

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details and outcomes

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	10697/1
Permit type:	Purpose Permit
Applicant name:	Redstone Resources Limited
Application received:	24 August 2024
Application area:	4.8 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Mineral Exploration and Associated Activities
Method of clearing:	Mechanical Removal
Tenure:	Exploration Licence 69/2450 Exploration Licence 69/3456
Location (LGA area):	Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku
Colloquial name:	Tollu Project

1.2. Description of clearing activities

Redstone Resources Limited proposes to clear up to 4.8 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 227.92 hectares, for the purpose of mineral exploration and associated activities (Redstone Resources, 2024). The project is located approximately 185 kilometres east of Warburton and 55 kilometres west of the state border, within the Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku.

The application is to allow for copper exploration, which includes the construction of access tracks and a maximum of 25 drill pads (Cawthorn, 2021).

1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Grant
Decision date:	17 April 2025
Decision area:	4.8 hectares of native vegetation

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 Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) advertised the application for a public comment for a period of 21 days, and no submissions were received.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (**Error! Reference source not found.**), relevant datasets (Appendix E), photographs of the application area (Appendix B), the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act (Appendix B), proposed avoidance and minimisation measures (Section 3.1), relevant planning instruments and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment (Section 3.3). The Delegated Officer also took into consideration the purpose of the clearing to allow for copper exploration.

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing may result in:

- the potential introduction and spread of weeds into adjacent vegetation, which could impact on the quality of the adjacent vegetation and its habitat values;
- impacts to conservation significant flora;
- the loss of native vegetation that is suitable habitat for malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), brush-tailed mulgara (*Dasycercus blythi*), great desert skink (*Liopholis kintorei*), and night parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*); and
- potential land degradation in the form of erosion.

After consideration of the available information, as well as the applicant's minimisation and mitigation measures (Section 3.1), the Delegated Officer determined the proposed clearing can be minimised and managed to be unlikely to lead to an unacceptable risk to environmental values.

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

- avoid, minimise to reduce the impacts and extent of clearing;
- take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds;
- undertake slow, progressive one-directional clearing to allow terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity;
- commence construction no later than three months after undertaking clearing to reduce the risk of erosion;
- engage a botanist to conduct a targeted flora survey for the presence of threatened and priority flora prior to clearing and maintain a 50 metre buffer of identified threatened flora and a 10 metre buffer of identified priority flora;
- undertake a fauna survey to identify *Liopholis kintorei* (great desert skink) and *Dasyercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara) burrows;
- identify active (in use) malleefowl mounds and avoid clearing within 200 metres of any mounds from September to January; and
- undertake appropriate surveys to identify the presence of *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) prior to the commencement of clearing and cease clearing until suitable management measures are identified and approval to continue clearing has been granted.

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 (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 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)
- *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Mining Act 1978* (WA)

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (DER, December 2014)
- *Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits* (DWER, October 2021)

3. Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

Evidence was submitted by the applicant, demonstrating that efforts have been made to avoid clearing native vegetation, by:

- limiting clearing to only the required drill pads and access tracks for the actual holes drilled (no unnecessary excess access tracks/drill pads will be cleared if it is decided that planned holes will no longer proceed);
- utilising existing tracks at all times, where possible;
- avoiding clearing where it is not necessary for the safe operation of the drill rig; and
- moving drill hole locations to accommodate larger vegetation and trees (Redstone Resources, 2024).

The Delegated Officer was satisfied that the applicant has made a reasonable effort to avoid and minimise 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 A) 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 identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological values (fauna, adjacent flora and 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. Biological values (flora and fauna) - Clearing Principles (a) and (b)

Assessment

Flora

No flora or vegetation surveys have been conducted over the application area. A database search found that there are 12 priority flora species that may have suitable habitat within the application area (Appendix A.3). As the local area is poorly surveyed, and no surveys of the application area have been conducted, the potential impact to priority flora from the proposed clearing is unknown.

Fauna

No fauna surveys have been conducted over the application area. The following fauna habitats can be inferred from vegetation and landform descriptions, and photographs of the application area (Tille, 2006; GIS Database; Appendix D):

- *Triodia* grasslands
- Mulga (and other) shrub over *Triodia* grasslands

A database search and evaluation of the returned conservation significant fauna species (CALM, n.d.; DCCEEW, 2024; DOTE, 2025b, 2025c; DEPW, 2021b; NESP, 2021; Tille, 2006; GIS Database) identified that the proposed clearing may have significant impacts on the following species (Appendix A.4):

- brush-tailed mulgara (*Dasyercus blythi*), P4
- crest-tailed mulgara (*Dasyercus cristicauda*), P4
- great desert skink (*Liopholis kintorei*), VU
- night parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*), EN
- malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), VU
- princess parrot (*Polytelis alexandrae*), VU

The above species were determined to be potentially impacted by the proposed clearing based on known distribution and habitat preferences, and their likelihood of occurrence within the application area, accounting for local environment, age and location of records, ecological knowledge and regional context.

Brush-tailed mulgara

Mulgaras are generally found in arid regions that support *Triodia* grasslands (DEC, n.d.). This habitat occurs within the application area (Tille, 2006; GIS Database; Appendix D). Brush-tailed mulgaras have also been identified to repeatedly use great desert skink burrows; thus, it is not unreasonable to conclude that these two species may both be present within the application area (Molyneux et al., 2017).

Great desert skink

Great desert skink occur on *Triodia* grasslands of Central Australia (IDA, 2022). This habitat occurs within the application area (Tille, 2006; GIS Database; Appendix D). Ngaanyatjarra Rangers conducted a survey across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands for great desert skink and located 60 active burrows, indicating that the Ngaanyatjarra Lands may support the largest known regional population of great desert skink in Australia (IDA, 2022). This population is likely to include the application area.

Mining related development is a known threat to great desert skink populations, resulting in loss of habitat and fragmentation (IDA, 2022). Direct impacts from clearing include the destruction of burrows by heavy machinery and increased mortality due to roadkill (IDA, 2022).

Night parrot

The Great Victoria Desert Central subregion is a priority survey bioregion for the night parrot (DBCA, 2024). The night parrot requires dense, unburnt *Triodia* for roosting, and floodplain or run-on areas with higher floral diversity for foraging (DBCA, 2024). *Triodia* grasslands are present within the application area, however due to the lack of surveys within the application area, the suitability of this habitat for night parrot is unknown. Site investigation is required to determine the likelihood of night parrot occurrence within the application area.

Malleefowl

The application area is located within the current malleefowl range, and there is one record of malleefowl within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area (DOTE, 2025b; GIS Database). In central Australia, malleefowl may occur in areas of mulga over *Triodia*, such as the application area (DCCEEW, 2024; Tille, 2006).

Princess parrot

Princess parrot a little known species of parrot which is recorded sporadically in the arid interior (DEPW, 2021b). It is highly nomadic and its habitat includes sand dunes and shrublands (DEPW, 2021b). Suitable habitat for this species occurs within the application area, however, the species is likely to only be sporadic visitor to the area, and there is a vast amount of potential habitat within the local area.

The princess parrot breeds in hollows of the river red gum or other large eucalypts (DEPW, 2021b). River red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* subsp. *arida*) occurs in drainage lines, lakes, springs and floodplains (Western Australian Herbarium, 1998-). As there are no watercourses or wetlands located within the application area, and trees are not a characteristic of the application area, breeding habitat for the princess parrot is unlikely to occur (Barton & Cowan, 2001; Tille, 2006; GIS Database).

Crest-tailed mulgara

The crest-tailed mulgara is listed as species at risk for the Great Victoria Desert Central subregion (Barton & Cowan, 2001). However, the nearest record of crest-tailed mulgara is 496.5 kilometres from the application area and brush-tailed mulgaras have been previously misidentified as crest-tailed mulgaras in Western Australia (DOTE, 2025a). As Western Australia is not part of the current distribution of this species, it is unlikely to occur within the application area (DOTE, 2025a).

Conclusion

Flora

Given there have been no flora and vegetation surveys over the application area, the potential impact to priority flora from the proposed clearing is unknown. Site investigation is required to determine the potential impact to priority flora from the proposed clearing.

Fauna

Brush-tailed mulgara and great desert skink: Given the application area primarily consists of preferred habitat, and there are recent records within the local area, there is a potential for these species to be present. Without adequate surveying to determine their absence from the application area, it is to be assumed they may be directly and indirectly impacted from the proposed clearing. Given preferred habitat for the species is present, a fauna management condition requiring pre-clearance surveys is recommended.

Night parrot: Site investigation is required to determine the likelihood of night parrot occurrence within the application area.

Malleefowl: There is one record of malleefowl within the local area (GIS Database). The absence of recent records could be due to the overall lack of surveys within the region. Given habitat for the species is present, a fauna management condition requiring pre-clearance surveys is recommended.

Princess parrot: The application area is not considered critical habitat for the species; therefore, proposed clearing is not likely to significantly impact the conservation of this species.

Crest-tailed mulgara: As the application area is outside of the current distribution of this species, it is unlikely to occur within the application area, and is therefore unlikely to be impacted by the proposed clearing.

Conditions

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

- avoid, minimise and reduce impacts and extent of clearing;
- conduct a pre-clearance survey for threatened and priority flora species;
- undertake slow, progressive one-directional clearing to allow terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity; and
- fauna management conditions for *Leipoa ocellata* (malleefowl), *Liopholis kintorei* (great desert skink), *Dasycercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara), and *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot).

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The clearing permit application was advertised on 10 September 2024 by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to this application.

There is one native title claim (WCD2005/002 - Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Part A)) over the area under application (DPLH, 2025). This claim has been determined by the Federal Court on behalf of the claimant group. However, the mining tenure has been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore, the granting of a clearing permit is not a future act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2025). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

It is noted that the proposed clearing may impact habitats for great desert skink, malleefowl, and night parrot, which are protected matters under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The proponent may be required to refer the project to the (Federal) Department of Climate Change, Environment and Water for environmental impact assessment under the EPBC Act. The proponent is advised to contact the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and the Environment for further information regarding notification and referral responsibilities under the EPBC Act.

Other relevant authorisations required for the proposed land use include:

- A Programme of Work approved under the *Mining Act 1978*.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

End

Appendix A. Site characteristics

A.1. Site characteristics

Characteristic	Details
Local context	<p>The area proposed to be cleared is part of an expansive tract of native vegetation in the extensive land use zone of Western Australia. It is located within the Central subregion of the Great Victoria Desert bioregion, and closely borders the Mann-Musgrave Block subregion of the Central Ranges bioregion (GIS Database).</p> <p>The application area is located close to the state border and is surrounded by copper and nickel mining operations. It is located within the 'Ranges of the Western Desert', which is part of the Register of the National Estate and published in the EPA Redbook (GIS Database). Approximately 99% of the local area (50 kilometre radius from the application area) remains uncleared (GIS Database).</p>
Ecological linkage	<p>The application area is not considered a significant ecological linkage. The vegetation immediately surrounding the application area and the majority of the region remains uncleared (GIS Database).</p>
Conservation areas	<p>The application area is not located within any DBCA legislated conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest legislated conservation area is the Pila Nature Reserve (Gibson Desert) approximately 223 kilometres northwest of the application area (GIS Database).</p> <p>The application area is located within the 'Ranges of the Western Desert', which is part of the Register of the National Estate and published in the EPA Redbook; and the Ngaanyatjarra Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) (GIS Database).</p>
Vegetation description	<p>The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation association:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 252: Shrub-steppe; hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee (GIS Database). <p>No vegetation surveys have been conducted over the application area.</p>
Vegetation condition	<p>No vegetation surveys have been conducted over the application area.</p> <p>Vegetation condition has been inferred from photographs of the application area, aerial imagery and historical land uses (GIS Database; Appendix D). Existing exploration activities and disturbances from feral camels may have degraded some parts of the application area to a 'good' condition (GVDBT; n.d.; Redstone Resources, 2025; Trudgen, 1991; GIS Database). Given the remoteness of the location, it is likely that some of the application area is in 'excellent' condition (ABS, 2023; GVDBT; n.d.; Redstone Resources, 2025; Trudgen, 1991).</p> <p>Therefore, the vegetation within the application area is in Good to Excellent (Trudgen, 1991) condition, described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent: Pristine or nearly so, no obvious signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement. Very good: Some relatively slight signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement. For example, some signs of damage to tree trunks caused by repeated fire, the presence of some relatively non-aggressive weeds, or occasional vehicle tracks. Good: More obvious signs of damage caused by human activity since European settlement, including some obvious impact on the vegetation structure such as that caused by low levels of grazing or slightly aggressive weeds. <p>The full Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C.</p>
Climate and landform	<p>The climate of the Central subregion of the Great Victoria Desert bioregion is described as arid, with the nearby weather station, Giles Meteorological Office, recording an average annual rainfall of 289.3 millimetres per year (Barton & Cowan, 2001; BoM, 2025).</p> <p>The application area is flat to gently-sloping and mapped at elevations of 530-560 metres Australian height datum (GIS Database). Land system mapping broadly describes the application area as extensive plains with dunes (GIS Database).</p>
Soil description	<p>The soil is mapped as systems 618k2 and 618l6 (DPIRD, 2025; GIS Database). These are part of the Atlas system, which is described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandplain and dunes with hills, ranges, plains and some wash plains on Musgrave Complex granite and gneiss (with some volcanic and sedimentary rocks); Red sandy earths with Red deep sands, Red loamy earths and some Stony soils and Self-mulching cracking clays; Mulga (and other acacia) woodlands and spinifex grasslands; and

Characteristic	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in the central-eastern Arid Interior between the Barrow Range and the South Australian Border (Tille, 2006). <p>The mapped soils within the application area are described as being self-mulching cracking clay (95.7 per cent of the application area) and red sandy earth (4.3 per cent of the application area) (GIS Database).</p>
Land degradation risk	Most of the application area (95.7 per cent) consists of self-mulching cracking clay (GIS Database). This soil type is a Great Group within the Vertosol Soil Order (Soil Science Australia, n.d.). Vertosols are subject to erosion during high intensity rainfall events when vegetation cover is removed (Freebairn et al., 1996).
Waterbodies	The desktop assessment indicated that no permanent or non-perennial watercourses or waterbodies intersect the application area (GIS Database).
Hydrogeography	<p>The application area is not within any mapped Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA) or legislated surface water areas (GIS Database). The nearest PDWSA is the Laverton Water Reserve and Catchment Area located approximately 643 kilometres to the west-southwest of the application area (GIS Database).</p> <p>The application area is located within the East Murchison Groundwater Area proclaimed under the <i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> (GIS Database).</p> <p>The mapped groundwater salinity is 1,000-3,000 total dissolved solids milligrams per litre, which is described as brackish water quality (NWGA, 2023; GIS Database).</p>
Flora	There are no records of threatened flora species within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database). There are records of 12 priority flora species within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database).
Ecological communities	<p>There are no threatened or priority ecological communities mapped within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database). There are no threatened ecological communities (TECs) listed within the Great Victoria Desert or Central Ranges bioregions (DBCA, 2023b).</p> <p>There is one priority ecological community (PEC) recorded within the Great Victoria Desert bioregion, being the 'yellow sandplain vegetation of the Great Victoria Desert with diverse vertebrate fauna' PEC (GIS Database). The nearest mapped location of this PEC is located approximately 557 kilometres southwest of the application area (GIS Database).</p> <p>This PEC is characterised by yellow sandplains, which are not present within the application area, so this PEC is unlikely to occur within the application area (DBCA 2023a; Tille, 2006; GIS Database).</p>
Fauna	There are records of six conservation significant fauna species recorded within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database).

A.2. Vegetation extent

	Pre-European area (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current extent in all DBCA Managed Land (proportion of pre-European extent) (%)
IBRA Bioregion - Great Victoria Desert	21,794,222.05	21,784,887.23	99.96	1,844,351.02	8.46
Beard vegetation associations - State					
252	141,311.10	141,311.10	100.00	0	0
Beard vegetation associations - Bioregion					
252	109,254.04	109,254.04	100.00	0	0

Government of Western Australia (2019)

A.3. Flora analysis table

The following conservation significant flora species have records within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area, or are species at risk, located within the Great Victoria Desert Central subregion (Barton & Cowan, 2001; GIS Database).

The likelihood of occurrence for these species were determined by potentially suitable habitat within the application area and known regional records (Tille, 2006; Western Australian Herbarium, 1998-; GIS Database).

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat?	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]	Likelihood of occurrence
<i>Amaranthus centralis</i>	P3	Yes	<48	N	Possible
<i>Apowollastonia stirlingii</i> subsp. <i>stirlingii</i>	P1	Yes	<12	N	Possible
<i>Eremophila undulata</i>	P2	Yes	<330*	N	Possible
<i>Eucalyptus sparsa</i>	P3	Yes	<4	N	Possible
<i>Euphorbia inappendiculata</i> var. <i>queenslandica</i>	P3	Potential	<45	N	Possible
<i>Euphorbia parvicaruncula</i>	P1	Potential	<47	N	Possible
<i>Goodenia asteriscus</i>	P3	Yes	<34	N	Possible
<i>Menkea lutea</i>	P1	Yes	<34	N	Possible
<i>Micromyrtus helmsii</i>	P1	Potential	<145*	N	Possible
<i>Olearia arida</i>	P4	Potential	<126*	N	Possible
<i>Vittadinia pustulata</i>	P3	Yes	<18	N	Possible
<i>Calytrix warburtonensis</i>	P2	No	<230*	N	Unlikely
<i>Conospermum toddii</i>	P4	No	<519*	N	Unlikely
<i>Eremophila aureivisca</i>	P1	Yes	<496*	N	Unlikely
<i>Indigofera cornuligera</i> subsp. <i>cornuligera</i>	P3	No	<17	N	Unlikely
<i>Indigofera gilesii</i>	P3	No	<38	N	Unlikely
<i>Labichea deserticola</i>	P1	No	<259*	N	Unlikely
<i>Lythrum paradoxum</i>	P3	No	<35	N	Unlikely
<i>Teucrium grandiusculum</i> subsp. <i>grandiusculum</i>	P2	No	<41	N	Unlikely

T: threatened, CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, P: priority, *Great Victoria Desert Central subregion species at risk (Barton & Cowan, 2001)

A.4. Fauna analysis table

The following conservation significant fauna species have records within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area; are species at risk, located within the Great Victoria Desert Central subregion; or have survey requirements within the the Great Victoria Desert Central subregion (Barton & Cowan, 2001; DBCA, 2024; GIS Database).

The likelihood of occurrence for these species were determined by potentially suitable habitat within the application area, species distribution, and known regional records (CALM, n.d.; DBCA, 2024; DCCEEW, 2023, 2024; DEPW, 2021a, 2021b; DOTE, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d, 2025e, 2025f, 2025g, 2025h; NESF, 2021; Körtner et al., 2007; Pearson, 2013; Tille, 2006; GIS Database).

Species name	Conservation status		Suitable habitat features?	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]	Likelihood of occurrence
	WA	EPBC				
<i>Dasyercus blythi</i> (brush-tailed mulgara)	P4	-	Yes	48.8	N	Possible (discussed in Section 3.2.1)
<i>Dasyercus cristicauda</i> (crest-tailed mulgara)	P4	-	Yes	496.5*	N	Unlikely (discussed in Section 3.2.1)
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (malleefowl)	VU	VU	Yes	17.8*	N	Possible (discussed in Section 3.2.1)
<i>Liopholis kintorei</i> (great desert skink)	VU	VU	Yes	146.8*	N	Possible (discussed in Section 3.2.1)
<i>Pezoporus occidentalis</i> (night parrot)	CR	EN	Yes	176.4 ¹	N	Possible (discussed in Section 3.2.1)
<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i> (princess parrot)	VU	VU	Yes	173.4*	N	Possible (discussed in Section 3.2.1)
<i>Macrotis lagotis</i> (greater bilby)	VU	VU	Limited	0.0	N	Unlikely
<i>Petrogale lateralis centralis</i> (central Australian rock-wallaby)	VU	VU	No	38.2	N	Unlikely
<i>Macrotis leucura</i> (lesser bilby)	EX	EX	Limited	25.1	N	Highly unlikely
<i>Onychogalea lunata</i> (crescent nailtail wallaby)	EX	EX	Yes	43.4	N	Highly unlikely

CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, P: priority, MI: migratory, CD: conservation dependent, OS: other specially protected, EX: extinct, *Great Victoria Desert Central subregion species at risk (Barton & Cowan, 2001), ¹survey requirements within the Great Victoria Desert Central subregion

Appendix B. 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></p> <p>The area proposed to be cleared contains potential habitat for a number of priority flora and conservation significant fauna species.</p>	May be at variance	Yes <i>Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.</i>
<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></p> <p>The area proposed to be cleared has the potential to contain significant habitat for multiple conservation significant fauna.</p>	May be at variance	Yes <i>Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.</i>
<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></p> <p>A desktop search within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area did not identify any Threatened flora species (GIS Database). Additionally, there are no records of Threatened flora species within the Great Victoria Desert bioregion (GIS Database). As such, the area proposed to be cleared is unlikely to be necessary for the continued existence of Threatened flora.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<p><u>Principle (d):</u> <i>“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.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>There are no threatened ecological communities (TECs) listed within the Great Victoria Desert or Central Ranges bioregions (DBCA, 2023b).</p> <p>While no flora and vegetation surveys have been conducted over the application area, given the distance from the nearest known TEC, the application area is unlikely to be representative of a threatened ecological community.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		
<p><u>Principle (e):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The application area falls within the Great Victoria Desert Bioregion of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) (GIS Database). Approximately 100% of the pre-European vegetation still exists in the IBRA Great Victoria Desert Bioregion (Government of Western Australia, 2019).</p> <p>The application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation association:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 252: Shrub-steppe; hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee (GIS Database). <p>Approximately 100% of the pre-European extent of this vegetation association remains uncleared at both the state and bioregional level (Government of Western Australia, 2019).</p>	Not at variance	No
<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></p> <p>The application area is located within the ‘Ranges of the Western Desert’, which is part of the Register of the National Estate and published in the EPA Redbook; and the Ngaanyatjarra Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) (GIS Database).</p> <p>The Ranges of the Western Desert has an area of approximately 8.0 million hectares (DCCEW, 2025). The Ngaanyatjarra IPA has an area of approximately 9.8 million hectares (NIAA, 2025). In comparison to this, the small size of proposed clearing activities (4.8 hectares) is unlikely to result in a significant impact to the conservation values of these areas.</p>	Not likely to be 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></p> <p>Given no water courses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to impact any vegetation growing within association with a watercourse or wetland.</p>	Not 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></p> <p>Most of the application area (95.7 per cent) consists of self-mulching cracking clay (GIS Database). This soil type is a Great Group within the Vertosol Soil Order (Soil Science Australia, n.d.). Vertosols are subject to erosion during high intensity rainfall events when vegetation cover is removed (Freebairn et al., 1996).</p> <p>The Great Victoria Desert experiences occasional heavy rainfall events (GVDBT, n.d.). Therefore, the proposed clearing may increase the incidence of soil erosion.</p> <p><u>Condition:</u></p> <p>To address the above impact, the following management measure will be required as a condition on the clearing permit:</p>	May be at variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A staged clearing condition, which restricts the timing of vegetation clearing activities to less than three months prior to the commencement of exploration activities. 		
<p><u>Principle (i):</u> "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."</p> <p><u>Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Public Drinking Water Source Areas within or in close proximity to the application area (GIS Database). There are no watercourses or wetlands within the application area (GIS Database).</p> <p>The proposed clearing is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (j):</u> "Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding."</p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>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. The application area is generally flat to gently undulating, and there are no watercourses or wetlands recorded within the application area. The proposed clearing is unlikely to contribute to waterlogging (GIS Database).</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No

Appendix C. Vegetation condition rating scale

Trudgen, M.E. (1991) *Vegetation condition scale* in National Trust (WA) 1993 Urban Bushland Policy. National Trust of Australia (WA), Wildflower Society of WA (Inc.), and the Tree Society (Inc.), Perth.

Measuring vegetation condition for the Eremaean and Northern Botanical Provinces (Trudgen, 1991)

Condition	Description
Excellent	Pristine or nearly so, no obvious signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement.
Very good	Some relatively slight signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement. For example, some signs of damage to tree trunks caused by repeated fire, the presence of some relatively non-aggressive weeds, or occasional vehicle tracks.
Good	More obvious signs of damage caused by human activity since European settlement, including some obvious impact on the vegetation structure such as that caused by low levels of grazing or slightly aggressive weeds.
Poor	Still retains basic vegetation structure or ability to regenerate it after very obvious impacts of human activities since European settlement, such as grazing, partial clearing, frequent fires or aggressive weeds.
Very poor	Severely impacted by grazing, very frequent fires, clearing or a combination of these activities. Scope for some regeneration but not to a state approaching good condition without intensive management. Usually with a number of weed species present including very aggressive species.
Completely degraded	Areas that are completely or almost completely without native species in the structure of their vegetation; i.e. areas that are cleared or 'parkland cleared' with their flora comprising weed or crop species with isolated native trees or shrubs.

Appendix D. Photographs of the application area

Cawthorn (2021)



E.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)
- Clearing Regulations - Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Clearing Regulations - Schedule One Areas (DWER-057)
- DBCA - Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA - Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- DBCA Fire History (DBCA-060)
- Esri World Imagery
- Geographic Names (GEONOMA) (LGATE-013)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- Hydrographic Catchments – Catchments (DWER-028)
- Hydrography – Inland Waters – Waterlines
- Hydrography, Linear (DWER-031)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Native Title (ILUA) (LGATE-067)
- Native Vegetation Extent (DPIRD-005)
- Pre-European Vegetation (DPIRD-006)
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Best Available (DPIRD-027)
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Rangelands (DPIRD-064)
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Western Australia attributed by WA Soil Group (DPIRD-076)
- WA Now Aerial Imagery

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Threatened and Priority Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened and Priority Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened and Priority Fauna
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

E.2. References

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4. Glossary

Acronyms:

BC Act	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> , Western Australia
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australian Government
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
DEMIRS	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia (now DEMIRS)
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DEMIRS)
DoEE	Department of the Environment and Energy (now DCCEEW)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora (now known as Threatened Flora)
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Federal Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
PEC	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
RIWI Act	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DBCA (2023) *Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna*. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia}:

T **Threatened species:**

Listed by order of the Minister as Threatened in the category of critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under section 19(1), or is a rediscovered species to be regarded as threatened species under section 26(2) of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act).

Threatened fauna is the species of fauna that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

Threatened flora is the species of flora that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

The assessment of the conservation status of threatened species is in accordance with the BC Act listing criteria and the requirements of [Ministerial Guideline Number 1](#) and [Ministerial Guideline Number 2](#) that adopts the use of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Red List of Threatened Species Categories and Criteria](#), and is based on the national distribution of the species.

- CR Critically endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be “*facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.
- Listed as critically endangered under section 19(1)(a) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 20 and the ministerial guidelines.
- EN Endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be “*facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.
- Listed as endangered under section 19(1)(b) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 21 and the ministerial guidelines.
- VU Vulnerable species**
Threatened species considered to be “*facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.
- Listed as vulnerable under section 19(1)(c) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 22 and the ministerial guidelines.

Extinct Species:

- EX Extinct species**
Species where “*there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 24 of the BC Act).
- EW Extinct in the wild species**
Species that “*is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; and it has not been recorded in its known habitat or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 25 of the BC Act).
- Currently there are no threatened fauna or threatened flora species listed as extinct in the wild.

Specially protected species:

- Listed by order of the Minister as specially protected under section 13(1) of the BC Act. Meeting one or more of the following categories: species of special conservation interest; migratory species; cetaceans; species subject to international agreement; or species otherwise in need of special protection.
- Species that are listed as threatened species (critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable) or extinct species under the BC Act cannot also be listed as Specially Protected species.
- MI Migratory species**
Fauna that periodically or occasionally visit Australia or an external Territory or the exclusive economic zone; or the species is subject of an international agreement that relates to the protection of migratory species and that binds the Commonwealth; and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 15 of the BC Act).
- Migratory species include birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) or The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and fauna subject to the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (Bonn Convention), an environmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Program. Migratory species listed under the BC Act are a subset of the migratory animals, that are known to visit Western Australia, protected under the international agreements or treaties, excluding species that are listed as Threatened species.
- CD Species of special conservation interest (conservation dependent fauna)**
Species of special conservation need that are dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 14 of the BC Act).
- Currently only fauna are listed as species of special conservation interest.
- OS Other specially protected species**
Species otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 18 of the BC Act).
- Currently only fauna are listed as species otherwise in need of special protection.
- P Priority species:**

Priority is not a listing category under the BC Act. The Priority Flora and Fauna lists are maintained by the department and are published on the department's website.

All fauna and flora are protected in WA following the provisions in Part 10 of the BC Act. The protection applies even when a species is not listed as threatened or specially protected, and regardless of land tenure (State managed land (Crown land), private land, or Commonwealth land).

Species that may possibly be threatened species that do not meet the criteria for listing under the BC Act because of insufficient survey or are otherwise data deficient, are added to the Priority Fauna or Priority Flora Lists under Priorities 1, 2 or 3. These three categories are ranked in order of prioritisation for survey and evaluation of conservation status so that consideration can be given to potential listing as threatened.

Species that are adequately known, meet criteria for near threatened, or are rare but not threatened, or that have been recently removed from the threatened species list or conservation dependent or other specially protected fauna lists for other than taxonomic reasons, are placed in Priority 4. These species require regular monitoring.

Assessment of priority status is based on the Western Australian distribution of the species, unless the distribution in WA is part of a contiguous population extending into adjacent States, as defined by the known spread of locations.

P1 Priority One - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, none on conservation lands

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, for example, agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, some on conservation lands

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, for example, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species – known from several locations

Species that are known from several locations and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. These species need further survey.

P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring

(a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.

(b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for vulnerable but are not listed as a conservation dependent specially protected species.

(c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species or lists of conservation dependent or other specially protected species, during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.

(d) Other species in need of monitoring.

Principles for clearing native vegetation:

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (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.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.
- (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.
- (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.

- (f)** Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g)** Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (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.
- (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.
- (j)** Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.