

## Case study

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### **Protecting the Cobblers Peg**

As part of its Biodiversity Action Plan for the Bowen Basin, Rio Tinto Coal Australia is entering into a Nature Refuge Agreement with the Queensland Government to protect an endangered plant species.

The small yellow native daisy - known as the Belyando Cobblers Peg (*Trioncinia retroflexa*) - was thought to be extinct, but was rediscovered during vegetation surveys in 1996 for the then proposed Clermont Mine.

The agreement will preserve populations of the species for long term conservation, while new research will help understand what caused its decline and how best to re-establish it.

The Belyando Cobblers Peg is a small perennial daisy, found only in north eastern Queensland in bluegrass grasslands that, since rediscovery, is listed as Endangered under Schedule 2, Part 2, of the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006*.

As part of the construction of Clermont Mine it was recognised that a number of individual plants would need to be disturbed during construction of the Peak Downs Highway diversion.

A clearing permit was obtained under the *Nature Conservation Act 1999* to allow for the clearance of these individual plants, subject to a number of conditions, one of which was to undertake further research and development into the endangered species.

To meet this commitment, Rio Tinto Coal Australia has established a Collaborative Research Agreement with The University of Queensland with assistance from the Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland Herbarium) to undertake further research on the species.

The research project will build on research undertaken up to 2005 which was aimed at understanding the factors that led to the species' decline, and the best approach for re-establishing it.

Due to be completed by 2012, the goal of this research project is to aid in the re-establishment of Belyando Cobblers Peg (*T. retroflexa*) populations on the Clermont Mine site and to improve the understanding of the ecology and life history of the endangered species.

The research will have three key components; germination and competition trials, field trials and population genetics, and results from the research project will improve Rio Tinto Coal Australia's ability to protect and maintain this species on the Clermont Mine site and surrounding areas.

All current and future populations of *T. retroflexa* will be preserved for long term conservation, under Nature Refuge Agreements, which Rio Tinto Coal Australia is in the process of finalising with the EPA. These populations will not be impacted by mining.