



CLEARING PERMIT

Granted under section 51E of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 (WA) (CI)

Purpose Permit number:	CPS 8587/1
Permit Holder:	Parks Australia, Christmas Island National Park
Duration of Permit:	11 October 2019 to 11 October 2024

The Permit Holder is authorised to clear native vegetation subject to the following conditions of this Permit.

PART I – CLEARING AUTHORISED

1. Purpose for which clearing may be done

Clearing for the purpose of rehabilitation and revegetation.

2. Land on which clearing is to be done

Unallocated Crown Land (PIN 1097173), Christmas Island
Lot 281 on Deposited Plan 243086, Christmas Island

3. Area of Clearing

The Permit Holder must not clear more than 2.9 hectares of native vegetation within the area hatched yellow on attached Plan 8587/1.

4. Application

This Permit allows the Permit Holder to authorise persons, including employees, contractors and agents of the Permit Holder, to clear native vegetation for the purposes of this Permit subject to compliance with the conditions of this Permit and approval from the Permit Holder.

PART III - RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

5. Avoid, minimise and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing

In determining the amount of native vegetation to be cleared authorised under this Permit, the Permit Holder must have regard to the following principles, set out in order of preference:

- avoid the clearing of native vegetation;
- minimise the amount of native vegetation to be cleared; and
- reduce the impact of clearing on any environmental value.

6. Weed control

When undertaking any clearing or other activity authorised under this Permit, the Permit Holder must take the following steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of *weeds*:

- clean earth-moving machinery of soil and vegetation prior to entering and leaving the area to be cleared;
- ensure that no *weed*-affected soil, *mulch*, *fill* or other material is brought into the area to be cleared; and
- restrict the movement of machines and other vehicles to the limits of the areas to be cleared.

7. Record keeping

The Permit Holder must maintain the following records in relation to the clearing of native vegetation authorised under this Permit:

- (a) the location where the clearing occurred, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 1994 (GDA94), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees;
- (b) the date(s) that the area was cleared;
- (c) the size of the area cleared (in hectares);
- (d) actions taken to avoid, minimise and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing in accordance with condition 5 of this Permit;
- (e) actions taken to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of *weeds* in accordance with condition 6 of this Permit; and

8. Reporting

The Permit Holder must produce the records required under condition 7 of this Permit when required by the *CEO*.

DEFINITIONS

The following meanings are given to terms used in this Permit:

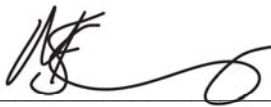
CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of the Department responsible for the administration of the clearing provisions under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*;

fill means material used to increase the ground level, or fill a hollow;

mulch means the use of organic matter, wood chips or rocks to slow the movement of water across the soil surface and to reduce evaporation;

weed/s means any plant -

- (a) that is a declared pest under section 22 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*; or
- (b) published in a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions species-led ecological impact and invasiveness ranking summary, regardless of ranking; or
- (c) not indigenous to the area concerned.

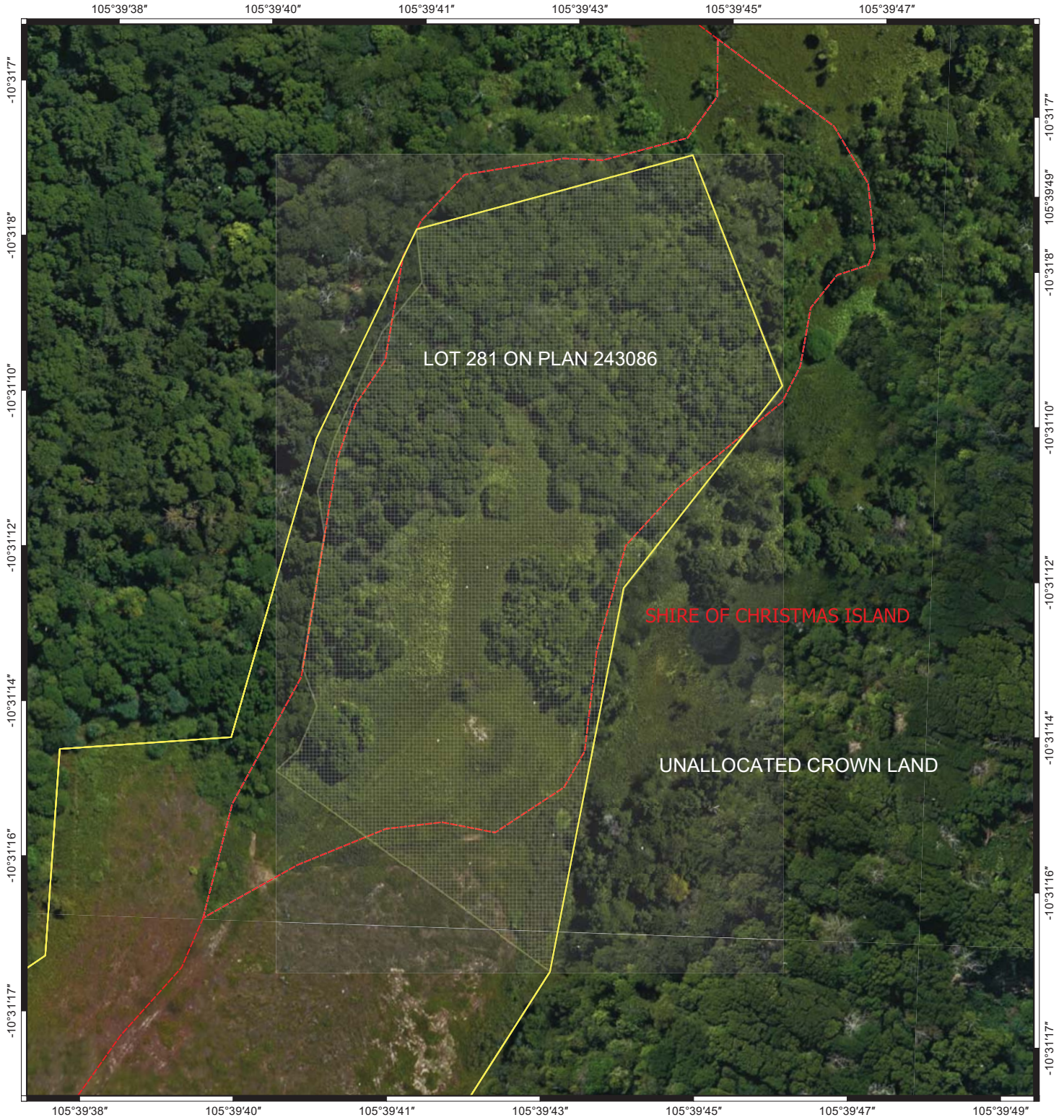


Mathew Gannaway
MANAGER
NATIVE VEGETATION REGULATION

*Officer delegated under Section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*

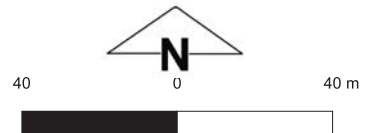
12 September 2019

Plan 8587/1



Legend

-  CPS areas approved to clear
-  Cadastre - LGATE 218 - Christmas
-  Local Government Authorities
- Roads (2011)
-  4WD Track



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Officer with delegated authority under Section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986





1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 8587/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name: Parks Australia, Christmas Island National Park
Application received date: 28 June 2019

1.3. Property details

Property: Unallocated Crown Land (PIN 1097173), Christmas Island
Lot 281 on Deposited Plan 243086, Christmas Island
Local Government Authority: Shire of Christmas Island
Localities: Christmas Island

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	Purpose category:
2.9		Mechanical Removal	Miscellaneous

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 12 September 2019
Reasons for Decision: The clearing permit application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with section 51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). It has been concluded that the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles.

The Delegated Officer determined that the clearing is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts and had regard to the purpose of clearing being to facilitate rehabilitation of a previously cleared area.

2. Site Information

Clearing Description The applicant proposes to clear 2.9 hectares of native vegetation within Unallocated Crown Land (PIN 1097173) and Lot 281 on Deposited Plan 243086 (former mine lease ML 101 now called Field 17T), Christmas Island, for the purpose of removing weedy/degraded vegetation and recovering soil to allow redistribution to more useful areas and creating habitat corridors connecting forest patches.

Vegetation Description Vegetation within the application area is described as weed dominated vegetation and pioneer regrowth (Geoscience Australia, 2014).

Vegetation Condition The application area is determined to be in a Degraded condition, which is described as a structure that is severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery, 1994).

The vegetation condition of the application area was determined based on applicants photographs (Parks Australia, 2019) and available aerial imagery.



Figure 1: Application area (cross hatched blue)



Figure 2 – photographs of the application area (Parks Australia, 2019)

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

The applicant proposes to clear 2.9 hectares of native vegetation within surrendered section of relinquished, former mine lease ML 101 (now called Field 17T), Christmas Island, for the purpose of removing weedy/degraded vegetation and recovering soil to allow redistribution to more useful areas and creating habitat corridors connecting forest patches.

The entire application area has been previously cleared for mining. It was most recently re-cleared by Christmas Island Phosphate mine in 2017/18 under clearing permit CPS 3472/6. Applicant states that over 60 per cent of the area is bare ground and the remainder is almost entirely covered by weeds such as False Coffee Bush (*Leucaena leucocephala*), Jamaican Cherry (*Muntingia calabura*), 'Gotcha' sensitive weed (*Mimosa diplotricha*), snakeweed (*Stachytarpheta cayennensis*), and others. Clumps of swordfern (*Nephrolepis biserrata*) are also establishing. Less than 5 per cent of the area displays scattered native plants that have come up since previous clearing finished, and these are only common species (e.g. *Macaranga tanarius*, *Dysoxylum gaudichaudianum*). A comprehensive search determined there are no threatened or priority native plants within the application area (Parks Australia, 2019).

The applicant has advised that they will keep native plants where possible as they can be important sources of seed and therefore improve rehabilitation outcomes. The applicant will aim to selectively manoeuvre around these to remove introduced weeds and retain native species wherever possible. The minimal common native plants that will be removed to access soil for rehabilitation purposes will be replaced with more than 10,000 native trees sourced from the Christmas Island National Park nursery (Parks Australia, 2019).

The clearing and rehabilitation works proposed will provide an overwhelmingly positive improvement on the site and ecosystem function of the area. It will replace bare open ground with a vegetated corridor and facilitate the safe passage of endemic red crabs from forest in the west to the east for their annual breeding migration towards the coast. With red crab densities around 1,500 per hectare and a migration catchment of approximately 75 hectares (possibly more) adjacent to this particular parcel, it is estimated that around 110,000 crabs will be able to utilise and benefit from this corridor once restored. In the absence of such a corridor, migrating crabs that attempt to cross the open field may die from heat exposure if their attempt happens when the sun comes out from behind the clouds. Crabs can die crossing distances of as little as 20m in the heat of the day; the bare ground of this field is over 70m from east to west (the direction of migration) (Parks Australia, 2019).

Due to the previous disturbance and the resulting degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition of the application area (figure 2), it is not likely to contain high biodiversity, threatened or priority flora or significant fauna habitat.

No priority flora or threatened ecological communities have been recorded on Christmas Island.

Christmas Island retains approximately 75 per cent native vegetation, of which 84 per cent (63 per cent of total island area) is protected as National Park. The application area has been previously cleared and mined, therefore the application area is not considered to be a significant remnant in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Perennial surface water features on Christmas Island are limited to spring fed streams on coastal or sloping areas of the island. No watercourses are located within the application area.

Given that the application is for the purpose of rehabilitation, the proposed clearing is not likely to lead to appreciable land degradation.

The application area is located adjacent to Christmas Island National Park. The disturbance caused by the proposed clearing may increase the risk of weeds being spread into the National Park. Weed management practices will assist in minimising this risk.

The assessment has found that the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles.

Planning instruments and other relevant matters

Parks Australia/The Director of National Parks (DNP) is required under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development (DITCRD) to carry out ecological restoration works of relinquished mine lease land, running the Christmas Island Minesite to Forest Rehabilitation (CIMFR) program (Parks Australia, 2019).

The application area includes National Park across approximately 80 per cent of its boundary. The Christmas Island National Park Management Plan 2014-2024, section 4.2.1, states that the DNP may take actions to clear vegetation including plants listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act (if necessary), for (b) protecting, conserving, restoring and managing biodiversity and heritage, including implementing the CIMFR program (Parks Australia, 2019).

The clearing permit application was advertised on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation website on 16 July 2019 with a 21 day submission period. The application was also advertised in *The Islander* on 19 July 2019. No public submissions have been received in relation to this application.

4. References

- Geoscience Australia (2014). Christmas Island Vegetation and Clearing Map. Compiled May 2014. Prepared By Geoscience Australia in Collaboration with Christmas Island Phosphates and The Commonwealth Department of Environment.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994). Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Parks Australia, Christmas Island National Park (2019). Clearing permit application form and supporting documentation for CPS 8587/1. Received by DWER on 28 June 2019. (DWER Ref: DWERDT173158).