

Application to increase clearing limit

Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE) requires that amendments to clearing permits, including administrative amendments, be reviewed. The purpose of the review is to clarify whether there have been any substantial changes in conservation values and/or impacts within the application area since the original assessment. Such changes may result in supporting surveys no longer being adequate to support the revised assessment and/or change the outcomes when assessed against the 10 Clearing Principles listed under Schedule 5 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

The purpose of this pro forma is to provide DMPE with information on:

- changes in conservation values since the original assessment.
- the significance of those changes; and
- the appropriate approval pathway for the area in question.

Where demonstrated through this pro forma, that previous survey information meets current regulator expectations and no substantial changes to known conservation values and/or clearing impacts exist, Rio Tinto Iron Ore (RTIO) would not pursue further survey work to support the administrative amendment.

Where previous supporting surveys are no longer adequate to meet current regulator expectations, or there have been significant changes to the known conservation values since assessment was made, supplementary supporting information will accompany an amendment to the NVCP or new clearing permit application. Rio Tinto will seek confirmation from DMPE on the appropriate pathway.

Current		Proposed	
CPS#	9985/1	CPS#	9985/2
No clearing after date	10/05/2029	No clearing after date	10/05/2029
Expiry date	10/05/2029	Expiry date	10/05/2029
Clearing approved (ha)	30 ha		
Clearing carried out to date (ha)	<p>A total of 10.2 ha of vegetation clearing was reported in the 2024/2025 Annual Report. Further clearing activities have occurred following the reporting period, with the balance of the approved clearing area committed to planned project works.</p> <p>As the existing approved clearing is fully allocated, additional clearing is being requested – the subject of this application.</p>		
Rehabilitation carried out to date (ha)	0		
Justification of extension:	<p>Subsequent to the grant of Clearing Permit CPS 9985/2, the design of the Silvergrass East Managed Aquifer Recharge (SGE MAR) scheme has been refined through detailed engineering review. To implement the updated design and facilitate ongoing operational access and maintenance requirements, an additional 10 ha of native vegetation clearing is requested.</p>		

Bio Input/Desktop assessment Assessor: Botanist Jonas Mitchell	
Date/s of field surveys:	<p>Greater Brockman Syncline Consolidated Vegetation Type and Condition Mapping (Stantec 2021a):</p> <p>17 - 29 May 2019; 11 - 23 August 2019 26 - 31 August 2019</p> <p>Greater Brockman and Nammuldi Silvergrass Hub Consolidated Fauna Habitat Mapping (Stantec 2021b)</p> <p>16 - 28 May 2019 13 - 23 August 2019 8 - 21 September 2019</p>
Survey type/s:	<p>Since 2005, the Greater Brockman region has been subject to extensive environmental assessments including comprehensive vegetation, flora, and fauna surveys. These assessments have established a detailed understanding of the region's ecological values, including the composition, condition, and conservation value of vegetation communities and flora assemblages, together with the diversity, distribution and conservation value of fauna species and the habitats supporting regional biodiversity.</p> <p>The most relevant surveys to support this application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Brockman Syncline Consolidated Vegetation Type and Condition Mapping - IBSA-2022-0424; and • Greater Brockman Consolidated Fauna Habitat Mapping - IBSA-2022-0426
Constraints / limitations:	<p>Stantec 2021a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The confidence in consolidation vegetation type and condition mapping is limited by the consistency and quality of the previous reports. • Wide range of seasonal conditions recorded for consolidated reports. • Varying degrees of vegetation type mapping detail, depending on the size of the survey area and the purpose of the survey for consolidated reports. • The desktop assessment did not include surveys conducted in the vicinity or overlapping the Consolidation Area where spatial data was absent or incomplete. <p>Stantec 2021b:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was necessary to modify the habitat names and remap habitats within the Biota (2019a, 2019b) survey areas as a desktop exercise. This task was informed by aerial imagery and habitat assessments presented within the Biota (2019a, 2019b) survey reports. While habitat types could largely be delineated via these desktop methods, there was lower confidence in delineating the following habitats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ major creeklines from <i>minor</i> creeklines; and ◦ gorge/ gully and free face from debris slope/ outcropping. Where possible, habitat mapping was informed from ground-truthed locations in proximity to the Biota (2019a, 2019b) survey areas. • Spatial data for previous habitat mapping was only available for 43% of the Consolidation Area. Despite this, extrapolation was possible using previous data and desktop methodologies.
Have any additional field surveys been	N/A

<p>undertaken within the Permit area since the original application was submitted?</p>	
<p>Presence of Threatened flora/fauna?</p>	<p>The established regional understanding of ecological values - derived from a long history of environmental assessments - indicates that a range of flora and fauna species of ecological and conservation significance have been identified or are recognised as potentially occurring within the Greater Brockman region. In summary:</p> <p>No threatened flora species have previously been recorded within the area subject to this application, and no threatened flora records were identified within 20 kilometres during the most recent desktop assessment.</p> <p>Three threatened fauna species listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) and the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (BC Act) have been previously recorded within the broader study area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilbara olive python (<i>Liasis olivaceus barroni</i>) – <i>Vulnerable</i> (EPBC, BC): previously detected through secondary evidence (scats). • Ghost bat (<i>Macroderma gigas</i>) – <i>Vulnerable</i> (EPBC, BC): previously observed opportunistically; however, subsequent acoustic surveys did not record echolocation activity within the immediate area. • Pilbara leaf-nosed bat (<i>Rhinonicterus aurantia</i>) – <i>Vulnerable</i> (EPBC, BC): detected through echolocation recordings, with only a small number of calls documented in proximity to the study area. <p>In addition, one other EPBC Act-listed species is recognised as having potential to occur within or near the study area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern quoll (<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>) – <i>Endangered</i> (EPBC, BC): previously recorded within approximately 300 metres of the study area through direct sightings, motion camera detections, and secondary evidence such as scats. <p>All EPBC Act-listed species are known from the surrounding region and may occasionally traverse the area. However, given the limited extent of suitable denning, roosting, or breeding habitat within the study area, the small spatial scale of the proposed disturbance, and its location adjacent to existing infrastructure and roads, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would result in a significant impact on these species or their habitats.</p> <p>This is based on the consolidated regional ecological understanding derived from historical environmental assessments undertaken across the Greater Brockman region. The findings presented herein are provided as a summary of that existing understanding; the underlying technical reports and datasets are not included as part of this submission.</p>
<p>Presence of Priority flora/fauna?</p>	<p>The established regional understanding of ecological values also indicates the presence and potential occurrence of flora and fauna species of Priority listed or otherwise specially protected fauna species within or near the study area. In summary:</p> <p>Priority Flora</p> <p>A total of 41 conservation-listed flora species have been identified within a 20-kilometre radius of the study area. None of these species have been recorded within the study area itself. Two species—<i>Rhagodia</i> sp. <i>Hamersley</i> (M. Trudgen 17794) and <i>Goodenia nuda</i>—have since been delisted and are no longer considered in this assessment.</p>

	<p>Of the remaining species, only two Priority flora species were identified through the desktop assessment as potentially occurring within the study area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Calotis squamigera</i> (Priority 1) – Previously recorded approximately 10 kilometres from the study area in association with open mulga woodland; limited areas of similar habitat occur within the study area. • <i>Ipomoea racemigera</i> (Priority 3) – Recorded along the banks of Caves Creek, adjacent to the study area; minimal comparable riparian habitat is present within the area of proposed disturbance. <p>Given the limited extent of suitable habitat types within the study area, the likelihood of occurrence for these Priority flora species is considered low.</p> <p>Priority Fauna</p> <p>Four Priority 4 fauna species listed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and one Other Specially Protected fauna species listed under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (BC Act) as potentially occurring in proximity to the study area. None of these species have been previously recorded within the study area, although four are assessed as having some potential to occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakeland Downs mouse (<i>Leggadina lakedownensis</i>, Priority 4) – Potential to occur; the study area lacks core habitat but may occasionally be traversed by individuals moving through the region. • Lined soil-crevice skink (<i>Notoscincus butleri</i>, Priority 4) – Potential to occur; adjacent watercourses and associated vegetation may offer marginally suitable habitat. • Western pebble-mound mouse (<i>Pseudomys chapmani</i>, Priority 4) – Potential to occur; pebble mounds have been recorded in nearby areas, and suitable habitat may be present within the study area. • Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>, Other Specially Protected) – Potential to occur; a wide-ranging species likely to use the area opportunistically for foraging. <p>Given the small scale of the proposed disturbance, its proximity to existing infrastructure, and the generally limited extent of suitable or unique habitat within the study area, it is unlikely that the proposal would result in significant impacts to Priority or Specially Protected fauna species or their habitats.</p> <p>This is based on the consolidated regional ecological understanding derived from historical environmental assessments undertaken across the Greater Brockman region. The findings presented herein are provided as a summary of that existing understanding; the underlying technical reports and datasets are not included as part of this submission.</p>
Presence of Threatened Ecological Communities?	TEC boundaries known by DBCA are within a kilometer of the study area, to the east. However, none of the vegetation types defined in the study area resemble the TEC based on mapping by Stantec (2021a).
Presence of Priority Ecological Communities?	PEC boundaries known by DBCA are within 150 m of the study area. However, none of the vegetation types defined in the study area resemble the PEC based on mapping by Stantec (2021a).
Have there been any changes to the conservation rank of species or communities identified in previous surveys?	<p>The following changes have occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vittadinia</i> sp. Coondewanna Flats (S. van Leeuwen 4684) - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 1 to Priority 3 • <i>Ipomoea racemigera</i> – Conservation listing lowered from Priority 2 to Priority 3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Euphorbia inappendiculata</i> var. <i>inappendiculata</i> - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 2 to Priority 3 • <i>Euphorbia inappendiculata</i> var. <i>queenslandica</i> - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 2 to Priority 3 • <i>Aristida lazardis</i> - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 2 to Priority 3 • <i>Oxalis</i> sp. Pilbara (M.E. Trudgen 12725) - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 2 to Priority 3 • <i>Pentalepis trichodesmoides</i> subsp. <i>hispida</i> - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 2 to Priority 3 • <i>Rhagodia</i> sp. Hamersley (M. Trudgen 17794) – Conservation listing lowered from Priority 3 to no longer Priority listed • <i>Goodenia nuda</i> - Conservation listing lowered from Priority 4 to no longer Priority listed
Have any new species, communities or habitats of elevated environmental value been identified within the boundary of the clearing permit?	No new species, communities or habitats of elevated environmental value have been identified within the boundary of the clearing permit.
Other changes relevant to conservation of significant biological values in the context of the impact assessment (e.g., changes in known species distributions, new threats etc.)?	<i>Triodia</i> sp. Silvergrass (P.-L. de Kock BES 00808) is more recently known as <i>Triodia lutiteana</i> (P1)
Is a field survey required to validate desktop assessment? Why / why not?	Additional field surveys are not required to validate the results. The existing survey work has indicated good overall coverage with few survey limitations. The existing survey is consistent with the requirements stipulated in the relevant EPA technical guidance statements.
Is a new survey required? Why / why not?	A new survey is not required. The current level of survey coverage, combined with the detailed ecological understanding derived from extensive previous environmental assessments across the Greater Brockman region, provides sufficient information to support assessment of this Application.

Based on the above information the risk of significant impacts to ecological values (flora, fauna, and ecological communities) due to increasing the clearing amount, is low.

RTIO proposes an administrative amendment to increase the total clearing amount with no additional changes. DMPE Native Vegetation Branch to advise if this approach is considered appropriate.



DMPE Native Vegetation Branch approves an administrative amendment pathway



DMPE Native Vegetation Branch **does not** approve an administrative amendment pathway and will advise RTIO of the preferred approval pathway

Name: _____

Date: _____

