



Vegetation Clearing

1. OBJECTIVE

Describes processes and procedures for clearing vegetation at Cooljarloo to ensure compliance with site environmental requirements and preservation of resources for rehabilitation.

2. BACKGROUND

Native areas and some areas of Mullering Farm require clearing to allow access for mining activities prior to topsoil stripping and to allow access for drilling, infrastructure corridors (some pipelines, powerline corridors), road establishment and to access ore.

3. DOCUMENTATION

- Application to Clear Native Vegetation (Intranet – Environment Forms)
- Clearing Audit Check list (Intranet – Environment Forms)
- Vegetation Harvesting (DocTrack – C0750)

4. APPROVAL REQUIRED TO CLEAR

- Applications to clear vegetation are submitted to the Environmental Coordinator - Rehabilitation (EC-R) by the date of the preliminary Planning Meeting and finalised and approved by the final monthly Planning Meeting for the month the works are intended to be completed in. Applications may be processed outside these times in exceptional circumstances.
- It is the responsibility of the originator of the clearing activities to ensure that the form is correctly filled out, submitted to the appropriate parties for approval and that clearing is completed in accordance with this procedure and the requirements documented within the approved application.
- The EC-R reviews all clearing applications and adds any specific requirements for the management of vegetation and associated potential environmental impacts (including impacts to declared rare flora, environmental monitoring locations or sensitive areas and management of *Phytophthora*).
- The Group Leader Environment reviews all clearing applications and includes any specific requirements for the management of community and heritage issues.
- Actual areas cleared are reported in the annual (or triennial) environmental report.

5. SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

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- The Group Leader Survey is responsible for setting out (delineating as per survey flagging conventions) all areas to be cleared. They maintain a record of all areas applied for and actual areas cleared once clearing is complete. This information is reported (both areas and Arcview shape files) to the EC-R monthly.
- The Group Leader Survey with the assistance of the EC-R, undertakes an annual reconciliation of total area cleared by the end of March for the preceding year.
- Records of floor areas of windrowed vegetation is maintained by the Group Leader Survey and reported to the Rehabilitation Officer (RO) by the end of August.

6. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- In all cases clearing is undertaken in such a manner as to minimise disturbance to the underlying topsoil irrespective of whether the topsoil will be stripped at a later time or not.
- Mixing of topsoil or other soils with vegetation removed is avoided as this increases the cost of tubgrinding and reduces the quality of the mulch resource.
- Preference is given to field mulching of vegetation via forage harvester as opposed to pushing into windrows for later tubgrinding
- In area where vegetation is to be cleared but topsoil is not to be stripped, large trees and shrubs are preserved wherever practical.

7. DRILL LINE CLEARING

- The Mine Geologist advises the Environmental Group Leader of the location and timing of the planned drilling programme in advance to ensure that the necessary botanical and/or *Phytophthora* surveys are completed.
- The Mine Geologist ensures that the machinery conducting the clearing is washed down for *Phytophthora* and weed hygiene purposes prior to commencing clearing operations, and that any additional hygiene directions from the Environmental Group Leader EC-R are followed.
- The Mine Geologist ensures that the loader conducting the clearing travels with its bucket positioned 15 cm above the ground to minimise disturbance to the soil profile
- Large trees are to be protected where practical.

8. OPERATIONAL CLEARING

- The Group Leader Environment will ensure that the necessary botanical and/or *Phytophthora* surveys are conducted for all areas proposed for clearing, as set out within the Mine Plan.
- The originator of the clearing activities notifies the Group Leader Environment of the requirement to clear areas not identified in the current Mine Plan. This is to allow any necessary botanical and/or *Phytophthora* surveys to be completed.

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Areas outside the mine plan (either additional areas or areas cleared outside the planned timing) are clearly identified in the Application.

- Clearing is conducted using a 'rake' attachment (not using a bucket or blade).

9. AUDITING OF CLEARING ACTIVITIES

- Each year the RO will complete an annual field audit on an area of completed clearing.
- A checklist of areas to consider in the audit is provided on the intranet
- The RO discusses the results of the audit with the originator of the relevant Clearing Application and the EC-R.

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