woodlands

W2: Low open woodland of *Melaleuca minutifolia* and *Eucalyptus pruinosa* over *Triodia bitextura*;

W3: Low open woodland of *Eucalyptus brevifolia* over pockets of *Acacia argyraea* and *Eriachne ciliata*;

W4: Open woodland and low open woodland of *Terminalia platyptera*, *Terminalia arostrata*, *Adansonia gregorii*, *Buchanania obovata* and *Bauhinia cunninghamii*;

W5: Mixture of open woodland and low open woodland of *Adansonia gregorii*, *Buchanania obovata*, *Bauhinia cunninghamii* and *Eucalyptus brevifolia* over patches of *Typha domingensis*, *Heteropogon contortus*, *Cenchrus elymoides* and *Chloris truncata*;

W6: Low open woodland of *Melaleuca minutifolia* over patches of *Typha domingensis*;

W7: Low open woodland of *Bauhinia cunninghamii* and *Eucalyptus pruinosa* over mixed grasses and herbs;

Sedgeland

S1: Sedgeland of *Typha domingensis* with emergent *Adansonia gregorii* and *Melaleuca viridiflora*.

Clearing Description	Killarney Project. IronRinger Resources Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 0.75 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 12.3 hectares, for the purpose of mineral exploration. The project is located approximately 140 kilometres north-east of Halls Creek, in the Shire of Halls Creek.
Vegetation Condition	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994); To: Very Good: Vegetation structure altered, obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994).
Comment	Vegetation condition was determined by the assessing officer using aerial imagery and the Keighery (1994) scale.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

The proposal to clear 0.75 hectares of native vegetation within an application area of 12.3 hectares for the purpose of mineral exploration is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts.

The application area occurs within the Ord subregion of the Ord Victoria Plain Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia bioregion (GIS Database). This subregion is characterised by level to gently undulating plains with scattered hills on Cambrian volcanic and Proterozoic sedimentary rocks; vertosols on plains and predominantly skeletal soils on hills (CALM, 2002). The overall vegetation is grassland with scattered bloodwoods (*Corymbia* spp.) and snappy gum (*Eucalyptus brevifolia*) with spinifex and annual grasses (CALM, 2002).

No known Threatened Ecological Communities or Priority Ecological Communities are present within the application area (GIS Database) Available databases identified seven Priority Flora species occurring within a 10 kilometre radius of the application area; *Boronia jucunda* (P1), *Heliotropium uniflorum* (P1), *Hibiscus squarulosus* (P1), *Marsdenia hemiptera* (P1), *Micraira* sp. *Pumululu* (M.D. Barrett & R.L. Barrett 1507) (P1), *Boronia minutipinna* (P2), *Grevillea miniata* (P4) (DPaW, 2015). The proposed clearing of 0.75 hectares of native vegetation within an application area of 12.5 hectares is unlikely to impact the conservation significance of these species.

Several weed species have been recorded from biological surveys surrounding the application area. Weeds have the potential to significantly change the dynamics of a natural ecosystem and lower the biodiversity of an area. Potential impacts to the biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a weed management condition.

No caves, semi-permanent water holes or other microhabitats of significance are present in the application area and the fauna habitats present within the application area are well represented elsewhere in the local area (GIS Database).

There are no permanent water bodies or watercourses within the application area (GIS Database). There is one minor non-perennial drainage line that intersects the application area (GIS Database). The surface flows of this drainage line are likely to be dry most of the year therefore it is not expected the proposed clearing will have a detrimental effect on native vegetation growing in, or in association with a watercourse or wetland.

The application area is not located within any conservation area (GIS Database). There are no conservation areas within 10 kilometres of the application area (GIS Database).

The land system associated with the application area has a low risk of erosion (GIS Database) and the proposed clearing is not likely to cause a deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water or increase the incidence or intensity of flooding (GIS Database).

The application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s.51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, and the proposed clearing is at variance to Principle (f), is not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (j), and is not at variance to Principle (e).

Methodology	CALM (2002) DPaW (2015) GIS Database: - DPaW Tenure - Hydrography, linear - IBRA WA (Regions - Sub Regions) - Pre-European Vegetation - Public Drinking Water Source Areas - Rangeland Land System Mapping - Threatened and Priority Flora - Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered
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Planning instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

There is one Native Title claim (WC1999/044) over the area under application (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 Aboriginal Sites of Significance located within the clearing permit application area (GIS Database). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Environment Regulation, 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 17 August 2015 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. One submission raising concerns in relation to native title, aboriginal heritage and the environment was received in relation to this application. A written response was provided on the matters raised.

Methodology DAA (2015)
GIS Database:
- Aboriginal Sites Register System

4. References

- CALM (2002) A Biodiversity Audit of Western Australia's 53 Biogeographical Subregions. Ord Victoria Plains 1 (OVP1 - Ord subregion) Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.
- DAA (2015) Department of Aboriginal Affairs (WWW Search – Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System). Retrieved from <http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/> on 18 August 2015.
- DPaW (2015) NatureMap Department of Parks and Wildlife, viewed 18 August 2015 <<http://naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au>>.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

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 DPaW 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.