

# **BMC Dragline Move Vegetation Clearing Procedure**

**1 December 2016**

# Table of Contents

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<b>1.0 Vegetation Clearing Procedure</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope	1
1.2 Clearing Guidelines	1
1.3 Induction and Toolbox Notes	2
1.4 Inspections and Monitoring	2
1.5 Incident Reporting	3
1.6 Recording and Reporting	3
1.7 Continual Improvement	3

# 1.0 Vegetation Clearing Procedure

## 1.1 Scope

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the relevant Environmental Authority, permit and licence conditions and relevant management plans for the specific project underway.

The following procedure outlines the process and key points which will be implemented during the clearing of vegetation within ecologically significant areas. Ecologically significant areas are those identified during environmental assessment and approval process and/or those recorded on relevant databases and maps.

## 1.2 Clearing Guidelines

### Prior to Clearing Activities

1. Where practicable, schedule clearing to occur outside of known breeding seasons. **Site Environmental Officer**
2. The Environmental Officer will ensure any necessary vegetation clearing approvals are obtained prior to clearing. **Site Environmental Officer**
3. **Hold Point reference:** Prior to any clearing, the site shall be ground truthed and areas where vegetation is to be cleared/ and or retained, and will be clearly marked. Clearing of vegetation shall not occur outside those boundaries. **Site Supervisor and Site Environmental Officer**
4. **Hold Point reference:** Prior to any clearing a suitably qualified fauna spotter/catcher will undertake a pre-clearance fauna survey to identify all wildlife that may potentially inhabit the area. The survey should:
  - a) identify and flag all Hollow Bearing Trees (HBTs) and potential breeding sites within the clearing area and where possible search hollows for resident fauna using methods that may include the use of binoculars, cameras on poles, ladders or mechanical methods such as cherry-pickers where feasible and appropriate .
  - b) involve a search of likely ground habitats such as rocky areas, fallen logs and woody debris, gullies and waterways and banks (including any artificial habitat sites such as discarded mine or farm equipment, water tanks etc)
  - c) if fauna is present and can be relocated, this shall be undertaken by the fauna spotter catcher, with GPS coordinates recorded at both the original and relocated sites. The relocation site should be located in near-by habitat that is not subject to vegetation clearing. **Site Environmental Officer, Fauna Spotter/Catcher.**
5. All HBTs identified as having habitat value will be marked using flagging tape. All HBTs will be removed in accordance with the procedure outlined below. **Site Environmental Officer**
6. The Environmental Officer shall ensure the name and contact details for the local animal hospital/veterinary surgeon shall be included on the Emergency Contacts List and is made available to the Site Supervisor. **Site Environmental Officer, Fauna Spotter/Catcher.**

### During Clearing

7. The Site Supervisor is to ensure all **HOLD POINTS** have been met prior to commencing vegetation clearing. **Site Supervisor.**
8. A fauna spotter/catcher will be present during clearing of vegetation with high ecological values to prevent injury or death to fauna detected prior to clearing. **Site Supervisor, Fauna Spotter/Catcher.**

9. Where a fauna spotter is required to be present during clearing, works should not commence/continue until the fauna spotter/catcher has given notification that no fauna lies directly in the path of clearing plant. **Site Supervisor / Fauna Spotter/Catcher.**
10. **HBT Removal:** All HBTs that require removal will be inspected for resident fauna immediately prior to clearing by a fauna spotter /catcher using methods that may include the use of binoculars, cameras on poles, ladders or mechanical methods such as cherry-pickers where appropriate. All reasonable attempts will be made to clear these trees as late in the day as possible to avoid disturbing/dislocating nocturnal fauna in the middle parts of the day and thus exposing them to a greater period of daylight without shelter.
  - a) The method for clearing HBT that are confirmed habitat trees will incorporate the use of a 'grab' or 'sling' on an excavator to slowly lower the HBT.
  - b) All hollows will be inspected immediately after felling to ensure that no fauna are present in the hollows that were missed by the original pre-clearance survey. **Site Supervisor, Fauna Spotter/Catcher**
11. When certain fauna is located, e.g. gliders or other nocturnal fauna at risk of predation, the spotter catcher will ensure the fauna is taken into care and released either that evening into in suitable habitat as close to the capture site as possible. **Fauna Spotter/Catcher.**
12. Once cleared and where possible, the hollow bearing sections of the tree will be set aside for relocation into designated areas of remnant vegetation where possible. This will contribute toward habitat provisions for terrestrial fauna (Coarse Woody Debris). **Site Supervisor.**
13. Any native fauna injured as a result of construction shall be transported to a native animal hospital / refuge or veterinarian by appropriate / qualified persons. Note: should the fauna be considered dangerous to human health, e.g. venomous snake, flying fox, obviously diseased, the Environmental Officer should be notified. These animals should only be handled by appropriately qualified persons. If unable to be moved, the Vet shall attend the site to determine the course of action in the best interest of the animal. If required, BHP Billiton will provide appropriate compensation for the management of injured fauna. **Environmental Officer** (assisted by fauna spotter catcher if required).
14. Land clearing debris must not be pushed into gullies, watercourses, other drainage lines or waterlogged areas. **Site Supervisor.**

### **1.3 Induction and Toolbox Notes**

During induction/tool box sessions all persons will be made aware of these requirements, including:

- instructions to stay within the clearing footprint to prevent damage and harm to adjacent fauna and habitat;
- weed control and hygiene rules;
- vegetation protection and clearing limited; and
- fauna protection and action for injured fauna.

### **1.4 Inspections and Monitoring**

Clearing limits and protective measures are informally inspected daily as part of routine construction activity. Formal inspections are conducted weekly and recorded on the inspection form. These inspections will include weed, vegetation and fauna management requirements. Any maintenance or repairs shall be undertaken as soon as practicable after observance of the defect. Welfare of native fauna and habitat shall be monitored as part of routine construction activity throughout the duration of the construction phase of the project.

## **1.5 Incident Reporting**

In the event of injury or death of any significant fauna species (i.e. threatened or rare species) , all incidents will be recorded and reported to DEHP by BHP Billiton or its delegated authority within 48 hours of the incident occurring. The details for reporting incidents to DEHP are as follows:

- The coordinates of where the incident occurred will be recorded;
- The checking methods will be outlined i.e. confirmation the pre-clearance surveys were undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined above;
- Confirmation that the spotter/catcher was suitably qualified; and
- Suggested mitigation measure to ensure that a similar incident does not occur in the future.

Furthermore, all injuries to, and deaths of native fauna will be recorded by the spotter catcher (including species type and GPS location), and provided to the site Environmental Officer and BHP Billiton on completion of the clearing works. These records will be kept by the Environmental officer and will be made available to DEHP upon request.

## **1.6 Recording and Reporting**

Reporting will be undertaken by the licensed spotter-catcher whilst on site during clearing works and the completed register will be forwarded to DERM by BHP Billiton upon completion of the clearing. The fauna spotter catcher shall supply a report to BHP Billiton detailing:

- spotter catcher activities undertaken at each area;
- types of habitats removed during clearing, including GPS locations.
- fauna relocated and/or injured/ killed, including GPS coordinates;
- number of hollow bearing trees or nests removed or relocated during clearing works, including GPS coordinates and photos of new locations;
- number of hollow bearing trees removed confirmed as hosting the listed species or are existing breeding places; and
- types of habitats removed during clearing, including GPS locations.

## **1.7 Continual Improvement**

The effectiveness of this procedure in delivering specified and desirable outcomes is monitored through the results of inspections and non-conformances, which are issued as the works progress. Any corrective actions or amendments to the procedure that are required are initiated at the time of inspection.