



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1021/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Department of Education and Training

1.3. Property details

Property: HOPETOUN TOWNSITE LOT 465 (House No. 2 BUCKIE HOPETOUN 6348)
HOPETOUN TOWNSITE LOT 464 (House No. 26 CHAMBERS HOPETOUN 6348)
Local Government Area: Shire Of Ravensthorpe
Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
1.58		Mechanical Removal	Building or Structure

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Beard Vegetation Association 42 - Shrublands; mallee & acacia scrub on south coastal dunes (Hopkins et al., 2001).	The vegetation at the site is a Eucalyptus angulosa / E. falcata mallee 4m high over a Spyridium majoranifolium Open Heath to 1.4m over Gahnia sp (Headland) Open Sedgeland (ATA Environmental, 2005).	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994).	The vegetation over most of the site was considered to be in very good to excellent condition. The only weed species to note was Bridal Creeper. Small patches of disturbance to the vegetation were recorded in part of the site adjacent to the playing fields (ATA Environmental, 2005).

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

(a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
The area under application is small (1.58 hectares) and surrounded by residential development. Within 10km lies one edge of the Fitzgerald River National Park, as such the biodiversity values of the site are considered to be low to moderate when compared to the local area.

It was also the view of the Environmental Consultants that the clearing of vegetation from this project area is unlikely to have a significant impact on the biodiversity value at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels in this region (ATA Environmental, 2005).

Methodology ATA Environmental (2005)
GIS Database:
-Ravensthorpe 1.4m Orthomosaic - DLI 02

(b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
Extensive information with respect to fauna was provided in the ATA Environmental (2005) report as outlined below:
- The habitat type in the area under application was identified as scrub mallee over open heath, over open sedgeland.
- Using FaunaBase, previous surveys and habitat preferences 35 species of reptiles, 10 species of amphibians and 23 species of mammals (including 5 introduced species) and 95 species of birds potentially occur within the project area. However, taking into account the small size of the area and that it is surrounded by development, a much smaller number of species are likely to actually be present.
- Three species of conservation significance, Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, Perigrine Falcon and Rainbow Bee-

eater, may be found within the project area but are unlikely to rely on the site for breeding purposes.

- There are large areas of high quality habitat within close proximity of the proposed site including a number of Nature Reserves and National Parks.

In summary, there are no special features or specific habitat within the project area that would indicate it has ecological significance that is different to other similar areas surrounding Hopetoun (ATA Environmental, 2005).

Methodology ATA Environmental (2005)

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.

Comments Proposal is not at variance to this Principle

Within a 10km radius of the area under application the following Declared Rare (DRF) and Priority flora species are listed as occurring:

- Eucalyptus burdettiana (DRF),
- Andersonia carinata (Priority 2), and
- Lechenaultia superba (Priority 4).

None of the plant species identified during the flora survey carried out in September 2005 are Declared Rare or Priority flora species (ATA Environmental, 2005).

Based on the high quality and content of the optimally timed flora survey, it is considered that this proposal is not at variance to this Principle.

Methodology ATA Environmental (2005)

GIS Database:

-Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 01/07/05

(d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no recorded Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC's) in the area under application with the closest approximately 40km north east of the site.

The vegetation type is not a Threatened Ecological Community at the State or Commonwealth level (ATA Environmental, 2005)

Methodology ATA Environmental (2005)

GIS Database:

-Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 12/04/05

(e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Comments Proposal is not at variance to this Principle

The State Government is committed to the National Objective and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 (AGPS, 2001) which includes a target that prevents clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30% of that pre-European settlement (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002; EPA, 2000).

The area under application has above 50% representation for the IBRA Bioregion (Esperance Plains), for the Shire (Ravensthorpe) and 96.5% for the Beard Vegetation Association 42 (Shepherd et al., 2001; Hopkins et al., 2001).

The benchmark of 15% representation in conservation reserves (JANIS, 1997) has been exceeded for Beard Vegetation Association 42 (Hopkins et al., 2001) with 46.8% currently reserved.

Information provided by ATA Environmental (2005) suggests that the vegetation type recorded on site is slightly different to Vegetation Association 42. However, the Association they recorded also has extensive distribution along the south coast from Hopetoun to Esperance.

Methodology Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002), EPA (2000), Shepherd et al. (2001), Hopkins et al. (2001), AGPS (2001), JANIS (1997), ATA Environmental (2005)

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments Proposal is not at variance to this Principle

No watercourses or wetlands of significance are present within the area proposed to be cleared. While an ANCA wetland lies within 10km of the site, it is higher in the catchment and will not be affected by the proposed

clearing. The site is approximately 350m from the coastline and all surface flows are likely to be directed there via drains through the residential development that surrounds the proposed area.

Methodology GIS Databases:
-Hydrographic, linear - DOE 1/2/04
-Ravensthorpe 1.4m Orthomosaic - DLI 02
-ANCA, Wetlands - CALM 08/01

(g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**
The sites elevation ranges from 12.7m AHD on the small ridge in the west of the site to 7.5m AHD in a small valley. The soils on the site are all sandy ranging from pink to grey in colour with small limestone fragments on the ridge (ATA Environmental, 2005).
The proposed clearing is for 1.58 hectares approximately 350m from the Southern Ocean and the site is surrounded by residential development. Given the above and the intended use of the site as a school, the proposed clearing will not result in any appreciable land degradation.

Methodology ATA Environmental (2005)
GIS Databases:
-Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02
-Ravensthorpe 1.4m Orthomosaic - DLI 02

(h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
Within a 10km radius of the area under application one CALM managed conservation area exists, the Fitzgerald River National Park, approximately 8km north west of the site. The proposed clearing is unlikely to impact this reserve primarily because of its position in a developed townsite and also due to the small area proposed to be cleared.

Methodology GIS Database:
-CALM Managed Lands and Water - CALM 1/07/05

(i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**
The area under application is not within a proclaimed or gazetted water protection area. Hopetoun's Public Drinking Water Source Protection Areas are approximately 2km north of the proposed area and higher up in the catchment.
Given the small area to be cleared (1.58 hectares), the position of the site in the townsite of Hopetoun, the intended use of the site as a school and proximity to the ocean, this application is not considered to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS Database:
-Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA's) - DOE 07/02/06

(j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**
With an average annual rainfall of 425mm (ATA Environmental, 2005), proximity to the coast and low gradient at the site, it is considered that the proposed clearing will not lead to increased peak flood height or duration.

Methodology ATA Environmental (2005)
GIS Database:
-Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02
-Ravensthorpe 1.4m Orthomosaic - DLI 02

Planning instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments
The area under application is in the process of being excised from two Reserves and vested with the Department of Education and Training (DET). Presently it is vested partly with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) for the purposes of Government requirements; vacant land - residential. The other half is vested with the Shire of Ravensthorpe for the purposes of recreation; bowling club; hall and sports ground. Permission was given by both organisations to the DET (DoE TRIM ref AI932) to use the land while the change

in vesting takes place, and as such DET has a legal interest in the area under application.

The Department for Planning and Infrastructure has confirmed that there are no Native Title implications in the creation of the new reserve (DoE TRIM ref AI934).

Methodology

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method Applied	area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Building or Structure	Mechanical Removal	1.58	Grant	<p>The Clearing Principles have been addressed and the proposed clearing is either not or not likely to be at variance to any of the Principles.</p> <p>The Department recognises that the proponent has minimised clearing where possible in the planning of the school and will use local native species as part of the landscaping when the school is complete.</p> <p>Control of the weed species Bridal Creeper within the remaining native vegetation surrounding the proposed school will protect the values of these remnants. This has been imposed as a condition on the permit.</p> <p>The assessing officer therefore recommends that the permit be granted.</p>

5. References

- AGPS (2001) The national objective and targets for biodiversity conservation 2001-2005. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- ATA Environmental (2005) Flora and Fauna Assessment; Hopetoun Primary School. Report No 2005/155 for the Department of Education and Training, Western Australia.
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002) Biodiversity Action Planning. Action planning for native biodiversity at multiple scales; catchment bioregional, landscape, local. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria.
- EPA (2000) Environmental protection of native vegetation in Western Australia. Clearing of native vegetation, with particular reference to the agricultural area. Position Statement No. 2. December 2000. Environmental Protection Authority.
- Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.
- JANIS Forests Criteria (1997) Nationally agreed criteria for the establishment of a comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve System for Forests in Australia. A report by the Joint ANZECC/MCFFA National Forest Policy Statement Implementation Sub-committee. Regional Forests Agreement process. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

6. Glossary

Term	Meaning
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
DAWA	Department of Agriculture
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection (now DoE)
DoE	Department of Environment
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
EPP	Environmental Protection Policy
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
WRC	Water and Rivers Commission (now DoE)

