

PASTORAL LAND BOARD

Pastoral Land Act – section 38(1)(h)

CONSENT TO CLEAR PASTORAL LAND

PERMIT NUMBER: PLC06/4

DESCRIPTION OF LAND THE SUBJECT OF THE PERMIT

Station Name: Mt Kepler
Pastoral Lease No: PPL 991
NT Portion: 2850
Pastoral District: Darwin Pastoral District

DETAILS OF APPROVED CLEARING

The Pastoral Land Board on 28 July 2006 granted consent to the clearing of approximately 1,431 hectares, in accordance with the attached schedule of conditions and the endorsed clearing plan.

REASONS FOR DECISION

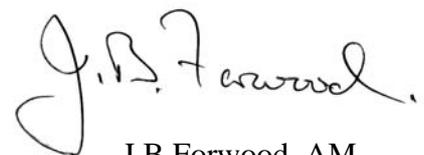
1. The application lodged on 19 April 2006 sought approval to clear a total of 1,800 hectares. The Board resolved to reduce the approved area for clearing to approximately 1,431 hectares to exclude areas not considered to be suitable for clearing and to incorporate appropriate setback from drainage lines.
2. The application is in accordance with the Land Clearing Guidelines 2002.
3. Soil types in the areas approved for clearing are suitable for selective clearing and pastoral land use.
4. The property management plan for land clearing development addresses relevant resource management issues.

PERIOD OF THE PERMIT

This permit will lapse if clearing has not commenced within 3 years and/or has not been completed within 5 years of the date of this permit; and the lessee will need to seek an extension of time from the Pastoral Land Board to complete the clearing.

APPEAL

Under section 119 of the *Pastoral Land Act*, a pastoral lessee who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Pastoral Land Board may appeal to the Pastoral Land Appeal Tribunal against the decision of the Board. Appeals may be lodged with the Registrar of the Appeal Tribunal within 28 days of notification of the decision of the Board.



J B Forwood AM
Chairman
Pastoral Land Board
18/8/2006

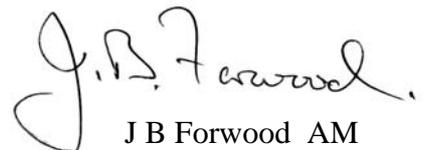
CONSENT TO CLEAR PASTORAL LAND

PERMIT NUMBER: PLC06/4 SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. Clearing carried out under this permit shall be in accordance with drawing number 06/991/2 endorsed as forming part of this permit, to the satisfaction of the Chairman, Pastoral Land Board.
2. All clearing is to be carried out on the contour.
3. Areas of rock outcrops and stone arrangements are not to be cleared and are to be avoided during clearing procedures and any construction works carried out.
4. Clearing and ongoing resource management shall be in accordance with the Property Management Plan for Land Clearing Development endorsed as forming part of this permit, to the satisfaction of the Chairman, Pastoral Land Board.
5. The Director Rangelands Management Branch, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts is to be notified before the commencement of clearing and on completion of the clearing development.

NOTES:

1. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority recommends that the pastoral lessee obtain an Authority Certificate to indemnify against prosecution under the *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*.
2. The permit holder is advised that there are statutory obligations under *the Weeds Management Act 2001* to take all practical measures to manage weeds on the property. For advice on weed management please phone (08) 8999 2020.
3. Fire prevention measures are to be implemented in accordance with the requirements of the *Bushfires Act*. Permits must be obtained from the Regional Fire Control Officer of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (telephone 89 220844) before ignition of any felled timber in this area.
4. The *Heritage Conservation Act 1991* protects archaeological places and objects, regardless of the level of documentation that the Heritage Conservation Services, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts has of such sites. It is an offence to undertake work on a place or object without the consent of the Minister for Natural Resource, the Environment and Heritage.
5. It is the responsibility of the pastoral lessee to refer the proposed development to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* should they believe the proposed development may have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance as outlined in that legislation.



J B Forwood AM
Chairman
Pastoral Land Board

18/8/2006



This is the Property Management Plan for Land Clearing Development referred to in Pastoral Land Clearing Permit No. PLC06/4 issued on 18/8/2006


CHAIRMAN
PASTORAL LAND

Property Management Plan for Land Clearing Development Pastoral Lease No: PPL 991, Mt Keppler Station

1. Overview of Proposed Clearing & Whole Property Development

Summary of clearing & development program for the whole property.

Mt Keppler Station comprises an area of 225 km², and was subdivided from the original Mt Bunday Station in 1995. We purchased the property in 1995, and operate the property in the name of our family company, White's Pastoral Co.

Prior to purchase by Whites Pastoral Company the property was poorly maintained and virtually abandoned. Our family have invested a considerable amount of capital into improving the property, and have worked hard to develop Mt Keppler into a profitable working pastoral enterprise.

A series of new watering points have been constructed on Mt Keppler with the aim of promoting improved and sustainable utilisation of the pastoral resource. As per livestock projection figures formerly submitted to DIPE Pastoral Branch it is evident that stock numbers are continuing to naturally increase towards supporting a viable and sustainable herd. The increase in stock numbers is occurring simultaneously with increased planting of improved pastures, and the requirement for additional watering points and other infrastructure.

The proposed land clearing outlined in this application forms an integral part of our overall property plan to improve property viability in a sustainable and orderly manner.

Mt Keppler is strategically located close to Darwin with reasonable access. The improved pastures intended to be sown on the proposed cleared land within close proximity to station stock handling facilities will form an integral role in the turn off of stock for live export during the traditionally "quieter months" when exporters often have trouble sourcing sufficient cattle numbers to meet market demands.

Details of the natural resources (native vegetation and pasture, soils, waters, average rainfall) and current status (is native vegetation stable, current land condition and weed status).

Soils : Fabian Landsystem – moderate to deep yellow to reddish earths.

Vegetation: Upper storey of open Eucalypts with thicker patches of Acacia hemifusa (Wattle), with understorey of Native Sorghum spp, Themeda, and Chrysopogon fallax.

Water: Suitable supplies of groundwater have proven difficult to obtain in the region, and as such a comprehensive network of dams are utilised for stock watering and to also evenly spread grazing through out the property for improved utilisation of the pastoral resource.

The increasing number of watering points has reduced the negative impact associated with "sacrifice areas" that often occurs in association with fewer isolated watering points such as regional bores.

Rainfall: Approx 1500 mm

Weeds: Mt Keppler has an integrated weed management plan in place, and currently works in close liaison with relevant Government Departments regarding the control of weeds located outside of the Pastoral Lease boundary, including Mimosa control along the banks of the Adelaide River and Deepwater localities. New quad bikes are purchased bi-annually specifically for weed control purposes and a budget of approximately \$30,000 - \$40,000 is spent annually on other associated costs.

Rangeland Condition: Mt Keppler is an active participant in the Tier 1 rangeland monitoring program with all sites listed as fair to good. No serious erosion problems exist on the property and particular care has been taken to locating waters, fences, roads etc; to minimise potential for erosion. Numerous land resource information is available with regards to Mt Keppler, including Technical Bulletin No 16 – Report on the Land Units of Mt Bunday Station (*Forster.B; & Fogarty.P 1975*).

How does the proposed clearing development fit into the long term aims for the property?

The long term aim is to improve both the economic viability and environmental sustainability of the property. Clearing the regrowth country and the selective clearing of small areas in some paddocks will reduce the mustering costs as it will reduce the use of helicopters. It is anticipated that the proposed land clearing and establishment of improved pastures will assist in achieving the above mentioned goals. This clearing and pasture development will also help in some areas with the control of weeds by allowing access. These weeds are mainly *Cena*, *Sida*, *Hiptis* and other woody weeds.

Economic viability will be enhanced via the availability of quality pastures and conserved fodder within reasonably close proximity to stock handling facilities aiding stock to be marketed in good physical condition and at a time when seasonal supply is low and corresponding prices are higher.

The proposed clearing will also complement existing areas of improved pastures on the property and in conjunction with strategically located watering points and other infrastructure. Also assist in preventing over grazing of inferior native pastures, and regeneration/continued improvement of historically grazed lands.

Number of cattle currently carried and proposed final number of cattle to be carried on the property following completion of the clearing development.

Mt Keppler currently supports a herd of 6920 head livestock of the following composition, 3000 cows, 800 heifers, 120 bulls, 800 steers and 2200 calves. These numbers are seasonally grazed with a large number of these animals being sent out on agistment over the dry season. The proposed clearing and pasture establishment is not aimed at increasing stock numbers, but rather to improve management of current stock numbers for both economic benefit and also to the benefit of the rangelands.

2. Cost and Benefit of Development

Cost of the proposed clearing development; total, per ha or km².

ESTABLISHMENT COST	COST \$
Bulldozer	
1800 Hectares @ 2 Hectare/hr @\$300 /hr	\$270,000
Seed bed : Ploughing Etc @ \$25 /hct	\$16,250
Seed	
650 Hectares @3 kg/hectare	\$39,000
Fertiliser	
50 - 150 Kg/hectare \$650 per tonne	\$64,000
Fuel	
Incorporated above	0
Labour Incorporated above	
TOTAL COST	\$388,625

Maintenance Cost

MAINTENANCE COST	\$
Fertiliser	
DAP @ 100 Kg /hectare Bi-anually @ \$650 ton	\$58,500
Weed Control	
Amicide \$15/hct Tri-anually	\$9,000
TOTAL COST	\$67,500

Projected increased annual income from the clearing development; per Ha or km²

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

COST	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Establishment	\$388,625				
Maintenance		\$67,500	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$67,500
Fodder Conservation	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total	\$398,652	\$77,500	\$77,500	\$77,500	\$77,500
BENEFIT					
Extra beef produced 162000kg @ \$1.50	\$243,000	\$243,000	\$243,000	\$243,000	\$243,000
Hay Cut	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Reduced Helicopter (Opp Costs)	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Total Income	\$298,000	\$298,000	\$298,000	\$298,000	\$298,000
Nett Benefit	\$-100,652	\$220,500	\$220,500	\$220,500	\$220,500

One of the benefits will be lower mustering costs. Up to \$15,000 per year.

3. Details of Proposed Clearing

Areas not to be cleared due to natural resource limitations (slope, rock outcrop, seasonal inundation, poor soils, highly erodible soils, watercourse and drainage line buffers and native vegetation strips to be retained for soil and drainage management).

All clearing will be completed in accordance with the “Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines”. No excessive slope will be cleared. Drainage lines, riparian vegetation, erodible soils etc; will not be cleared. Due to the relatively small size of the land to be cleared (less than 10 % of the property) and the location of the proposed cleared areas throughout the property, the majority of the landscape will remain in its native condition allowing for the free passage of wildlife.

Areas not to be cleared due to environmental and heritage considerations identified in Section II on the application form. Areas to be retained for wildlife corridors.

No sites identified.

Details of clearing method, technique & timing of each stage (eg chaining, windrowing, raking, burning, pin wheel rake, site preparation).

Chain. Burn. Rake. Plough etc;

It is intended that the vegetation will be chained in the early wet, allowing the timber to dry out in the wet season and then stick raked in the dry and sow the pastures in the early wet next year.

Details of waterway establishment, graded banks and other earthworks for run off management and infrastructure development.

Land proposed to be cleared is of low slope with no specific drainage lines (no drainage lines will be cleared). Sufficient ground cover incorporating permanent improved pastures will be maintained at all times thus controlling any runoff that may occur.

Earthworks should not be required.

Details of pasture establishment and development methods (species, sowing rates, sowing methods, fertiliser regimes).

Large areas of the proposed clearing are all ready very well established with Verano and Seca Stylo's. It is intended that these areas are cleared and fertilized. We are intending to use these areas rotationally for hay production and grazing. Some of these areas also have a number of weeds (Sena , Hipptis , Sida) which has proven reasonably difficult to control in the timber. The remaining areas have also been sown aerially to stylos but are not as well established. In these areas we are intending ploughing and re-seeding to Humidicola and Arnhem grass depending on soil types. It is also proposed that these pastures may be cut for hay on an opportunity basis but we would hope to mainly graze these areas. As fertilizing is very expensive it is proposed that the country is fertilized bi-annually depending on stocking rates and hay production. This is a system already in place on Mt Kepler and we have found it to be very successful.

4. Ongoing Resource Management

Grazing regimes and pasture management plan (periods of stocking, stocking rates, spelling, fertiliser and woody regrowth management)

The land will be stocked according to seasonal conditions and the amount of pasture present. The grazing program in place will be rotational grazing this allows pastures to be strategically spelled to allow for regeneration and seed set. Care will be taken not to over utilise the pastures (approx 50 – 60 % utilisation rate).

A fertiliser and weed control program will be implemented as per mentioned previously in this application.

Weed Management Plan (to include weed species present, area of weeds, areas at risk, control measures proposed, including measures to prevent new weed infestations)

Soil disturbance associated with land clearing practices tends to promote some minor weed occurrence in the first instance. Prior to sowing of pastures it is anticipated to ensure the land is free of any weeds. High quality weed free certified pasture seed only will be planted. Improved pastures will be regularly monitored for the occurrence of any weeds. Any noted weeds will be mechanically or chemically removed via spot spray in the first instance prior to any seed set. The pasture will be kept clean thus eliminating the requirement for any broad scale spray program eg; boom spray etc; although this machinery is present on the property should it ever be required.

Exotic Pasture Species Management Plan (to include details of exotic pasture species and areas planted. Buffer zones around exotic pasture species, location of watercourses, measures proposed to prevent spread to non target areas, grazing systems, location of fences & watering points)

It is anticipated that an unplanted buffer zone comprising of a fire break will be maintained surrounding the perimeter of the improved pastures. Past experience has demonstrated the suitability of the improved pasture for grazing purposes in the region, however an on going management plan is necessary for the pastures to become successfully established. The pasture is not expected to spread into neighbouring areas.

Fire Management Plan (use of fire for management and protection from wildfires.

Mt Keppler currently maintains a network of strategically located firebreaks and maintains fire fighting equipment on the property. The improved pastures biomass will be maintained via grazing and fodder conservation and will not present a fire hazard or related fire threat to the surrounding landscape.

Native Vegetation Management Plan (prevention of degradation to remaining native vegetation, including native vegetation buffers).

The clearing and establishment of the improved pastures will allow for increased spelling and reduction in grazing pressure on the surrounding native vegetation and will benefit the biodiversity of the region. Due to the relatively small size of the land to be cleared (less than 10 % of the property) and the location of the proposed cleared areas throughout the property, the majority of the landscape will remain in its native condition.

Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (erosion prevention and strategies for rehabilitation if erosion occurs.

Given that the land will be planted to permanent improved pastures then sufficient ground cover will be maintained. It is not anticipated to over utilise the improved pastures to the detriment of the asset.

Feral Animal Management Plan

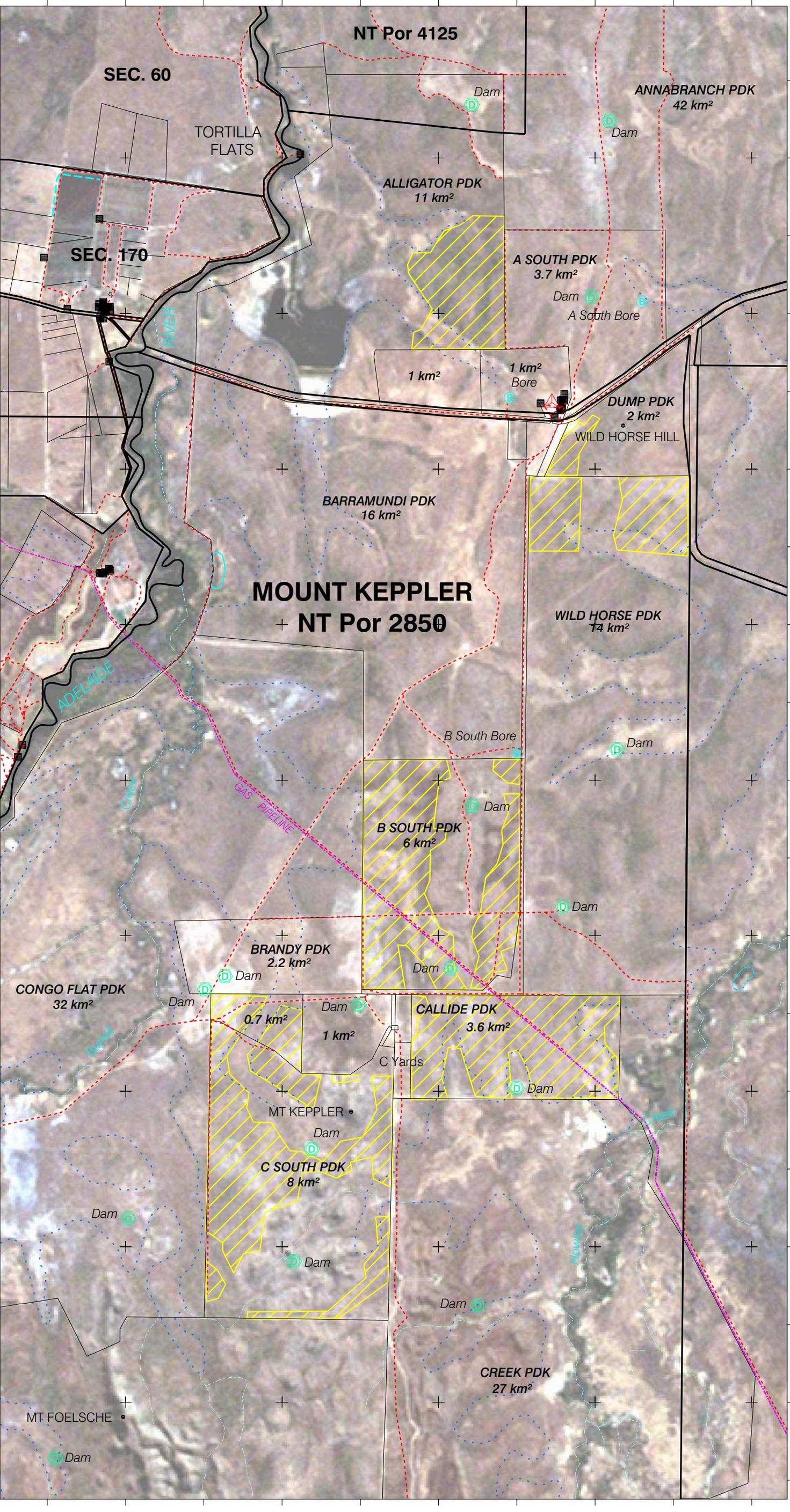
Dingo baiting and feral pig eradication is performed on Mt Kepler as required. There are no feral animals on the land proposed for development.

Donald Bruce White
Director

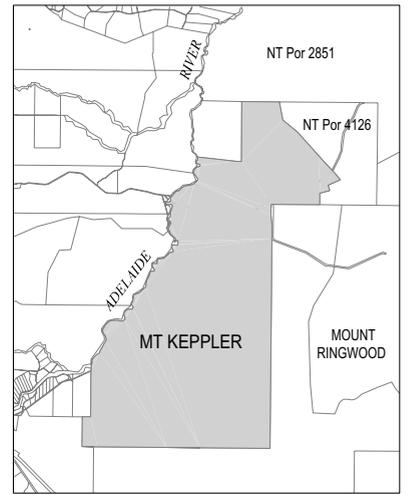
19 April 2006

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LOCALITY



LEGEND

-  AREA TO BE CLEARED
-  Fencelines; Stock/Drafting Yards
-  Cadastral Boundary
-  Tracks
-  Perennial Creek
-  Non Perennial Creek
-  Land Subject To Inundation

DATA SOURCE

Property Infrastructure:
Rangelands Management Branch, DNRETA, Palmerston.
(Current as at last DNRETA inspection date of 3/6/06)
For further property details refer to MKP.plt from this department

Cleared Areas:
Proposed by applicant and drawn using GPS point data
supplied by Rangelands Monitoring Branch, Palmerston.

Map Produced by:
Rangelands Management Branch, DNRETA, Palmerston.

Satellite Imagery:
Landsat 15 Image captured 2005. Bands 1 2 3.

For further information contact
Director Rangelands Management Branch
Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts
Phone: (08) 8999 4892, Fax: (08) 8999 4462
Plot file reference - Natural Resources, Palmerston.
CLR 06D991.pdf, Date 21 July, 2006

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Map Grid of Australia (MGA) Zone 52
Universal Transverse Mercator Projection
Horizontal datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia (GDA) 1994

Drawing No. 06 / 991 / 2

**MOUNT KEPPLER
PASTORAL LEASE
NT Por 2850 PPL 991**

AREAS APPROVED FOR CLEARING

This is the drawing referred to in Pastoral Land Clearing

Permit No: _____
Issued on: _____

CHAIRMAN, PASTORAL LAND BOARD

