



CLEARING PERMIT

Granted under section 51E of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

Purpose Permit number:	CPS 10655/1
Permit Holder:	Fenix Ruvidini Pty Ltd
Duration of Permit:	From 7 November 2024 to 7 November 2034

ADVICE NOTE

Revegetation offset

The revegetation offset referred to in condition 8 of this permit is intended to facilitate the *revegetation* of a total of 0.69 hectares of *native vegetation* within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa, that is significant as a remnant of *native vegetation* in an area that has been extensively cleared.

The permit holder is authorised to clear *native vegetation* subject to the following conditions of this permit.

PART I – CLEARING AUTHORISED

1. Clearing authorised (purpose)

The permit holder is authorised to clear *native vegetation* for the purpose of road intersection upgrades.

2. Land on which clearing is to be done

Lot 502 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa
Geraldton Mount Magnet Road reserve (PIN 11667673), Mullewa

3. Clearing authorised

The permit holder must not clear more than 0.437 hectares of *native vegetation* within the areas cross-hatched yellow in Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

4. Period during which clearing is authorised

The permit holder must not clear any *native vegetation* after 7 November 2029.

PART II – MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

5. Avoid, minimise, and reduce impacts and extent of clearing

In determining the *native vegetation* authorised to be cleared under this permit, the permit holder must apply the following principles, set out in descending order of preference:

- (a) avoid the clearing of *native vegetation*;
- (b) minimise the amount of *native vegetation* to be cleared; and
- (c) reduce the impact of clearing on any environmental value.

6. Weed and dieback management

When undertaking any clearing authorised under this permit, the permit holder must take the following measures to minimise the risk of introduction and spread of *weeds* and *dieback*:

- (a) clean earth-moving machinery of soil and vegetation prior to entering and leaving the area to be cleared;
- (b) ensure that no known *dieback* or *weed*-affected soil, *mulch*, *fill*, or other material is brought into the area to be cleared; and
- (c) restrict the movement of machines and other vehicles to the limits of the areas to be cleared.

7. Directional clearing

The permit holder must:

- (a) conduct *clearing* activities in a slow, progressive manner towards adjacent *native vegetation*; and
- (b) allow a reasonable time for fauna present within the area being cleared to move into adjacent *native vegetation* ahead of the *clearing* activity.

8. Offset- *revegetation* and *rehabilitation* with a reference site

Within 24 months of the commencement of clearing and at an *optimal time* the permit holder must:

- (a) retain the vegetative material and topsoil removed by clearing authorised under this permit and stockpile the vegetative material and topsoil to be used in the *revegetation* in an area that has already been cleared within the area cross hatched red in Figure 2 of Schedule 2;
- (b) commence *revegetation* of the areas cross hatched red in Figure 2 of Schedule 2 by;
 - (a) laying the appropriate vegetative material and topsoil retained under condition 8(a);
 - (b) deliberately *planting native vegetation* that will result in similar species composition, structure and density of *native vegetation* to the adjacent reference site at 115°29'18"E, -28°32'0"S; and
 - (c) ensuring only *local provenance* seeds and propagating material are used to *revegetate* and *rehabilitate* the area.

- (c) implement hygiene protocols by cleaning earth moving machinery of soil and vegetation prior to entering and leaving the *revegetation* site;
- (d) establish at least four 5 x 5 metre quadrat monitoring sites within the *revegetated* area as specified in condition 8(a);
- (e) monitor quadrats specified in condition 8(d) at least annually;
- (f) monitoring of quadrats specified in condition 8(d) is to be undertaken by an *environmental specialist*;
- (g) achieve the Completion Criteria specified in Table 1 of Schedule 3 after the three year monitoring period for areas *revegetated* under this permit;
- (h) undertake *weed* control activities on an ‘as needs’ basis to maintain a minimum criteria specified in Table 1 of Schedule 3;
- (i) undertake remedial actions for areas *revegetated* where monitoring indicates that the *revegetation* has not met the Completion Criteria specified in Table 1 of Schedule 3, including;
 - (i) *revegetate* the area by deliberately *planting* and/or *direct seeding native vegetation* seeds that will result in the minimum targets specified in the Completion Criteria in Table 1 of Schedule 3 ensuring only *local provenance* seeds and propagating material are used;
 - (ii) undertake further *weed* control activities;
 - (iii) undertake watering activities; and
 - (iv) undertake annual monitoring of the *revegetated* site until the Revegetation Completion Criteria specified in Table 1 of Schedule 3 are met.
- (j) where an *environmental specialist* has determined that the Completion Criteria, specified in Table 1 of Schedule 3 has been met, that report is to be provided to the *CEO* within three months of the determination being made by the *environmental specialist*; and
- (k) where the *CEO* does not agree with the determination made under condition 8(j), the *CEO* may require the permit holder to undertake remedial actions in accordance with the requirements under condition 8(i) and repeat actions under condition 8(e)-(i).

9. Vegetation management - fencing

- (a) Within 12 months of clearing, the permit holder shall construct a fence along the perimeters of the area cross hatched red in Figure 2 of Schedule 2;
- (b) Fences should allow for the movement of wildlife by being raised 15 centimetres from the ground;
- (c) Within one (1) month of installing the above fences, the permit holder shall notify the *CEO* in writing that the fencing has been completed.

10. Native vegetation conservation (conservation covenant)

In respect to the area cross hatched red in Figure 2 of Schedule 2, the permit holder shall give a conservation covenant under section 30B of the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* in accordance with the following conditions;

- (a) *Native vegetation* in the area subject to the conservation covenant must not be cleared, other than for clearing required under the *Bush Fires Act 1954*;
- (b) The land subject to the conservation covenant shall not be used for the purpose of cultivation of crops or pasture, or for the de-pasteurising of any stock;

- (c) The conservation covenant is to apply in perpetuity and be registered on the title of the property; and
- (d) Within one (1) month of executing and returning the conservation covenant to the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation, the permit holder shall notify the *CEO* in writing that the conservation covenant has been completed.

PART III - RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

11. Records that must be kept

The permit holder must maintain records relating to the listed relevant matters in accordance with the specifications detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Records that must be kept

No.	Relevant matter	Specifications
1.	In relation to the authorised clearing activities generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the species composition, structure, and density of the cleared area; (b) the location where the clearing occurred, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to GDA2020, expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings; (c) the date that the area was cleared; (d) the direction of clearing; (e) the size of the area cleared (in hectares); (f) actions taken to avoid, minimise, and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing in accordance with condition 5; and (g) actions taken to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of <i>weeds</i> and <i>dieback</i> in accordance with condition 6.
2.	In relation to <i>offset management</i> pursuant to conditions 8-10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the size of the <i>rehabilitated</i> area; (b) the date(s) on which the <i>rehabilitation works</i> began; (c) the boundaries of the area <i>rehabilitated</i> (recorded digitally as a shapefile using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to GDA2020, expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings); (d) a description of the <i>rehabilitation</i> activities undertaken pursuant to condition 8, including <i>planted</i> species composition and density, and actions taken to implement watering and <i>weed</i> control; (e) a copy of the <i>environmental specialist's</i> monitoring report and determination;

No.	Relevant matter	Specifications
		<p>(f) a description of any residual actions undertaken, where the <i>environmental specialist</i> indicates that the <i>planted trees</i> will not survive;</p> <p>(g) the location and size of the <i>reference quadrats</i> in accordance with condition 8 recorded using GPS a unit set to GDA2020, expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees;</p> <p>(h) at least two photographs of each <i>reference quadrat</i> and the date that the <i>reference quadrat</i> baseline data is collected;</p> <p>(i) the baseline data recorded for the reference quadrats, including species richness, species density, vegetation structure, bare ground cover, weed cover and vegetation condition;</p> <p>(j) at least two photographs of the areas <i>revegetated/rehabilitated</i> recorded annually;</p> <p>(k) the species composition, structure, density of the areas <i>revegetated/rehabilitated</i> annually;</p> <p>(l) a description of the extent of bare ground cover, weed cover and vegetation condition of the areas <i>revegetated/rehabilitated</i>, recorded annually;</p> <p>(m) evidence of fencing undertaken in accordance with condition 9; and</p> <p>(n) a copy of the relevant conservation covenant under section 30B of the <i>Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945</i> in accordance with condition 10.</p>

12. Reporting

- (a) the permit holder must provide to the *CEO* on or before 30 June of each calendar year, a written report containing:
- (i) the records required under condition 11 of this permit; and
 - (ii) records of activities done by the permit holder under this permit between 1 January and 31 December of the preceding calendar year.
- (b) if no clearing authorised under this permit has been undertaken, a written report confirming that no clearing under this permit has been carried out, must be provided to the *CEO* on or before 31 December of each calendar year.
- (c) the permit holder must provide to the *CEO*, no later than 90 calendar days prior to the expiry date of this permit, a written report of records required under condition 11, where these records have not already been provided under condition 12(a).

DEFINITIONS

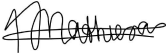
In this permit, the terms in Table have the meanings defined.

Table 2: Definitions

Term	Definition
Beard vegetation association 687	described as Wattle with York gum, casuarina, mulga, <i>Acacia spp.</i> with <i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i> , <i>Allocasuarina spp.</i> , <i>Acacia aneura</i> .
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of the department responsible for the administration of the clearing provisions under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> .
clearing	has the meaning given under section 3(1) of the EP Act.
condition	a condition to which this clearing permit is subject under section 51H of the EP Act.
department	means the department established under section 35 of the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i> (WA) and designated as responsible for the administration of the EP Act, which includes Part V Division 3.
dieback	means the effect of <i>Phytophthora</i> species on native vegetation.
direct seeding	means a method of re-establishing vegetation through establishment of a seed bed and the introduction of seeds of the desired plant species
environmental specialist	means a person who holds a tertiary qualification specialising in environmental science or equivalent, and has a minimum of 2 years work experience relevant to the type of environmental advice that an environmental specialist is required to provide under the permit, or who is approved by the CEO as a suitable <i>environmental specialist</i>
fill	means material used to increase the ground level, or to fill a depression.
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (WA)
local provenance	means native vegetation seeds and propagating material from natural sources within 50 kilometres and the same IBRA subregion of the area cleared.
mulch	means the use of organic matter, wood chips or rocks to slow the movement of water across the soil surface and to reduce evaporation.
native vegetation	has the meaning given under section 3(1) and section 51A of the EP Act.
optimal time	means the period from May to June for undertaking planting or seeding
planting/s/ed	means the re-establishment of vegetation by creating favourable soil conditions and planting seedlings of the desired species
reference quadrat	means a sample plot established for the purpose of data collection and monitoring vegetation characteristics, for example species composition, structure, density, foliage cover, vegetation condition (Keighery, 1994), weed species and extent, and extent of bare ground. Measurements from fixed reference quadrats or plots where biodiversity components are measured are used to set measurable completion criteria for revegetation projects. The reference site at Lot 500 contains the following values: (a) Vegetation representative of Beard vegetation association 687 which is described as Wattle with York gum, casuarina, mulga, <i>Acacia spp.</i> with <i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i> , <i>Allocasuarina spp.</i> <i>Acacia aneura</i> . (b) Vegetation in Good to Excellent (Keighery, 1994) condition
rehabilitate/ed/ion	means the re-establishment of a cover of <i>local provenance</i> native vegetation in an area using methods such as natural regeneration, direct

Term	Definition
	seeding and/or <i>planting</i> , so that the species composition, structure and density is similar to pre-clearing vegetation types in that area.
revegetate/ion	means actively managing an area containing native vegetation in order to improve the ecological function of the area
weeds	means any plant – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that is a declared pest under section 22 of the <i>Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007</i>; or (b) published in a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions species-led ecological impact and invasiveness ranking summary, regardless of ranking; or (c) not indigenous to the area concerned.

END OF CONDITIONS


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Temika Mathieson
 A/MANAGER
 NATIVE VEGETATION REGULATION

*Officer delegated under Section 20
 Of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*

14 October 2024

Schedule 1

The boundary of the area authorised to be cleared is shown in the map below (Figure 1).

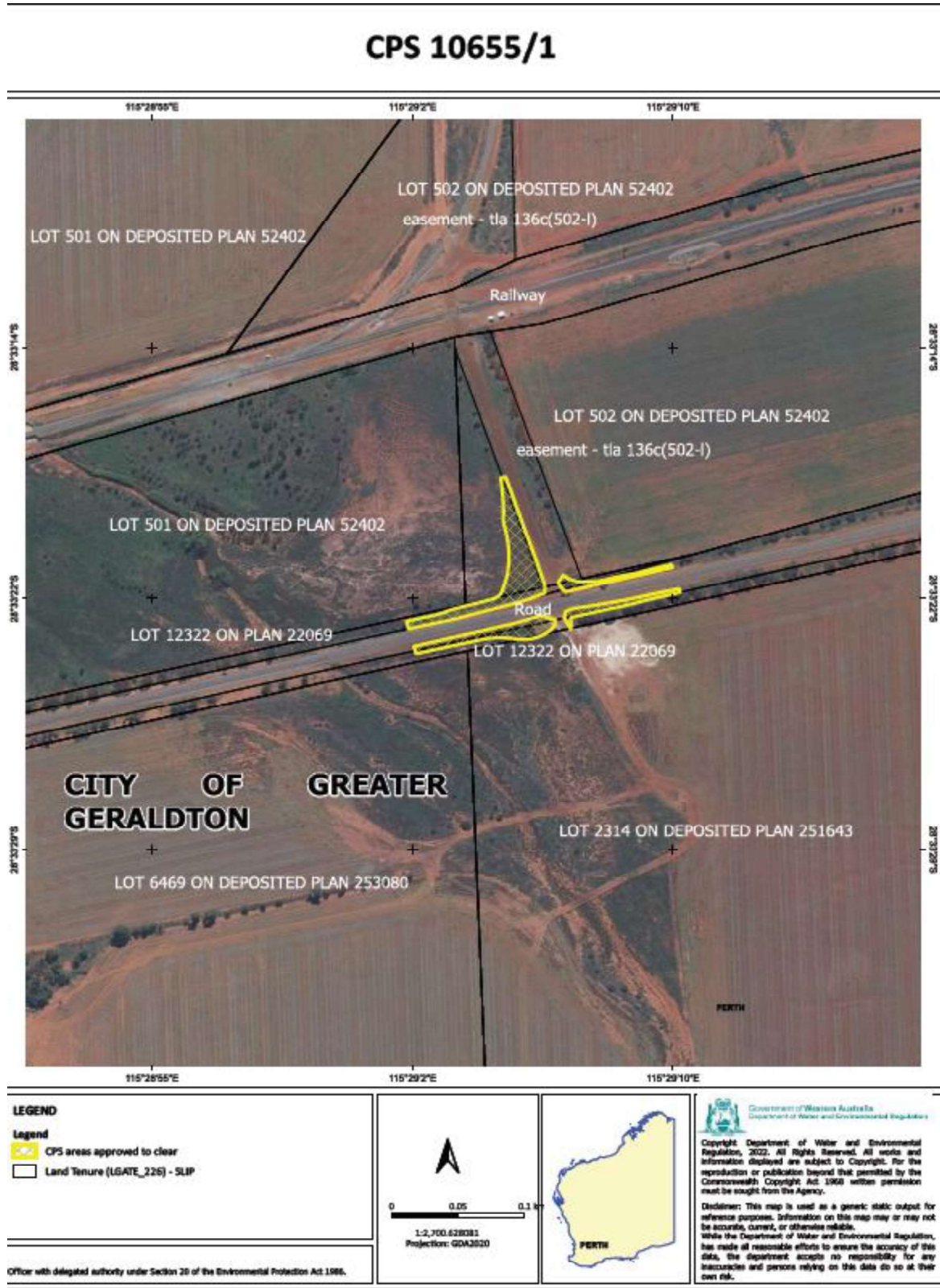


Figure 1: Map of the boundary of the area within which clearing may occur

Schedule 2

The boundary of the area designated as an offset site is shown in the map below (Figure 2).

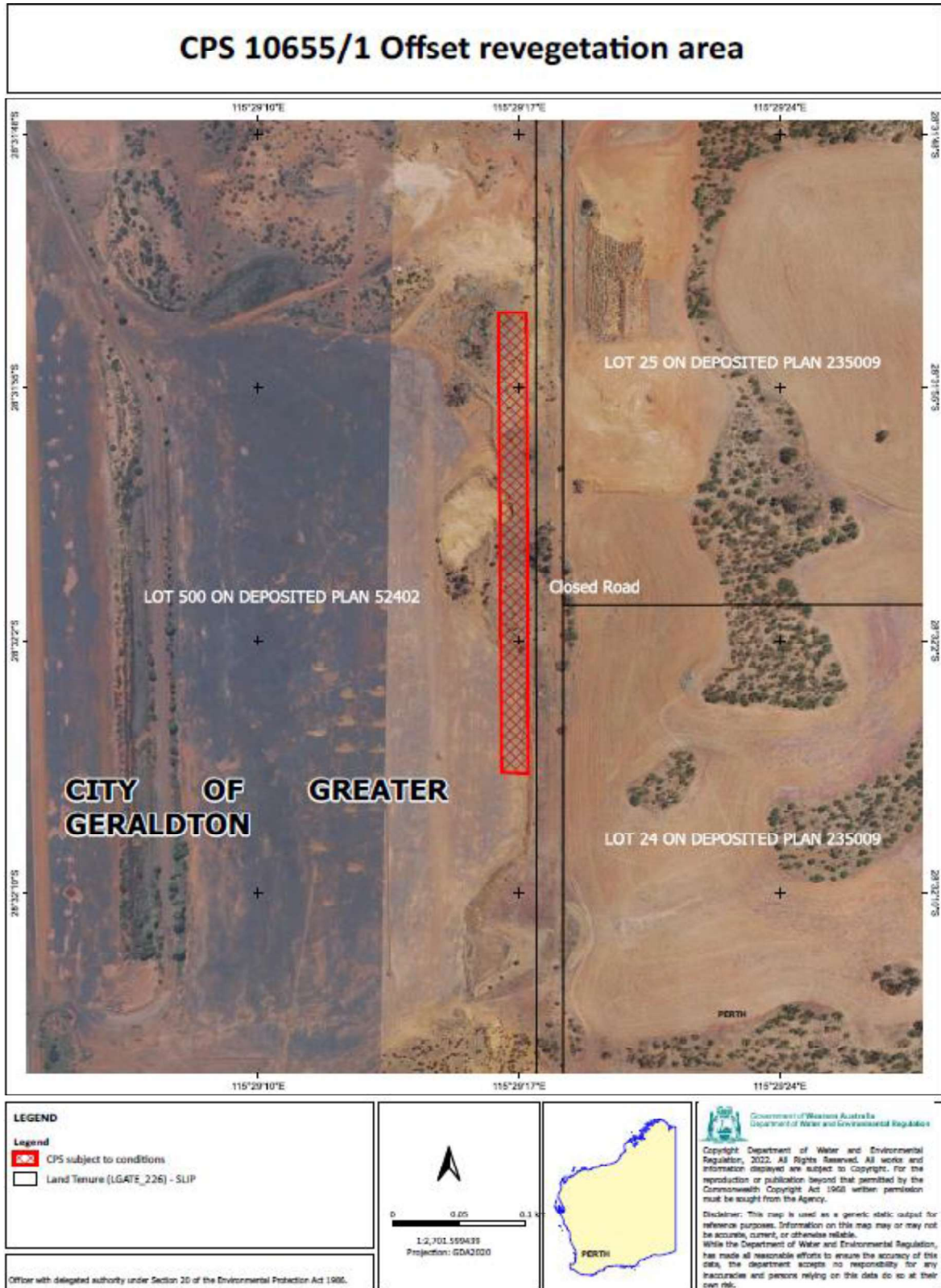


Figure 2: Map of the offset site on Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402 to be placed under a conservation covenant and *rehabilitated*, adjacent to reference site at 115°29'18"E, - 28°32'0"S

Schedule 3

Revegetation Completion Criteria

Table 1: Completing criteria for the *revegetation* within the area cross-hatched red in Figure 2 of Schedule 2.

Aspect	Completion Criteria	Monitoring
Survival rate to be achieved	The <i>revegetation</i> site needs to ensure a survival rate of at least 70 per cent of the seedlings initially planted to be established.	The species in the <i>revegetation</i> area will be counted annually by an <i>environmental specialist</i> in spring for a minimum of three years after the last year plants were established
Species richness-dominant overstorey species	The <i>revegetation</i> needs to maintain and/or improve species richness of the dominant overstorey species from the target reference site.	Annually in spring by an <i>environmental specialist</i> until completion criterion has been met and maintained for two years (i.e. three successive monitoring events).
Vegetation Structure	Vegetation in the <i>revegetation</i> site to be broadly representative of Beard vegetation association 687 which is characterised by: Wattle with York gum, casuarina, mulga, <i>Acacia spp.</i> with <i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i> , <i>Allocasuarina spp.</i> <i>Acacia aneura</i> , by establishing overstorey and midstorey species and providing conditions suitable for expanding remnant understorey species across the site.	The structure is to be assessed annually by an <i>environmental specialist</i> in spring for a minimum of three years after the last year plants were established.
Percentage of <i>weeds</i> present	Weed coverage is no greater than the baseline at reference site.	Monitor the <i>revegetation</i> site for <i>weeds</i> by quadrats annually in spring for a minimum of three years after the last year plants were established.
Patch size of bare ground	The <i>revegetation</i> area has no more than 5 per cent greater than the baseline at the reference site.	The patch size of bare ground is to be assessed annually by an <i>environmental specialist</i> in spring for a minimum of three years after the last year plants were established.
Declared weeds	No Declared Weeds under the <i>Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007</i> present	Monitor the <i>revegetation</i> site for Declared weeds by quadrats annually in spring for a minimum of three years after the last year plants were established.
Boundary fence	Gates and boundary fence to be in good condition with no obvious damage that will enable access by the general public, livestock and kangaroos.	Annually until completion criteria 1 – 5 has been met.



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1 Application details and outcome

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	CPS 10655/1
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	Fenix Ruvidini Pty Ltd
Application received:	18 June 2024
Application area:	0.437 hectares of native vegetation
Purpose of clearing:	Road intersection upgrades
Method of clearing:	Mechanical Clearing
Property:	Lot 502 on Deposited Plan 52402 Geraldton Mount Magnet Road reserve (PIN 11667673)
Location (LGA area/s):	City of Greater Geraldton
Localities (suburb/s):	Mullewa

1.2. Description of clearing activities

Fenix Ruvidini Pty Ltd (Fenix) is proposing to undertake the clearing of 0.437 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 502 on Deposited Plan 52402 and Geraldton Mount Magnet Road reserve, Mullewa. The proposed clearing will facilitate road upgrades for driver safety. The vegetation proposed to be cleared is distributed across four areas within Lot 502 and Geraldton Mount Magnet Road reserve (see Figure 1, Section 1.5).

1.3. Decision on application

Decision:	Granted
Decision date:	14 October 2024
Decision area:	0.437 hectares of native vegetation, as depicted in Section 1.5, below.

1.4. Reasons for decision

This clearing permit application was submitted, accepted, assessed and determined in accordance with sections 51E and 51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) advertised the application for 14 days and no submissions were received.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (see Appendix B), relevant datasets (see Appendix G.1), the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act (see Appendix C), relevant planning instruments and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment (see Section 3). The Delegated Officer also took into consideration that the purpose of the clearing is to improve driver safety.

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing will result in:

- the loss of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared,
- potential impacts to conservation significant fauna, if present during the clearing activities, and

- the potential introduction and spread of weeds into adjacent vegetation, which could impact on the quality of the adjacent vegetation and its habitat values.

After consideration of the available information, as well as the applicant's minimisation and mitigation measures (see Section 3.1), the Delegated Officer determined the proposed clearing including impacts to fauna present at the time of clearing and the potential to facilitate the introduction of weeds and dieback, can be minimised and managed to unlikely lead to an unacceptable risk to environmental values. However, impacts to significant remnant vegetation remained significant even after the application of minimisation and mitigation measures and constitutes a significant residual impact.

Having considered the environmental impacts outlined above, the applicant's implementation of the mitigation hierarchy and planning and other matters (including the consistency of the proposal with the planning framework and the public benefit of road safety), the Delegated Officer determined that, on balance, it was appropriate to grant the clearing permit subject to an adequate environmental offset being provided by the proponent, consistent with the Government of Western Australia's *Environmental Offsets Policy* (2011) and the *Environmental Offsets Guidelines* (2014), to counterbalance the significant residual impacts to remnant vegetation within an extensively cleared landscape (see Section 4).

The Delegated Officer determined that the revegetation of 0.69 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa, was sufficient to counterbalance the significant residual impacts of the proposed clearing within an extensively cleared landscape (see Section 4).

The Delegated Officer decided to grant a clearing permit subject to conditions to:

- avoid, minimise, and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing,
- revegetate and rehabilitate a minimum of 0.69 hectares of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant within an area that has been extensively cleared within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa,
- take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds, and
- undertake slow, progressive one directional clearing to allow terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity.

1.5. Site map

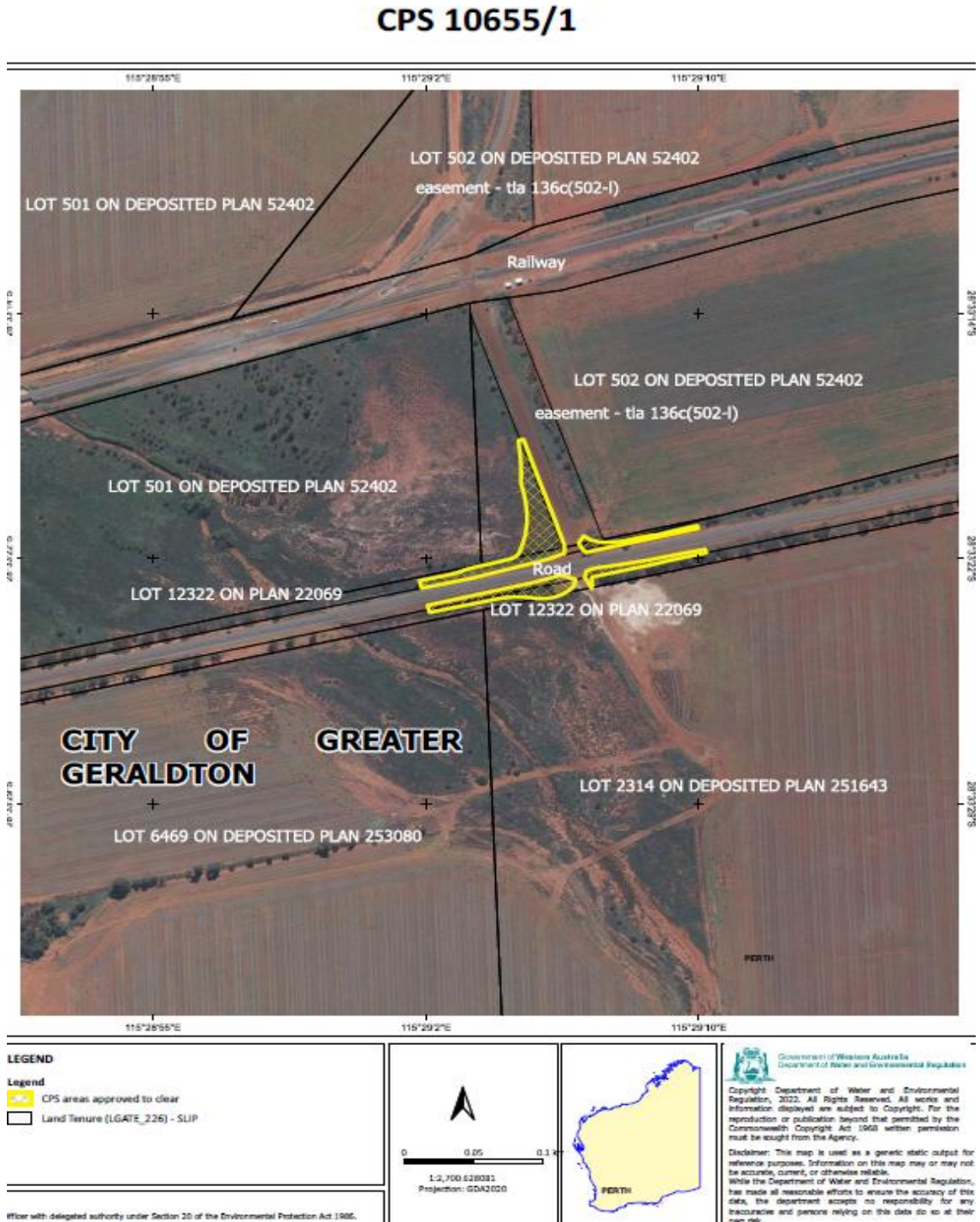


Figure 1 Map of the application area. The areas crosshatched yellow indicate the areas authorised to be cleared under the granted clearing permit.

2 Legislative context

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the EP Act and the *Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004* (Clearing Regulations).

In addition to the matters considered in accordance with section 51O of the EP Act (see Section 1.4), the Delegated Officer has also had regard to the objects and principles under section 4A of the EP Act, particularly:

- the precautionary principle
- the principle of intergenerational equity
- the polluter pays principle
- the principle of the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity.

Other legislation of relevance for this assessment include:

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)

Relevant policies considered during the assessment include:

- *Environmental Offsets Policy* (2011)

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (DER, December 2013)
- *Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits* (DWER, October 2019)
- *Environmental Offsets Guidelines* (August 2014)

3 Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

The applicant has advised that the following avoidance and mitigation measures have been undertaken (Fenix, 2024b):

- Clearing of native vegetation has been reduced to the minimum extent possible required to undertake the road intersection upgrades,
- Localised drain amendments (narrower and steeper drains),
- Local realignment of the roadside drain to avoid the trees on the eastern side of the intersection, and
- Utilising as much of the already cleared footprint as possible.

The Delegated Officer also took into consideration that the proposed road upgrade is required to improve the safety of the intersection and provide a rail access road for haulage drivers (Fenix, 2024a).

After consideration of the avoidance and mitigation measures provided, it was determined that an offset was required to counterbalance the significant residual impacts to significant remnant vegetation within an extensively cleared landscape. To offset the loss of vegetation, the applicant has committed to the undertaking revegetation within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa.

An assessment of the revegetation required was undertaken using the WA Environmental Offset Metric and having consideration for the *Environmental Offsets Policy* (2011) and the *Environmental Offset Guidelines* (2014). DWER have identified that the planting and maintaining of 0.69 hectares of native vegetation that is representative of the extensively cleared Beard vegetation association 687, would be required to ensure a significant residual impact to remnant vegetation in the local area does not remain after the proposed clearing. The applicant has agreed to the revegetation of 0.69 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa to reduce the significant residual impacts of the clearing.

Considering the above, the Delegated Officer was satisfied that the applicant has made a reasonable effort to avoid and minimise the potential impacts of the proposed clearing on environmental values.

3.2. Assessment of impacts on environmental values

In assessing the application, the Delegated Officer has had regard for the site characteristics (see Appendix B) and the extent to which the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological, conservation, or land and water resource values.

The assessment against the clearing principles (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to significant remnant vegetation. The consideration of these impacts, and the extent to which they can be managed through conditions applied in line with sections 51H and 51I of the EP Act, is set out below.

3.2.1. Significant remnant vegetation - Clearing Principle (e)

Assessment

The national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia has a target to prevent clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30 per cent of that present pre-1750, below which species loss appears to accelerate exponentially at an ecosystem level (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001).

The application area is located within the Avon Wheatbelt IBRA bioregion which retains approximately 18.51 per cent of its pre-European vegetation extent (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The application area is mapped within Beard vegetation association 687 which has also an extent lower than the 30 per cent threshold, both statewide and within the Avon Wheatbelt IBRA bioregion (see Appendix B.2). The vegetation extent in the local area also falls below the national targets, with approximately 13.95 per cent of pre-European vegetation extent remaining within a 20-kilometre radius of the application area. Given the above, the application area is considered to be a remnant within an extensively cleared landscape.

While it is acknowledged that the application area consists of roadside isolated *Acacia* spp. in Completely Degraded to Degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition, the vegetation proposed to be cleared is likely to be significantly contributing to ecological functions and vegetation extent in the extensively cleared landscape, given the extent of historical clearing and cumulative impacts of vegetation loss in the Avon Wheatbelt IBRA bioregion and that the vegetation within the application area is representative of an extensively cleared vegetation complex (Beard vegetation association 687).

The application area along the Geraldton Mount Magnet Road has the potential to facilitate the spread of weeds and dieback into other significant remnant vegetation in the local area. A weed management condition is considered to minimise this risk, and it is not considered likely that the proposed clearing will have a significant impact of environmental values of any adjacent remnant vegetation patches.

Ecological Linkage

The application area includes 0.437 hectares of remnant vegetation that form linear linkages along Geraldton Mount Magnet Road. Given the extensively cleared local area, it is likely that the application area is providing dispersal habitat between larger remnants in the local area. Noting the ecological linkage function of the Geraldton Mount Magnet Road reserve, fauna may be present at the time clearing as they move through the landscape. Slow, directional clearing to allow fauna to move into adjacent native vegetation will minimise impact to fauna.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, the proposed clearing will result in the loss of 0.437 hectares of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared. Impacts to the adjacent native vegetation and fauna that may be utilising the application area at the time of clearing can be managed through conditions imposed on the permit.

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing to significant remnant vegetation constitutes a significant residual impact. In accordance with the *Environmental Offsets Policy* (2011) and *Environmental Offsets Guidelines* (2014), this significant residual impact has been addressed through the conditioning of environmental offset requirements, as outlined under Section 4.

Conditions

To address the above impacts, the following management measures will be required as conditions on the clearing permit:

- offset- revegetate and rehabilitate a minimum of 0.69 hectares of native vegetation that is representative of the extensively cleared Beard vegetation association 687 within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa,
- weed and dieback management measures will be required as a condition on the clearing permit to mitigate impacts to adjacent vegetation, and
- undertake slow, progressive one directional clearing to allow any present terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity.

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The application was advertised on DWER's website on 27 June 2024, inviting submissions from the public within a 14-day period. No submissions were received.

The City of Greater Geraldton (the City) advised DWER that local government approvals are not required, and that the proposed clearing is located outside of the Local Biodiversity Strategy Study Area and is zoned rural under the Local Planning Scheme. The City did not have any objections to the proposed clearing (City of Greater Geraldton, 2024).

Several Aboriginal sites of significance have been mapped within the local area. It is the permit holder's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

4 Suitability of offsets

Through the detailed assessment outlined in Section 3.2 above, the Delegated Officer has determined that the following significant residual impacts remain after the application of the avoidance and mitigation measures summarised in Section 3.1:

- The loss of 0.437 hectares of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

The applicant proposed an environmental offset consisting of the rehabilitation and revegetation of a total of 0.83 hectares of native vegetation that is representative of the extensively cleared Beard vegetation association 687 within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa, to be placed under a conservation covenant pursuant to section 30B of the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* for conservation in perpetuity. Lot 500 is located approximately 2.2 kilometres north of the application area within the City of Greater Geraldton (See Figure 2 below).

In assessing whether the proposed offset is adequately proportionate to the significance of the habitat values being impacted, DWER undertook a calculation using the WA Environmental Offsets Metric. The calculation determined that the revegetation of at least 0.69 hectares of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant within an area that has been extensively cleared is adequate to counterbalance the significant residual impacts. It is acknowledged that the applicant has proposed the revegetation of 0.83 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa, which exceeds the calculated offset required to counterbalance the significant residual impacts of the proposed clearing.

Given the above, the Delegated Officer considers the proposed offset is consistent with the *Environmental Offsets Policy (2011)* and the *Environmental Offsets Guidelines (2014)*, and that it adequately counterbalances the significant residual impacts to native vegetation that is representative of the extensively cleared Beard vegetation association 687. The justification for the values used in the offset calculation is provided in Appendix E.

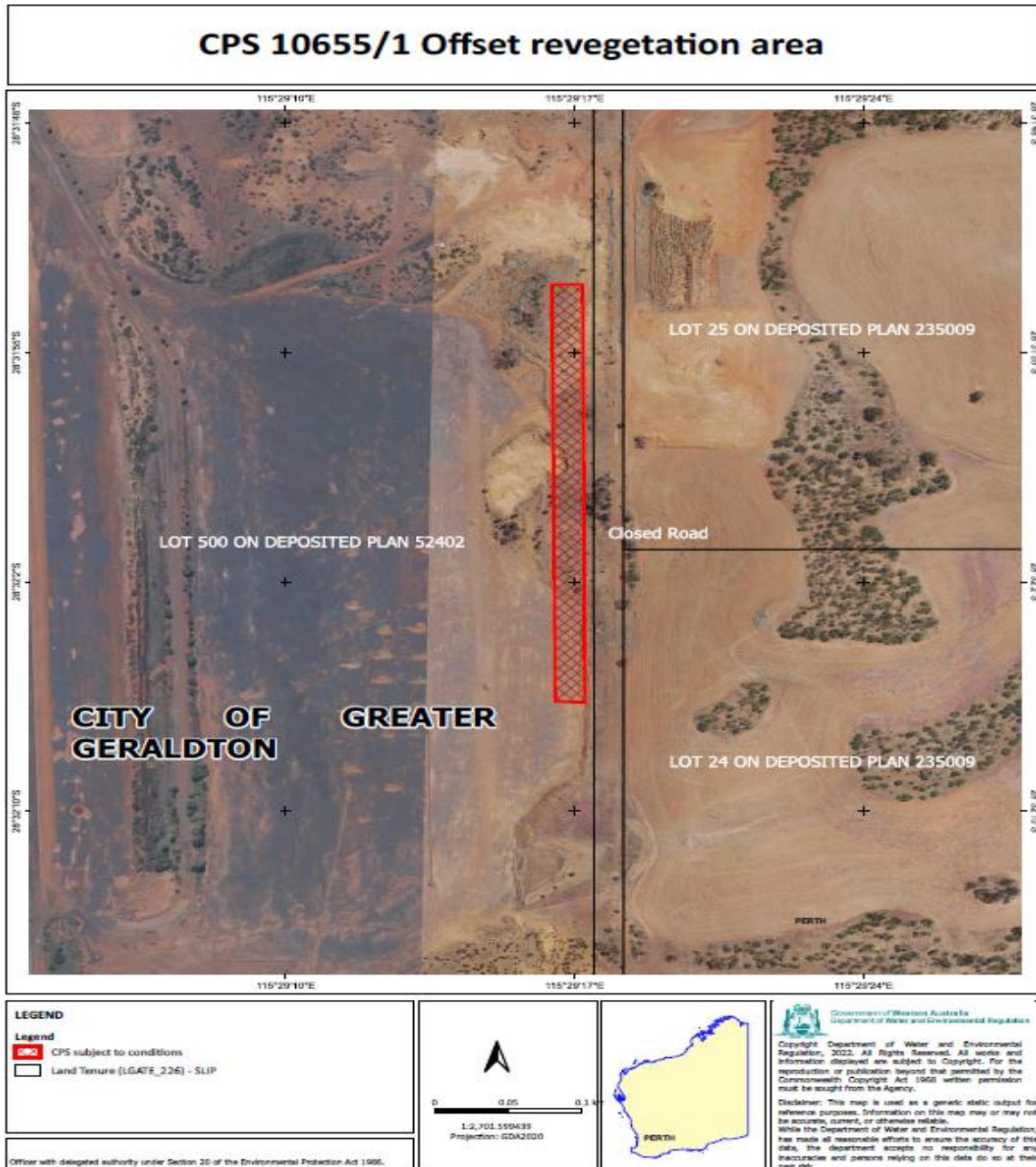


Figure 2. Location of the revegetation offset area within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa, approximately 2.2 kilometres north of CPS 10655/1.

End

Appendix A. Additional information provided by applicant

Summary of comments	Consideration of comment
Additional information provided by the applicant in response to the Department's request for further information on the 12 July 2024.	The additional information provided was considered in <i>Avoidance and mitigation measures</i> (Section 3.1) and <i>Suitability of offsets</i> (Section 4).

Appendix B. Site characteristics

B.1. Site characteristics

The information provided below describes the key characteristics of the area proposed to be cleared and is based on the best information available to DWER at the time of this assessment. This information was used to inform the assessment of the clearing against the Clearing Principles, contained in Appendix C.

Characteristic	Details
Local context	<p>The area proposed to be cleared comprises four roadside patches of remnant native vegetation in the intensive land use zone of Western Australia. It is surrounded by agricultural land and occasional patches of intact remnant vegetation within an extensively cleared landscape.</p> <p>Spatial data indicates the local area (20-kilometre radius from the centre of the area proposed to be cleared) retains approximately 13.95 per cent of the original native vegetation cover.</p>
Ecological linkage	The application area does not intersect any formally mapped ecological linkages. Although, given the extensively cleared local area, it is likely that the application area is contributing to the ecological function of roadside linkages.
Conservation areas	No conservation areas are mapped within the application area. The closest conservation area is Urawa Nature Reserve which is located 5.6 kilometres north of the application area.
Vegetation description	<p>Photographs supplied by the applicant indicate the vegetation within the proposed clearing area consists of remnant roadside vegetation featuring <i>Acacia</i> spp. (Fenix, 2024a).</p> <p>Representative photos are available in Appendix F.</p> <p>This is consistent with the mapped vegetation type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beard_687, which is described as Wattle with York gum, casuarina, mulga, <i>Acacia</i> spp. with <i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i>, <i>Allocasuarina</i> spp. <i>Acacia aneura</i>. (Shepherd et al, 2001) <p>The mapped vegetation type retains approximately 27.34 per cent of the original extent (Government of Western Australia, 2019).</p>
Vegetation condition	<p>Photographs supplied by the applicant indicate that the vegetation within the proposed clearing area is in a Degraded to Completely Degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition.</p> <p>The full Keighery (1994) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix D.</p> <p>Representative photos are available in Appendix F.</p>
Climate and landform	The region experiences a Mediterranean climate with cool winters and hot summers with a mean annual rainfall of 310 millilitres. The topography of the application area is relatively flat reaching 260 metres Australian Height Datum (AHD).
Soil description	<p>The soils within the application area are mapped as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dartmoor Subsystem 2 (227Da_2) described as level to gently undulating plain and weakly dissecting long slopes, much as a relic drainage network.

Characteristic	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dartmoor Saline Drainage, phase 2 (227DaSD2) described as level to very inclined broad salt plains.
Land degradation risk	The mapped soil types within the application area are mapped as having a high risk of phosphorus export and subsurface acidification (DPIRD, 2024).
Waterbodies and hydrogeography	<p>The desktop assessment and aerial imagery indicate that no wetlands or waterbodies transect the application area. The closest waterbody to the application area is a minor non-perennial river that is located approximately 55 metres south west of the application area.</p> <p>The application area is mapped within Greenough River and Tributaries Catchment Area and Gascoyne Groundwater Area, proclaimed under the RIWI Act.</p> <p>Groundwater salinity within the application area is mapped at 3000-7000 milligrams per total dissolved solids.</p>
Flora	<p>The desktop assessment identified that a total of 57 conservation significant flora species have been recorded within the local area, comprising of three threatened flora species and 54 priority flora species (Western Australian Herbarium, 1998-). None of these existing records occur within the application area, with the closest record being an occurrence of <i>Grevillea candicans</i> approximately two kilometres from the application area.</p> <p>With consideration for the relevant datasets (see Appendix G.1), the site characteristics, the habitat preferences and conservation statuses of the aforementioned species, and the distribution and extent of existing records, the application area is unlikely to provide habitat for conservation significant flora species.</p>
Ecological communities	<p>The desktop assessment identified that there are no conservation significant ecological communities within the application area. The closest mapped ecological community is the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt which is listed as a Priority 3 priority ecological community (PEC) by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in Western Australia, which is located 16 kilometres south east of the application area.</p> <p>With consideration for the site characteristics and relevant datasets (see Appendix G.1), the application area is not considered likely to contain vegetation representative of a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) or PEC.</p>
Fauna	<p>The desktop assessment identified that a total of 11 conservation significant fauna species have been recorded within the local area including seven threatened species, three priority species and one migratory species. None of these existing records occur within the application area, with the closest being an occurrence of <i>Cyclodomorphus branchialis</i> approximately 3.7 kilometres south of the application area (DBCA, 2007-).</p> <p>With consideration for the site characteristics set out above, relevant datasets (see Appendix G.1) and the habitat preferences of the aforementioned species, the application area is unlikely to provide significant habitat for conservation significant fauna species.</p>

B.2. Vegetation extent

	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current proportion (%) of pre-European extent in all DBCA managed land
IBRA bioregion*					
Avon Wheatbelt	9517109.95	1761187.42	18.51	174980.68	1.84
Vegetation complex					
Beard vegetation association 687	56441.24	15890.72	28.15	2904.61	5.15
Vegetation Complex within IBRA Bioregion					
Beard vegetation association 687	37458.98	10242.84	27.34	2750.22	7.37
Local area					
20km radius	126792.36	17486.23	13.95	-	-

*Government of Western Australia (2019)

Appendix C. Assessment against the clearing principles

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Environmental value: biological values		
<p><u>Principle (a):</u> "Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biodiversity."</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared does not contain locally or regionally significant flora, fauna or assemblages of plants. The degraded roadside vegetation is not likely to contain a high level of biodiversity.</p>	Not at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (b):</u> "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."</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared does not contain significant habitat for conservation significant fauna.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (c):</u> "Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora."</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared consists of roadside remnant vegetation in a Degraded to Completely Degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition and is unlikely to contain habitat for threatened flora.</p>	Not at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (d):</u> "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."</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared does not contain an assemblage of plants that can indicate a TEC.</p>	Not at variance	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		
<p><u>Principle (e):</u> "Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared."</p>	At variance	Yes

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<p><u>Assessment:</u> The extent of native vegetation in the local area is inconsistent with the national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia. The vegetation proposed to be cleared is likely to be providing ecological linkage values in the local area.</p>		<p><i>Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.</i></p>
<p><u>Principle (h):</u> <i>“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.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> Given the distance to the nearest conservation area, the proposed clearing is not likely to have an impact on the environmental values of nearby conservation areas.</p>	Not at variance	No
Environmental value: land and water resources		
<p><u>Principle (f):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> Given no water courses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, the proposed clearing is not within an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (g):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> The mapped soils are moderately susceptible to subsurface acidification and nutrient export. Noting the extent and location of the application area and the condition of the vegetation, the proposed clearing is not likely to have an appreciable impact on land degradation.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (i):</u> <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.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> Given no water courses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to impact surface or ground water quality.</p>	Not at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (j):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u> The mapped soils and topographic contours in the surrounding area do not indicate the proposed clearing is likely to contribute to increased incidence or intensity of flooding.</p> <p>Given no water courses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to contribute to waterlogging.</p>	Not at variance	No

Appendix D. Vegetation condition rating scale

Vegetation condition is a rating given to a defined area of vegetation to categorise and rank disturbance related to human activities. The rating refers to the degree of change in the vegetation structure, density and species present in relation to undisturbed vegetation of the same type. The degree of disturbance impacts upon the vegetation's ability to regenerate. Disturbance at a site can be a cumulative effect from a number of interacting disturbance types.

Considering its location, the scale below was used to measure the condition of the vegetation proposed to be cleared. This scale has been extracted from Keighery, B.J. (1994) *Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community*. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

Measuring vegetation condition for the South West and Interzone Botanical Province (Keighery, 1994)

Condition	Description
Pristine	Pristine or nearly so, no obvious signs of disturbance.
Excellent	Vegetation structure intact, with disturbance affecting individual species; weeds are non-aggressive species.
Very good	Vegetation structure altered, with obvious signs of disturbance. For example, disturbance to vegetation structure caused by repeated fires, the presence of some more aggressive weeds, dieback, logging and/or grazing.
Good	Vegetation structure significantly altered by very obvious signs of multiple disturbances. Retains basic vegetation structure or ability to regenerate it. For example, disturbance to vegetation structure caused by very frequent fires, the presence of some very aggressive weeds at high density, partial clearing, dieback and/or grazing.
Degraded	Basic vegetation structure severely impacted by disturbance. Scope for regeneration but not to a state approaching good condition without intensive management. For example, disturbance to vegetation structure caused by very frequent fires, the presence of very aggressive weeds, partial clearing, dieback and/or grazing.
Completely degraded	The structure of the vegetation is no longer intact and the area is completely or almost completely without native species. These areas are often described as 'parkland cleared' with the flora comprising weed or crop species with isolated native trees or shrubs.

Appendix E. Offset calculator value justification**Significant remnant vegetation**

**WA Environmental Offsets Calculator
Rationale for scores used in the offset calculator**

Calculation	Score (Area)	Rationale
Conservation significance		
Description	Significant remnant vegetation within an area that has been extensively cleared located in the Avon Wheatbelt	The proposed clearing will impact on 0.437 hectares of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant within an area that has been extensively cleared.
Type of environmental value	Vegetation/habitat	Significant remnant vegetation within the extensively cleared Avon Wheatbelt IBRA bioregion (18.51 per cent), the mapped Beard vegetation association 687 (28.15 per cent), and local area (13.95 per cent remaining).
Conservation significance of environmental value	Terrestrial native vegetation complex <30% extent remaining in the bioregion	The vegetation within the application area occurs within a local area (20-kilometre radius) that retains approximately 13.95 per cent of its original vegetation extent. The application area contains extensively cleared Beard association 687 which retains 28.15 per cent of its original vegetation extent in WA and 27.34 per cent of its original vegetation extent in the Avon Wheatbelt IBRA bioregion.
Landscape-level value impacted	yes	The impact is to an area of Beard vegetation association 687 in hectares.
Significant impact		
Description	Clearing of native vegetation that is significant as a remnant within an area that has been extensively cleared	Native vegetation that is significant as a remnant within an area that has been extensively cleared is proposed to be cleared for the purpose of works associated with the Geraldton Mount Magnet Road upgrades.

Calculation	Score (Area)	Rationale
	located in the Avon Wheatbelt	
Significant impact (hectares) / Type of feature	0.437	Given the IBRA bioregion, mapped Beard vegetation association and local area retain below the 30 per cent threshold for remaining vegetation extent, the entire application area is considered to be significantly contributing to the ecological function of native vegetation in the local area.
Quality (scale) / Number	5.00	A score of 5 is applied considering vegetation condition rating and the site context. Based on the information provided, the vegetation within the application area consists of roadside isolated <i>Acacia spp.</i> in Completely Degraded to Degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition. However, given the extent of historical clearing and cumulative impacts of vegetation loss in the Avon Wheatbelt IBRA bioregion and that the vegetation within the application area is representative of an extensively cleared vegetation complex, the vegetation proposed to be cleared is likely to be significantly contributing to vegetation extent and providing an ecological linkage in the extensively cleared landscape.
Rehabilitation credit		
N/A	None proposed.	No onsite rehabilitation or revegetation proposed (i.e., within the application area).
Offset		
Description	Revegetation and rehabilitation of native vegetation that is representative of the extensively cleared Beard vegetation association 687.	A single offset involving the revegetation of native vegetation that is representative of Beard vegetation association 687 located within Lot 500 on Deposited Plan 52402, Mullewa.
Proposed offset (area in hectares)	0.69	The revegetation of 0.69 hectares of native vegetation that is representative of the Beard vegetation association 687, is required to offset the residual impacts to this environmental value.
Current quality of offset site / Start number (of type of feature)	1.00	The revegetation offset area has been historically cleared and is in Completely Degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition.
Future quality WITHOUT offset (scale) / Future number WITHOUT offset	1.00	The condition of vegetation is expected to remain the same, or decline without the offset. However, the change is expected to be minimal.
Future quality WITH offset (scale) / Future number WITH offset	5.00	Assuming revegetation and rehabilitation will be undertaken as conditioned on the clearing permit 10655/1.
Time until ecological benefit (years)	11.00	It is assumed the benefits of revegetation and rehabilitation of extensively cleared native vegetation will be available after 10 years, adding the one year required to put the plan in place.
Confidence in offset result (%)	0.80	There is a moderate level of confidence that the offset will achieve the predicted result, given revegetation will be undertaken as conditioned on the clearing permit.

Calculation	Score (Area)	Rationale
Duration of offset implementation (maximum 20 years)	20.00	A suitable site identified will be conserved in perpetuity, therefore the maximum of 20 years for this field is applied.
Time until offset site secured (years)	3.00	It is assumed that the revegetation will commence within two years of clearing and that the offset site will be placed under a conservation covenant within one year of commencing, when the vegetation has begun to establish.
Risk of future loss WITHOUT offset (%)	15.0%	It is assumed that the offset site is currently zoned rural and is not subject to any existing planning approvals.
Risk of future loss WITH offset (%)	5.0%	The future conservation (in perpetuity) of the offset site through a conservation covenant would result in increased security and substantially reduce the risk of loss.
Offset ratio (Conservation area only)	N/A	
Landscape level values of offset?	N/A	

Appendix F. Photographs of the vegetation proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)



Figure 3. Google image of one tree (South 1) proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)



Figure 4. Google image of three trees (South 2, 3 and 4) proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)



Figure 5. Google image of two trees (South 5 and 6) proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)



Figure 6. Google image of two trees (North 1 and 2) proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)



Figure 7. Google image of one tree (North 3) proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)



Figure 8. Google image of one tree (North 4) proposed to be cleared (Fenix, 2024)

Appendix G. Sources of information

G.1. GIS databases

Publicly available GIS Databases used (sourced from www.data.wa.gov.au):

- 10 Metre Contours (DPIRD-073)
- Aboriginal Heritage Places (DPLH-001)
- Cadastre (LGATE-218)
- Cadastre Address (LGATE-002)
- Contours (DPIRD-073)
- DBCA – Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia – Western Australia (DBCA-045)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Flood Risk (DPIRD-007)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- Hydrography – Inland Waters – Waterlines
- Hydrological Zones of Western Australia (DPIRD-069)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Imagery
- Local Planning Scheme – Zones and Reserves (DPLH-071)
- Native Title (ILUA) (LGATE-067)
- Offsets Register – Offsets (DWER-078)
- Pre-European Vegetation Statistics
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- Ramsar Sites (DBCA-010)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)
- Remnant Vegetation, All Areas
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Flood Risk (DPIRD-007)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Phosphorus Export Risk (DPIRD-010)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Subsurface Acidification Risk (DPIRD-011)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Water Erosion Risk (DPIRD-013)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Water Repellence Risk (DPIRD-014)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Waterlogging Risk (DPIRD-015)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Wind Erosion Risk (DPIRD-016)
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Best Available
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Systems

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- ICMS (Incident Complaints Management System) – Points and Polygons
- Threatened Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened Fauna
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

G.2. References

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- Government of Western Australia (2019) *2018 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of March 2019*. WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. <https://catalogue.data.wa.gov.au/dataset/dbca-statewide-vegetation-statistics>
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