

Huntly and Willowdale current mining operations

Environmental assessment



Terrestrial fauna



Alcoa has been operating in Western Australia since 1963. Our Huntly and Willowdale mines send mined bauxite to our Pinjarra and Wagerup refineries where it's refined into alumina, the material used to make aluminium.

Aluminium plays a key role in decarbonisation. It's found in solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles, medical equipment and more. We continue to rely on it every day.

The assessment

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is reviewing some of the current mining activities at the Huntly and Willowdale mines to ensure they meet State environmental standards and minimises impacts to the environment, cultural values and surrounding communities.

While the EPA completes its assessment, Alcoa will continue to operate under an exemption granted by the WA Government – maintaining bauxite supply and supporting thousands of local jobs.

EPA environmental objective aims to

protect terrestrial fauna to maintain biodiversity
and keep ecosystems healthy.

Proposed activities

Alcoa's proposed mining activities that could impact
terrestrial fauna include:

Clearing land for roads, infrastructure, and
mining areas.

Transitioning mining operations into new locations.

Operating mining and haulage equipment.

Key terms

Terrestrial fauna – Animals that live on or use land for part of their lives, including vertebrates (birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and freshwater fish) and invertebrates (arachnids, insects, crustaceans, molluscs, and worms).

Short range endemic fauna – Animal species that live in a small and specific area such as spiders, snails and millipedes.

Black cockatoo nesting trees classifications:

- **Known** – Have a hollow with recorded breeding activity.
- **Suitable** – Have hollows but no recorded use.

Pre-clearance surveys – Environmental surveys to identify important habitats, threatened species, or black cockatoo nesting trees that need protection before any clearing of land is done.

Potential impacts

Mining activities have the potential to impact terrestrial fauna in the following ways:

Habitat loss and disturbance –

Clearing and fragmentation of vegetation, changes in water quality and availability, and impact of introduced light sources.

Feral animal attraction – Habitat changes, may attract feral animals, increasing risks to native species.

Pollution and hazardous

spills – Leaks from storage and handling of hazardous materials can affect soil, water, and fauna.

Noise and collisions –

Infrastructure and equipment may disturb fauna, with risks of entrapment or collision.

Weeds, disease, and dieback –

Soil and vehicle movement can introduce weeds and plant diseases, changing habitat for fauna.

Managing impacts

Alcoa is committed to minimise our impacts on fauna with Fauna Protection and Return one of the five core pillars of our Forest Research Centre. Evidence shows 100% of mammals, and about 90% of birds and reptiles return to rehabilitated areas within 20 years. We manage potential impacts to terrestrial fauna through the application of the mitigation hierarchy – avoidance, minimisation, rehabilitation and offsets.

Avoid

- No disturbance in high-conservation value areas, identified through aerial surveys and environmental assessments. These include old growth forests, national parks and conservation reserves.
- Pre-clearance surveys identify threatened species and habitat, including black cockatoo nesting trees, critical aquatic populations and other threatened or priority flora or fauna.
- No clearing for mining or infrastructure that can be placed in an alternative location, within 30 m of known or suitable black cockatoo nest trees, or night roosting trees.
- No clearing for mining within stream zones and large rocky outcrops with high-value fauna habitat.

Minimise

- Clearing footprint limited to 4119 ha across the proposal
- Clearing of any short-range endemic fauna habitat is avoided unless the species is known to exist outside clearing areas.
- Clearing in sensitive areas is restricted to essential infrastructure, such as roads and haul routes.

Rehabilitate

For decades, we have continued to follow and develop leading science-based rehabilitation practices.

- As part of this proposal, we will rehabilitate a minimum of 3,159 ha between 2024 and 2027.
- Rehabilitation will be prioritised near environmentally significant areas.
- Logs and rocks are returned as part of the early stages of rehabilitation to create fauna habitat.

Offsets

Our offset commitments are designed to protect, enhance and manage key habitat areas for threatened species in State Forest. We plan to maintain and enhance:

- 8,609 ha of black cockatoo habitat
- 5,062 ha of chuditch habitat
- 119 ha of quokka habitat, and
- 8,512 ha of woylie habitat.

In most cases, an area may represent habitat for more than one species.

How Alcoa monitors potential impacts

Fauna monitoring – A qualified fauna spotter will be on site during harvesting and clearing to identify and relocate fauna such as chuditch or quokka.

Fauna mapping – Spatial system records fauna habitat locations based on survey outcomes.

Clearing limits/extent – Clearing reconciliation conducted to ensure we comply with our clearing limits and extents.



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