

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT
POLICY STATEMENT NO. 10
REHABILITATION OF DISTURBED LAND
NOVEMBER 1986

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

To regenerate, on disturbed land, self-regulating ecosystems, consistent with the purpose for which the land is to be managed.

BACKGROUND

Disturbance is defined here as any activity or process producing, or likely to produce, long-term degradation of habitats and ecosystems. It may occur before the land is acquired by CALM, as an unavoidable part of CALM management, because of inadequate management in the past, or as a result of activities by other agencies or natural processes.

Disturbance may be caused by such things as mining or quarrying, clearing for agriculture, dieback disease, grazing pressure, excessive burning and physical damage by vehicles, machinery and people. It is expressed in various ways including changes to natural assemblages of plants and animals (especially the loss of species), soil compaction and/or erosion, salination and reduction in water quality, safety problems or threats to private land or other habitats.

The type, and extent, of rehabilitation required will vary depending upon the type and extent of the disturbance. The aim of regeneration in a particular case, and therefore the procedure used, may also depend upon the priority use of the land in question. For instance, intensive uses, such as the clearfelling/replanting of pines, resulting in an alteration to natural ecosystems would be maintained where that is the designated land-use.

The policies presented below are based upon the following three principles.

Firstly, CALM land should be managed as far as possible to avoid disturbance. Rehabilitation should be the last option in a series of management decisions designed to protect the environmental values of CALM land. (other policy statements deal with this matter in more detail).

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Secondly, rehabilitation should aim to restore original values, including indigenous communities where appropriate and help to enhance all potential uses provided the priority uses are not adversely affected.

Thirdly, policies on rehabilitation must be consistent with the four primary objectives of the CALM Corporate Plan.

POLICY

The Department will:

1. Prevent disturbance causing activities on CALM land wherever possible, particularly on Nature Reserves, National Parks, and Conservation MPAS, and in cases where the activity will lead to irreversible degradation of ecosystems or habitats;- (this clause does not prevent duly authorised necessary operations, or the implementation of an approved management plan).
2. In the event of planned activities on CALM land which will cause disturbance, establish conditions for such activities which minimise the area and degree of disturbance, and define the type of rehabilitation required.
3. Ensure that all CALM land which has suffered disturbance, as defined, is rehabilitated as far as practicable, so that it will best meet the needs of the designated land use.
4. Prevent or suppress the invasion by weeds of disturbed or rehabilitated areas.
5. Ensure that, whenever possible, the cost of rehabilitation is borne by the agency responsible for the disturbance.
6. Ensure that rehabilitation provides for as many secondary land uses as possible, consistent with 3 above.
7. Apply one of the following four procedures wherever nature conservation is the priority use, as in Nature Reserves, National Parks and Flora, Fauna and Landscape MPAS.
 - (i) Natural regeneration of indigenous vegetation is the preferred method of rehabilitation, and where necessary, steps should be taken to encourage it.

Where (i) is not possible, or needs supplementing, local species, grown from seed or cuttings obtained locally, should be planted, with restoration as far as possible of the original species diversity, composition and spacing.

Where conditions have been changed to such an extent that local species cannot grow (eg. on areas affected by salinity, dieback disease, or the removal. of topsoil) , or where a desired purpose, such as providing shade, cannot be met by local species, species suitable to the conditions and purpose should be planted. However, where more than one species are suitable, then that which occurs naturally closest to the rehabilitation-site should be used, with seeds and

cuttings collected from the nearest possible source.

- (iv) The necessity, and feasibility, of reintroducing species, or aggregations of species, of the original fauna will be considered.
 - 8. For areas where nature conservation is not the priority use, rehabilitate ecosystems to enhance designated uses, or to maintain them at an appropriate level; however, the steps in 7. above, including consideration of the reintroduction of native fauna, should be followed where they do not interfere with this aim.
 - 9. Carry out, or encourage research to provide a sound scientific basis for rehabilitation procedures.
 - 10. Maintain detailed operational guidelines based on the best current techniques, and ensure that disturbance causing activities and subsequent rehabilitation are fully integrated into land use planning and management.
 - 11. Establish criteria by which to judge the success of rehabilitation on land for different purposes.
 - 12. Monitor regeneration programmes to ensure that the aims are being achieved, and to contribute to the continuing improvement in methods.
 - 13. Liaise with mining companies, Government Departments and other land users to ensure an exchange of ideas on the latest techniques and standards in rehabilitation.
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- 14. Actively promote, and provide advice and assistance for, the regeneration of native vegetation, and the use of the most fitting rehabilitation methods, on areas of land outside the CALM estate.

Syd Shea
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Distribution: Lists A, B, C, D, E, F.