

**PASTORAL LAND BOARD**

*Pastoral Land Act – section 38(1)(h)*

**CONSENT TO CLEAR PASTORAL LAND**

**PERMIT NUMBER: PLC06/5**

**DESCRIPTION OF LAND THE SUBJECT OF THE PERMIT**

Station Name: Labelle Downs  
Pastoral Lease No: PPL 1086  
NT Portion: 3219  
Pastoral District: Darwin Pastoral District

**DETAILS OF APPROVED CLEARING**

The Pastoral Land Board on 9 November 2006 granted consent to the re-clearing of approximately 852 hectares, in accordance with the attached schedule of conditions and the endorsed clearing plan.

**REASONS FOR DECISION**

1. The application is in accordance with the Land Clearing Guidelines 2002.
2. Soil types in the areas approved for clearing are suitable for clearing and pastoral land use.
3. 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  
14/11/2006

## CONSENT TO CLEAR PASTORAL LAND

### PERMIT NUMBER: PLC06/5 SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. Clearing carried out under this permit shall be in accordance with drawing number 06/1086/2 endorsed as forming part of this permit, to the satisfaction of the Chairman, Pastoral Land Board.
2. All buffer zones along drainage lines shall comply with the stream order and buffer widths recommended in the NT Land Clearing Guidelines, Technical Report 27/2002, to the satisfaction of the Chairman, Pastoral Land Board.
3. All clearing is to be carried out on the contour.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. The lessee shall seek advice from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, prior to the commencement of clearing works, regarding the extent and exact location of any recorded sacred sites located within the areas proposed to be cleared.
7. 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

# NORTHERN TERRITORY PASTORAL LAND BOARD



This is the Property Management Plan for Land Clearing  
Development referred to in Pastoral Land Clearing Permit  
No. PLC06/5 issued on 14/11/2006

  
CHAIRMAN  
PASTORAL LAND BOARD

## Property Management Plan for Land Clearing Development

### Pastoral Lease No: 1086 Labelle Downs Station

#### 1. Overview of Proposed Clearing & Whole Property Development

##### Summary of clearing & development program for the whole property.

Labelle Downs Station is a small to medium sized pastoral property comprising an area of 610 Km<sup>2</sup> being 65% floodplain and 35% upland.

We purchased the property in 2003, and operate the property as a family business.

Our family have invested a considerable amount of capital into the property, and have worked hard to continue developing Labelle Downs into a profitable working pastoral enterprise.

Labelle Downs is typical of a number of coastal NT pastoral properties attempting to improve over-all property viability and best utilise the productive floodplains as part of an integrated whole property management plan.

The floodplains provide high quality aquatic grass species for grazing of livestock during the dry season when flood waters have receded.

During the wet season the floodplains are inundated with water for several months and can not be utilised for grazing livestock, subsequently stock must be confined to grazing the upland areas.

Labelle Downs shares a common problem with other Top End coastal properties in the Northern Territory in that the upland grazing lands are of inferior quality for grazing with poor quality native pastures.

Given that the upland provides inferior grazing in comparison to the floodplains it is necessary to significantly reduce overall property stock numbers for the wet season period.

Labelle Downs Station stock numbers vary by approximately 50% between wet and dry seasons.

Parts of the inferior upland in its native state is often susceptible to over utilisation during this period of reliance for grazing purposes.

Traditionally the months of January/February are a period of high prices for live export stock due mostly to non availability of suitable supplies within the NT.

It is planned to tidy up areas of upland landtype that have been previously cleared and allowed to degenerate with woody weed growth in association with other weeds such as hyptis, sida, and senna.

Only previously cleared land that has degenerated with smaller sucker and weed growth will be blade ploughed and seeded.

Remaining stands of native vegetation will remain un touched.

The proposed development will improve productivity from a pastoral perspective, but will be beneficial to the environment through allowing control of weed spread eg, hyptis, sida, senna, that is currently difficult to access and control.

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.

Labelle Downs is strategically located close to Darwin with reasonable access.

Access to markets is set to be further improved with the construction of a new sealed road to Darwin via Berry Springs.

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 to meet markets.

Importantly, the improved pastures will allow for greater spelling of floodplains, and reduce grazing pressure upon inferior native pastures.

**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 : Basically comprise land types 5 d & e. There is no prescribed soil mapping covering the whole of Labelle.

Vegetation : Land has been previously cleared and regrowth comprises minor mid storey of open Eucalypts with some patches of Acacia hemifusa (Wattle), and Quinine Bush (Petal quadriloculare) with understorey dominated by weeds such as hyptis, sida, and senna with some native Sorghum spp, eriachne spp (wire grass) and Chrysopogon fallax (Golden Beard Grass).

Water : Suitable water supplies exist in the region, comprising a comprehensive network of bores, tank/toughs & dams are utilised to for stock watering and to also evenly spread grazing through out the property for improved utilisation of the pastoral resource assisting in reducing the negative impact associated with “sacrifice areas” that often occurs in association with fewer isolated watering points such as regional bores.

Rainfall : Approx 1550 mm

Weeds : Labelle Downs has an integrated weed management plan in place with particular emphasis upon mimosa control. Approximately \$100,000.00 is spent annually on the control of mimosa on the property.

New quad bikes are purchased annually specifically for weed control purposes on top of a weed control budget of \$100,000.00

Rangeland Condition : Labelle Downs 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.

### **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.

It is anticipated that the proposed cleaning up of regrowth and weeds associated with previous land clearing and the establishment of improved pastures on the land will assist in achieving the above mentioned goals.

Economic viability will be enhanced via the availability of quality pastures within reasonably close proximation 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 continued improvement of inferior weed infested landtypes.

Most importantly the proposed development will create some equity between floodplain and upland grazing, and assist in preventing potential over utilisation of inferior uplands.

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

Labelle Downs currently supports a herd of 12,000 breeders and progeny. The breeders are retained on the property year round, whilst progeny and culls are transferred to the adjoining Welltree Station that is also operated by the Camm family.

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 km<sup>2</sup>.**

An establishment cost of approximately \$250.00 per hectare (variable costs only : fuel seed fertiliser) utilising own equipment is anticipated.

Benefits are difficult to place a monetary value upon.

It is not intended to significantly increase stock numbers, however existing stock will graze the improved pastures resulting in improved conception, calving, and weaning weights, and result in stock being turned of in good condition with improved weight gains in the first instance.

For example if current stock are turned off with a potential 20 – 30 kg additional weight gain in a shorter growth period, then this would equate to an extra approximately \$50 per head return on investment.

The environmental benefits associated with increased spelling of floodplains and native pastures, combined with removal of weeds and elimination of a weed seed source is difficult to place a monetary value, but will undoubtedly benefit the local environment as a whole.

### **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).**

Clearing comprises a total area of approximately 852 hectares, comprising approximately 538 hectares in Emu Ck Paddock, and approximately 314 hectares in House West Paddock.

All clearing will be completed in accordance with the “Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines” .

It should be noted that this application applies to previous cleared land only that is subject to weed infestation.

No excessive slope will be cleared.

Drainage lines, riparian vegetation, erodible soils etc; will not be cleared.

Adequate areas of native vegetation have been retained through out the property for 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. Pending comment from relevant service authorities.

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

It is anticipated to eradicate the suckers and weeds present on this previously cleared land with a single pass of a Homan blade plough hitched to a Caterpillar D8 dozer.

The blade plough will effectively cut the roots at a depth of 20 -30 cm below ground level.

The benefit of this methodology is that there is minimal soil disturbance with the soil being gently raised and placed down in the same location.

Reduced soil disturbance means reduced potential for erosion.

The blade plough is also fitted with a seeding mechanism.

This clearing methodology eliminates the requirement for raking and windrowing and the associated subsequent erosion potential associated with windrowing/raking operations.

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

Most of the land listed for development has already been cleared some years ago, and this application predominantly relates to cleaning up of suckers and weeds. Land is generally of low slope with no specific drainage lines (no drainage lines will be cleared).

Remaining tall timber will not be cleared and the same applies to drainage lines.

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).**

As mentioned previously, pastures will be sown with a single pass of the Homan blade plough.

It is anticipated to sow Tully grass at a rate of 3 Kg per hectare.

A top dressing of approximately 100 Kg/Ha of DAP fertiliser may be required every second year pending pasture monitoring.

It is anticipated that a good stand of the pasture will smother out most weed species.

Pastures will be monitored for weed invasion and controlled if/when required eg, sprayed with Amicide 500.

## **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.

Pasture will be strategically spelled to allow for regeneration.

Care will be taken not to over utilise the pastures (approx 50 – 60 % utilisation rate).

A general maintenance and weed control program will be implemented if and when required as mentioned previously above.

### **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, although this should be minimal where blade ploughing techniques are utilised.

As per photograph one in the application form, the land proposed to be developed is significantly infected with a range of weeds.

The proposed development comprising cleaning up of the land for sowing of pastures will significantly improve the current weed situation.

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 broadscale spray program eg; boomspray 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)**

Significant areas of Tully pastures already exist adjacent the land proposed to be cleared/cleaned and has not presented any problems with spread.

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 and retained.

The pasture is not expected to spread into neighbouring areas.

It anticipated that an unplanted buffer zone comprising fire break will be maintained surrounding the perimeter of the improved pastures.

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

Labelle Downs currently maintains a network of strategically located firebreaks and maintains fire fighting equipment on property.

The improved pastures biomass will be maintained via grazing and should not present a fire hazard or related fire threat to the surrounding landscape.

Present experience is that the pasture species has a low growth habit and remains green long into the dry season, thus presenting a low fire hazard.

**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.

Significant areas of native vegetation exist/remain on the property to the benefit of wildlife movement and biodiversity as a whole.

The undeveloped native vegetation is located through out the property as to provide for uninhibited wildlife passage across all landtypes from the coast, upland, and rugged hills beyond the Labelle Downs boundary.

**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.

Erosion and sediment control measures should not be warranted.

**Feral Animal Management Plan**

Dingo baiting and feral pig eradication is performed on Labelle Downs as required.

There are no feral animals on the land proposed for development.

**APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Ham'.

10/07/06

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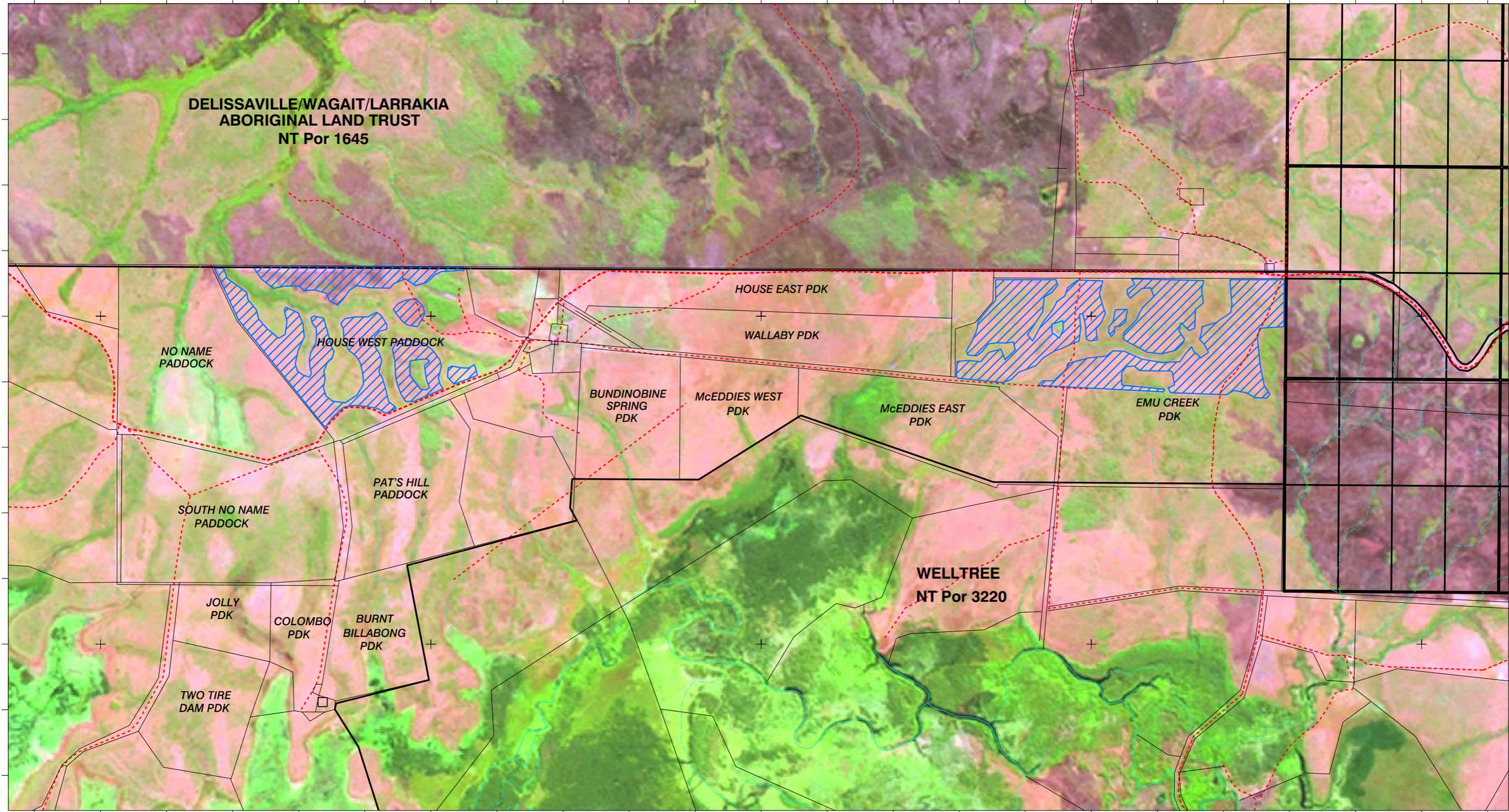
**DELISSAVILLE/WAGAIT/LARRAKIA  
ABORIGINAL LAND TRUST  
NT Por 1645**

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**LEGEND**

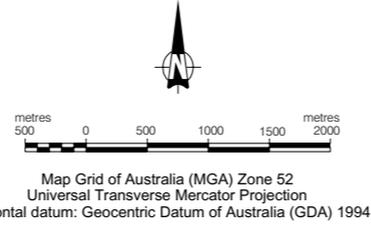
-  AREA TO BE CLEARED
-  Fencelines; Stock/Drafting Yards
-  Cadastral Boundary
-  Tracks
-  Perennial Creek
-  Non Perennial Creek

Property Infrastructure:  
Rangelands Management Branch, DNRETA, Darwin.  
(Current as at last DNRETA inspection date of 5/7/2006).  
For further property details refer to LBD.pdf from the department.

Cleared Ares  
Proposed by applicant and drawn using GPS point data  
supplied by the Rangelands Management Branch, Palmerston, N.T.

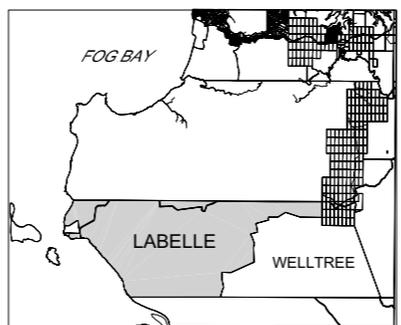
Map Produced by:  
Rangelands Management Branch, DNRETA, Palmerston, N.T.

Satellite Imagery:  
Landsat Image captured 31/5/2005.  
Bands 3 4 5, False Colours Blue Green Red.



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**LOCALITY**



Drawing No. 06 / 1186 / 2  
**LABELLE DOWNS  
PASTORAL LEASE  
NT Por 3219 PPL 1086**  
**AREAS APPROVED  
FOR CLEARING**

This is the drawing referred to in Pastoral Land Clearing

Permit No: .....

Issued on: .....

.....  
CHAIRMAN, PASTORAL LAND BOARD

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 - Rangelands Management, Palmerston  
CLR 06D1139.pdf, Date: 29th July, 2006.