



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6722/1

Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Newmont Boddington Gold Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Lease 70/23
Mining Lease 70/24

Local Government Area: Shire of Boddington

Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
	19	Mechanical Removal	Fire hazard reduction

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant

Decision Date: 22 October 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. One Beard vegetation association is located within the application area (GIS Database):

Beard vegetation association 3: Medium forest; Jarrah-Marri (GIS Database).

Clearing Description Newmont Boddington Gold Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 19 native trees for the purpose of fire hazard reduction. The project is located approximately 10 kilometres northwest of Boddington, in the Shire of Boddington.

Vegetation Condition Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994);

To:

Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species; weeds are non-aggressive species (Keighery, 1994).

Comment There have been no flora or fauna surveys undertaken over the application area. The vegetation condition was inferred from aerial photography (GIS Database).

The proposed clearing is to fulfil a requirement under the *Mine Safety and Inspection Act 1994* as directed by an Inspector of Mines from the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

The application area occurs within the Northern Jarrah Forest subregion of the Jarrah Forest Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia bioregion (GIS Database). Based on aerial imagery, the vegetation within the application area is in a 'good' to 'excellent' condition (Newmont Boddington Gold, 2015; Keighery, 1994; GIS Database), with the vegetation condition affected by the adjacent construction of an explosives magazine (GIS Database). The native vegetation within the application area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation association 3 of which greater than 67% remain at a state and bioregional level (Government of Western Australia, 2014).

A search of the Department of Parks and Wildlife's Threatened and Priority Flora databases within a 5 kilometre radius of the application area revealed no records of Threatened Flora species and three Priority Flora species (DPaW, 2015). Given that the application area only consists of an upperstorey (*Eucalyptus marginata* trees), the low impact nature and the small scale of the proposed clearing (19 native trees) is not likely to significantly impact the conservation significance of any flora species.

No Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities have been recorded within the application area or the local

area (GIS Database).

There have been no fauna surveys conducted over the application area. Based on aerial imagery, the application area does not appear to contain significant fauna habitat for any conservation significant fauna species (GIS Database). Hollows within *Eucalyptus marginata* are known to provide habitat for conservation significant fauna. None of the *Eucalyptus marginata* trees within the application area are potential habitat trees (Newmont Boddington Gold, 2015).

There are no permanent watercourses or water bodies mapped within the area under application (GIS Database).

The application area is located within the Murray River Catchment Public Drinking Water Source Area. Given the small scale clearing (19 native trees), the application area is not susceptible to erosion and the proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water or increase the incidence or intensity of flooding (GIS Database).

The application area is not located within any conservation area (GIS Database). There are no conservation areas within two kilometres of the application area (GIS Database). The clearing of 19 native trees is not likely to provide a significant ecological linkage or fauna movement corridor and is not likely to impact the environmental values of any conservation areas.

Weeds have the potential to significantly change the dynamics of a natural ecosystem and lower the biodiversity of an area. The presence of Dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) has been confirmed to occur within the application area, although areas are not mapped (GIS Database). Potential impacts to biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a weed and dieback management condition.

The proposal to clear 19 native trees for the purpose of a fire reduction hazard is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts.

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 not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (j).

Methodology DPaW (2015)
Government of Western Australia (2014)
Keighery (1994)
Newmont Boddington Gold (2015)
GIS Database

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

Comments

There is one Native Title claim over the area under application (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2015; GIS Database). This claim has been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant group. 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 is one registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2015; 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 12 October 2015 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received.

Methodology Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2015)
GIS Database

4. References

- Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2015) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Government of Western Australia, viewed 6 October 2015 <<http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/>>.
- DPaW (2015) NatureMap Department of Parks and Wildlife, viewed 6 October 2015 <<http://naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au>>.
- Government of Western Australia (2014) 2014 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of June 2014. 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.

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.