Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details and outcomes

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	10735/1
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd
Application received:	26 August 2024
Application area:	5.5 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Decommissioning petroleum infrastructure
Method of clearing:	Mechanical removal
Tenure:	Production Licence L 1
	Production Licence L 2
Location (LGA area):	Shire of Irwin

1.2. Description of clearing activities

MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd (MEPAU) proposes to clear up to 5.5 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 9.59 hectares, for the purpose of decommissioning petroleum infrastructure. The project is located approximately 6 kilometres east of Dongara, within the Shire of Irwin.

The application is to allow for the decommissioning of flowlines and well sites and reinstating the areas to its previous state or to the landowner's request (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024a; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025). Existing buried flowlines will be removed, and wells will be plugged and abandoned (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024a; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025). Between three to seven metres of regrowth native vegetation will be cleared within the right of way of buried flowlines, and regrowth and planted native vegetation within existing well sites will be cleared for the drill rig package to assist decommissioning of the wells (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024a; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025).

1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Grant
Decision date:	20 March 2026
Decision area:	5.5 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 Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE) 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 (Appendix A), relevant datasets (Appendix E), supporting information provided by the applicant (Appendix D), 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 that the proposed clearing is necessary to meet requirements under the Petroleum Acts (WA). Under these Acts, the petroleum operator is required to decommission and remove all structures, equipment and other property from petroleum activity sites (e.g. sumps, flare pits, water storage ponds, and other infrastructure used for the purpose of the activity).

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing may result in:

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

- impacts to vegetation growing in association with a watercourse
- potential land degradation in the form of wind and water 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 and dieback
- remove or kill any weeds growing within the permit area at least once annually
- retain cleared vegetation and topsoil and respread this on areas that are no longer required for the purpose for which they were cleared within 12 months following completion of clearing

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* (WA) (BAM Act)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Land Administration Act 1997* (WA)
- *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967* (WA)
- Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources (Environment) Regulations 2012 (WA)
- *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (WA) (RIWI Act)
- *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* (WA)

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

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

3. Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

MEPAU provided the following avoidance and mitigation measures within their application form and associated Environment Plan (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024a; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025):

- flowline removal activities will utilise the following methods to reduce the amount of clearing during decommissioning:
  - where possible the bell hole method will be used to avoid clearing of large trees. In particular, the section above the buried flowline will be excavated as close as possible to the upstream of the large trees to expose the buried line. A bell hole will then be excavated downstream of the large vegetation/trees to expose the buried pipe. Using the shears on the excavator, a cut will be made to the exposed section of flowline
  - a pulling sling will be attached to the flowline and pulled from the cleared position until the line is clear of the ground and in position for cutting into lengths for transport
  - this process will be repeated in 100 metre increments if the pipe is free enough to pull. Alternatively, smaller sections of pipe will be pulled
- clearing area will be approved under internal processes and clearly demarcated
- all personnel will be inducted prior to arriving onsite
- vehicles and machinery will undergo hygiene requirements and be cleaned of vegetative and soil material prior to arrival onsite

- clearing will be by mechanical methods including a grader or batter bucket excavator, with vegetation stockpiled or windrowed along the boundary
- windrowed topsoil will be kept separate from windrowed vegetative material
- topsoil will generally be stripped to a nominal depth of 100 millimetres and be stockpiled or windrowed prior to decommissioning activities
- earthworks conducted under dry soil conditions to re-contour areas to meet the final landform design
- ripping of compacted soils to a depth of approximately 50 to 100 centimetres (depending on the depth of topsoil) to relieve compaction and disperse any remaining in situ gravel
- weed spraying prior to decommissioning or site reinstatement activities
- inspect the rehabilitated area in winter for weed issues as part of the annual weed control program undertake spraying as required
- land areas will be reinstated to a condition suitable for the land use at the time of decommissioning and site reinstatement, except any infrastructure agreed to remain in place in agreeance with the landowner

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 (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 (Appendix B) identified the impacts of the proposed clearing are limited and able to be managed to be environmentally acceptable with standard avoid and minimise, hygiene, and revegetation and rehabilitation management conditions.

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The clearing permit application was advertised on 6 February 2026 by the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to this application.

There are no native title claims over the area under application (DPLH, 2026). The petroleum titles have 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 is one registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2026). 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.

Other relevant authorisations required for the proposed land use include:

- An Environment Plan approved under the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Resources Act 1967*

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.

Agreement to Reserve

The application area is partially located within an Agreement to Reserve, gazetted under Part IVA of the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* by the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation (Commissioner).

Section 51C(a) of the EP Act states that a person who causes or allows clearing commits an offence unless the clearing is done in accordance with a clearing permit. Pursuant to section 51D of the EP Act, section 51C(a) does not apply to clearing on land the subject of an agreement to reserve unless the clearing permit was granted with the written approval of the Commissioner; or the clearing is done with the written approval of the Commissioner.

The department was provided written permission from the Commissioner on 26 November 2025, which temporarily lifts the conditions under the Agreement to Reserve. This approval from the Commissioner is subject to the requirement that once the decommissioning has been completed, the land is rehabilitated to native vegetation as specified in the proponent's rehabilitation plan and fenced to exclude all livestock grazing.

End

Appendix A. Site characteristics

A.1. Site characteristics

Characteristic	Details
Local context	The areas proposed to be cleared are part of multiple small, disjointed areas of native vegetation in the intensive land use zone of Western Australia (GIS Database). The application area both intersects and is surrounded by privately owned agricultural pastures (GIS Database). It is located within the Geraldton Sandplains bioregion, with approximately half of the application area located within the Geraldton Hills subregion and half within the Lesueur Sandplain subregion (GIS Database). Approximately 27.3% of the local area (10 kilometre radius from the application area) remains uncleared (GIS Database).
Ecological linkage	The application area contains patchy regrowth remnant vegetation in degraded condition; however it may provide some form of ecological linkage (Appendix D; GIS Database).
Conservation areas	The application area is not located within any legislated conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest legislated conservation area is the Beekeepers Nature Reserve, located approximately 5 kilometres southwest of the application area (GIS Database).
Vegetation description	The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation associations (GIS Database): 352: Medium woodland; York gum 359: Shrublands; *Acacia* & *Banksia* scrub 433: Mosaic: Shrublands; *Acacia rostellifera* & *Melaleuca cardiophylla* thicket / Sparse low woodland; illyarrie No flora and vegetation surveys have been conducted over the application area. MEPAU have stated that the vegetation within the application area is either planted or regrowth of greater than 10 years and relatively sparse in nature (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024a; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025). The remnant vegetation is mainly heath and shrublands on sand over limestone, with scattered trees and some limestone exposures (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024a; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025).
Vegetation condition	The vegetation within the application area is considered to be in degraded to good condition (Appendix D; Keighery, 1994; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024b; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; GIS Database). Remnant vegetation has been partly cleared in the past and all of it is exposed to continuing grazing, resulting in variable condition (Appendix D; Keighery, 1994; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024b; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; GIS Database). A significant number of weed species have been recorded within the broader L 1 and L 2 Production Licences, including Weeds of National Significance and Declared Pests (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025). Given the application areas are adjacent to cleared agricultural land, it is highly likely that weeds will occur (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025). The full Keighery (1994) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C. Representative photos are available in Appendix D.
Climate and landform	The climate of the Geraldton Hills and Lesueur Sandplain subregions are described as Mediterranean to warm semi-arid, with the nearest weather station recording an average rainfall of approximately 424.4 millimetres per year (BoM, 2026; CALM, 2002). The application area is mapped at elevations of 14-102 metres Australian height datum (GIS Database). Landforms within the application area are broadly described as low hills with some limestone outcrop, gently undulating plains or rises with areas of low river terraces, and level to very gently inclined flats (DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database).
Soil description	The soils within the application area are broadly mapped as (DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database): • yellow deep sand

Characteristic	Details
	• yellow shallow sand • red sandy earth • red loamy earth • pale deep sand • grey deep sandy duplex Areas that intersect the Irwin River are likely to contain semi-wet to wet soils.
Land degradation risk	The application area is highly susceptible to wind erosion and moderately susceptible to water erosion in some areas (Appendix A.3; DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database).
Waterbodies	The application area intersects the Irwin River at four locations (GIS Database). The Irwin River is considered a major non-perennial river (GIS Database).
Hydrogeography	The application area is not located within any mapped Public Drinking Water Source Areas or legislated surface water areas (GIS Database). The nearest Public Drinking Water Source Area is Allanooka-Dongara Water Reserve (groundwater), located to the north to northeast of the application area (GIS Database). The nearest boundary of Allanooka-Dongara Water Reserve is located approximately 100 metres from the application area (GIS Database). The application area is located within the Arrowsmith Groundwater Area, proclaimed under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (GIS Database). The mapped groundwater salinity is 1,000-7,000 total dissolved solids milligrams per litre, which is described as brackish to saline water quality (GIS Database).
Flora	There are records of 25 priority flora within a 10 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database). Three are listed as vulnerable under the BC Act, there are also four priority 2, 12 priority 3, and six priority 4 flora species (GIS Database).
Ecological communities	There are no mapped threatened or priority ecological communities within the application area (GIS Database). The nearest ecological community is the 'Coastal sands dominated by *Acacia rostellifera*, *Eucalyptus oraria* and *Eucalyptus obtusiflora* (Geraldton area)' priority ecological community (P3), located approximately 5.2 kilometres south-southwest of the application area (GIS Database). The nearest threatened ecological community is the 'Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh' ecological community, listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act and priority 3 in Western Australia. It is located approximately 7 kilometres west of the application area (GIS Database).
Fauna	There are records of 16 conservation significant fauna species within a 10 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database). There are 13 bird, one reptile, and two mammal species. Ten of these species are listed as migratory, two priority, three threatened, and one other specially protected species (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 Geraldton Sandplains	3,136,037	1,404,424	~44	568,255	18.12
IBRA subregion Geraldton Hills	1,964,262	901,446	~45	355,757	18.11
IBRA subregion Lesueur Sandplain	1,171,775	502,977	~42	212,497	18.13
Local Government Shire of Irwin	236,968	117,014	~49	28,641	12.09
Beard vegetation associations State					
352	724,268	142,012	~19	12,672	1.75
359	44,493	10,760	~24	414	0.93
433	32,460	14,746	~45	1,603	4.94
Beard vegetation associations Geraldton Sandplains bioregion					
352	19,711	4,080	~20	503	2.55
359	44,417	10,760	~24	414	0.93
433	32,460	14,746	~45	1,603	4.94
Beard vegetation associations Geraldton Hills subregion					
352	14,589	2,102	~14	54	0.37
359	44,417	10,760	~24	414	0.93
433	14,363	3,288	~22	N/A	N/A
Beard vegetation associations Lesueur Sandplain subregion					
433	18,096	11,457	~63	1,603	8.86

Government of Western Australia (2019)

A.3. Land degradation risk table

Risk categories	221Ta_4 (6.80 ha)	221Ga_2IR2 (1.46 ha)	224MhS_ (0.75 ha)	221Ga_2Dr (0.48 ha)	224MhTA (0.06 ha)	221Al_1 (0.05 ha)
EROSION						
water erosion	high: 1% nil to moderate: 99%	high: 10% nil to moderate: 90%	high: 1% nil to moderate: 99%	extreme: 30% very high: 45% nil to moderate: 25%	nil to moderate: 100%	high: 5% nil to moderate: 95%
wind erosion	very high: 28% high: 67%	nil to moderate: 100%	very high: 5% high: 67% nil to moderate: 28%	nil to moderate: 100%	high: 52% nil to moderate: 48%	high: 80% nil to moderate: 20%
flood risk	low: 100%	high: 10% moderate: 5% low: 85%	high: 1% low: 99%	high: 75% moderate: 10% low: 15%	low: 100%	high: 5% low: 95%
instability	nil to very low: 100%	nil to very low: 100%	nil to very low: 100%	high: 75% nil to very low: 25%	nil to very low: 100%	nil to very low: 100%
WATER & DRAINAGE						
waterlogging	nil to low: 100%	very high: 5% moderate: 15% nil to low: 80%	moderate: 1% nil to low: 99%	very high: 15% high: 15% moderate: 55% nil to low: 15%	nil to low: 100%	moderate: 40% nil to low: 60%
site drainage	high: 100%	very poor: 5% moderate: 15% high: 80%	moderate: 5% high: 95%	very poor: 15% poor: 15% moderate: 55% high: 15%	high: 100%	moderate: 45% high: 55%

(DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database).

Appendix B. Assessment against the clearing principles

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Environmental value: biological values		
Principle (a): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biodiversity."* Assessment: The area proposed to be cleared does not contain locally or regionally significant flora, fauna, or assemblages of plants (GIS Database). The vegetation may provide some suitable habitat for flora or fauna species, however given the degraded condition of this vegetation, the proposed clearing is unlikely to result in significant impacts to biodiversity (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024b; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; WAH, 1998-; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance	No
Principle (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."* Assessment: The area proposed to be cleared does not contain significant habitat for, or necessary for the maintenance of conservation significant fauna species (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024b; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; WAH, 1998-; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance	No
Principle (c): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora."* Assessment: The area proposed to be cleared may contain some marginal habitat for threatened flora species (WAH, 1998-; GIS Database), however given the degraded nature of the native vegetation present, it is unlikely to support populations or individuals of	Not likely to be at variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
threatened flora (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024b; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; WAH, 1998-; GIS Database).		
Principle (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."* Assessment: The nearest threatened ecological community is the 'Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh' ecological community, listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act and priority 3 in Western Australia. It is located approximately 7 kilometres west of the application area (GIS Database). The vegetation within the application area is not representative of this TEC (MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		
Principle (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."* Assessment: The application area falls within the Geraldton Sandplains bioregion of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) (GIS Database). Approximately 44% of the pre-European vegetation still exists in the IBRA Geraldton Sandplains bioregion (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The application area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation associations 352: Medium woodland; York gum; 359: Shrublands; *Acacia* & *Banksia* scrub; and 433: Mosaic: Shrublands; *Acacia rostellifera* & *Melaleuca cardiophylla* thicket / Sparse low woodland; illyarrie (GIS Database). Approximately 19-45% of the pre-European extent of each of these vegetation associations remains uncleared at both the state and bioregional level (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The application area does represent a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared, however these areas are to be rehabilitated to similar composition and structure after infrastructure is decommissioned, resulting in greater quality of remnant vegetation than currently present.	May be at variance	No
Principle (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."* Assessment: The application area is not located within any legislated conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest legislated conservation area is the Beekeepers Nature Reserve, located approximately 5 kilometres southwest of the application area (GIS Database). Given the distance to the nearest conservation area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to have an impact on the environmental values of any conservation areas.	Not likely to be at variance	No
Environmental value: land and water resources		
Principle (f): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland."* Assessment: The application area intersects the Irwin River at four locations (GIS Database). The Irwin River is considered a major non-perennial river and the vegetation growing in association with the Irwin River is considered degraded (Appendix D; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2024b; MEPAU Perth Basin Pty Ltd, 2025; GIS Database). Given the areas intersecting the Irwin River will be temporarily cleared and then rehabilitated, the proposed clearing is unlikely to significantly impact riparian vegetation. Potential impacts from the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a revegetation and rehabilitation management condition.	At variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Principle (g): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation."* Assessment: The most extensively mapped land system within the application area has a 95% high to very high wind erosion risk (Appendix A.3; DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database). Land systems mapped within the Irwin River are highly susceptible to water erosion, however these areas are very limited within the application area (Appendix A.3; DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database). Given these areas will be rehabilitated, the temporary loss of vegetation cover that may result in some wind or water erosion will be remediated. Potential impacts from the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a revegetation and rehabilitation management condition.	May be at variance	No
Principle (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."* Assessment: The application area intersects the Irwin River at four locations (GIS Database). The Irwin River is considered a major non-perennial river (GIS Database). The application area is not located within any mapped Public Drinking Water Source Areas or legislated surface water areas (GIS Database). The nearest Public Drinking Water Source Area is Allanooka-Dongara Water Reserve (groundwater), located to the north to northeast of the application area (GIS Database). Given the application area will only be temporarily cleared for decommissioning infrastructure and then rehabilitated, the proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.	Not likely to be at variance	No
Principle (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."* Assessment: The majority of the land systems mapped within the application area have a low likelihood of waterlogging or flood risk (Appendix A.3; DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database). Land systems that have a higher likelihood or risk are mapped within the Irwin River (Appendix A.3; DPIRD, 2026; Rogers & National Landcare Program (Australia), 1996; GIS Database). Given these areas will only be temporarily cleared as they will be rehabilitated after decommissioning activities are complete, the proposed clearing is unlikely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.	Not likely to be at variance	No

Appendix C. 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.

Condition	Description
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 D. Aerial photographs of the vegetation within the areas proposed to be cleared

Figure 1: Dongara Production Facility Flowline to Dongara-11 wellsite.

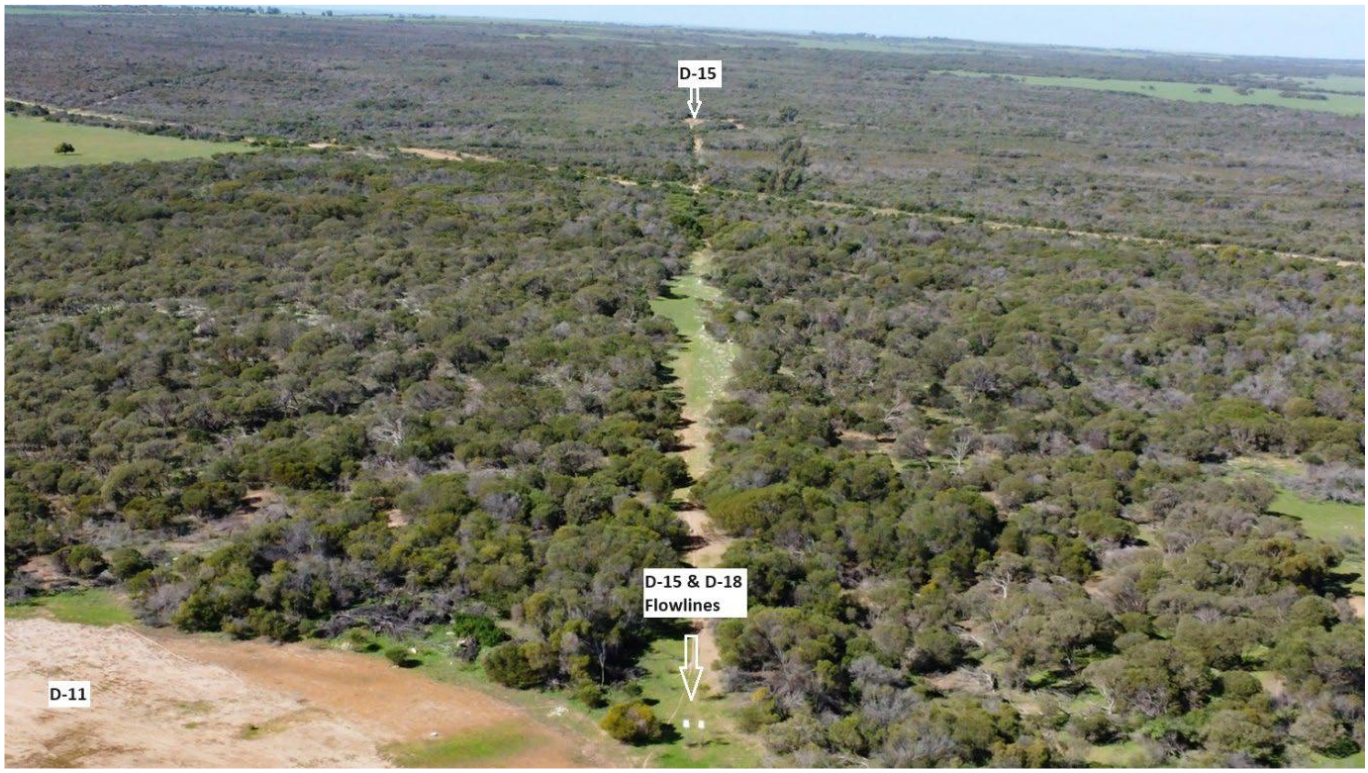

Figure 2: Dongara-11 flowline to Dongara-15 wellsite.

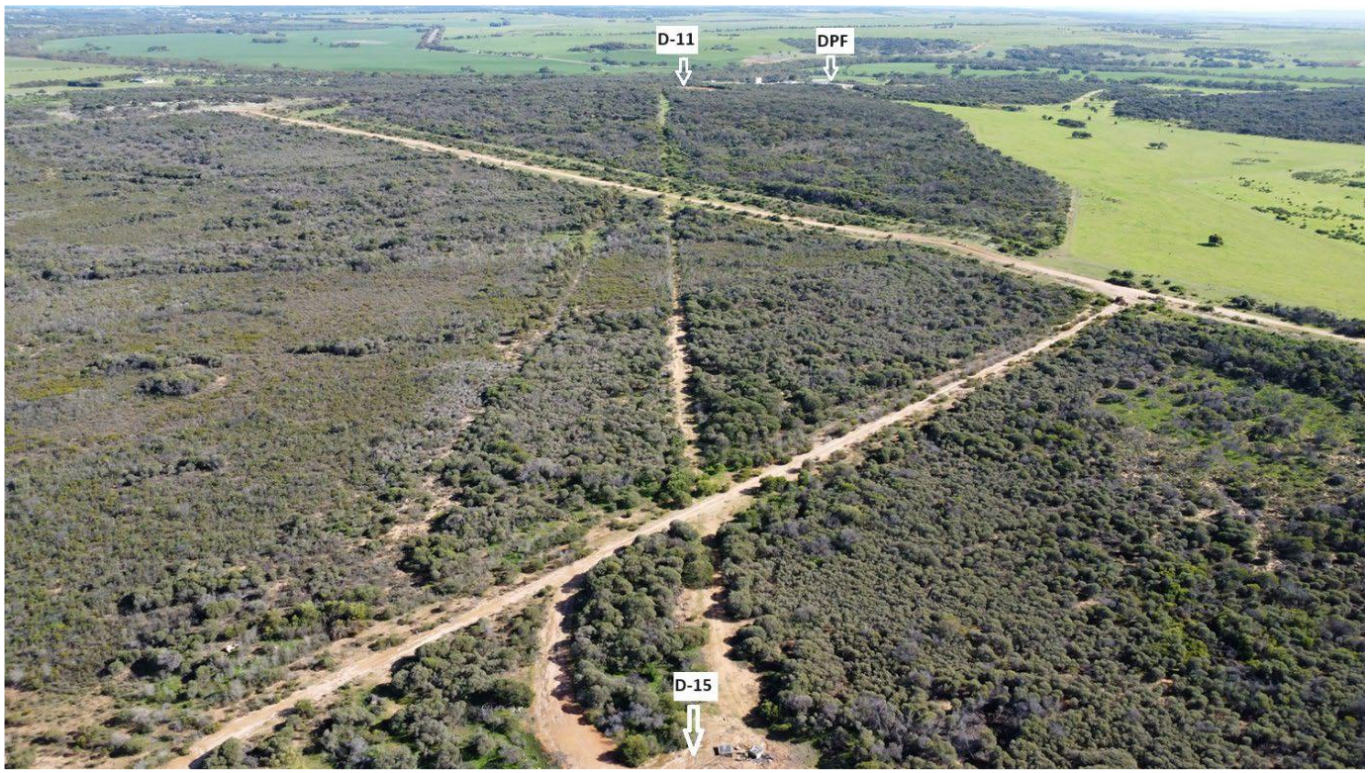

Figure 3: Dongara-11 Flowline to Dongara-15 Flowline.

Figure 4: Dongara-15 Wellsite.

Figure 5: Dongara-15 flowline to Dongara-18 wellsite.

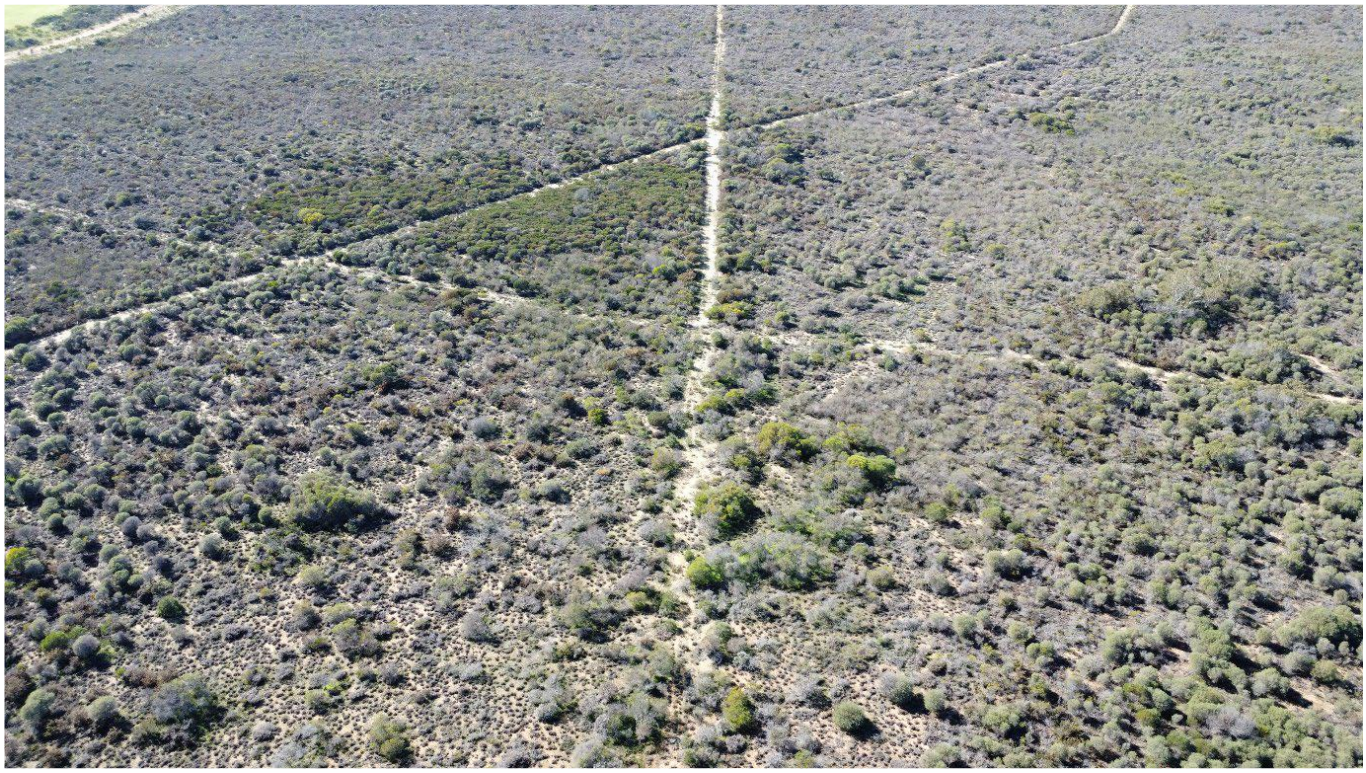

Figure 6: Dongara-15 flowline to Dongara-18 wellsite.

Figure 7: Dongara-18 wellsite.

Figure 8: Dongara Production Facility to Dongara-08 / 25 / 12 Flowline.

Figure 9: Dongara-08 to Dongara-08/25/12 flowline.

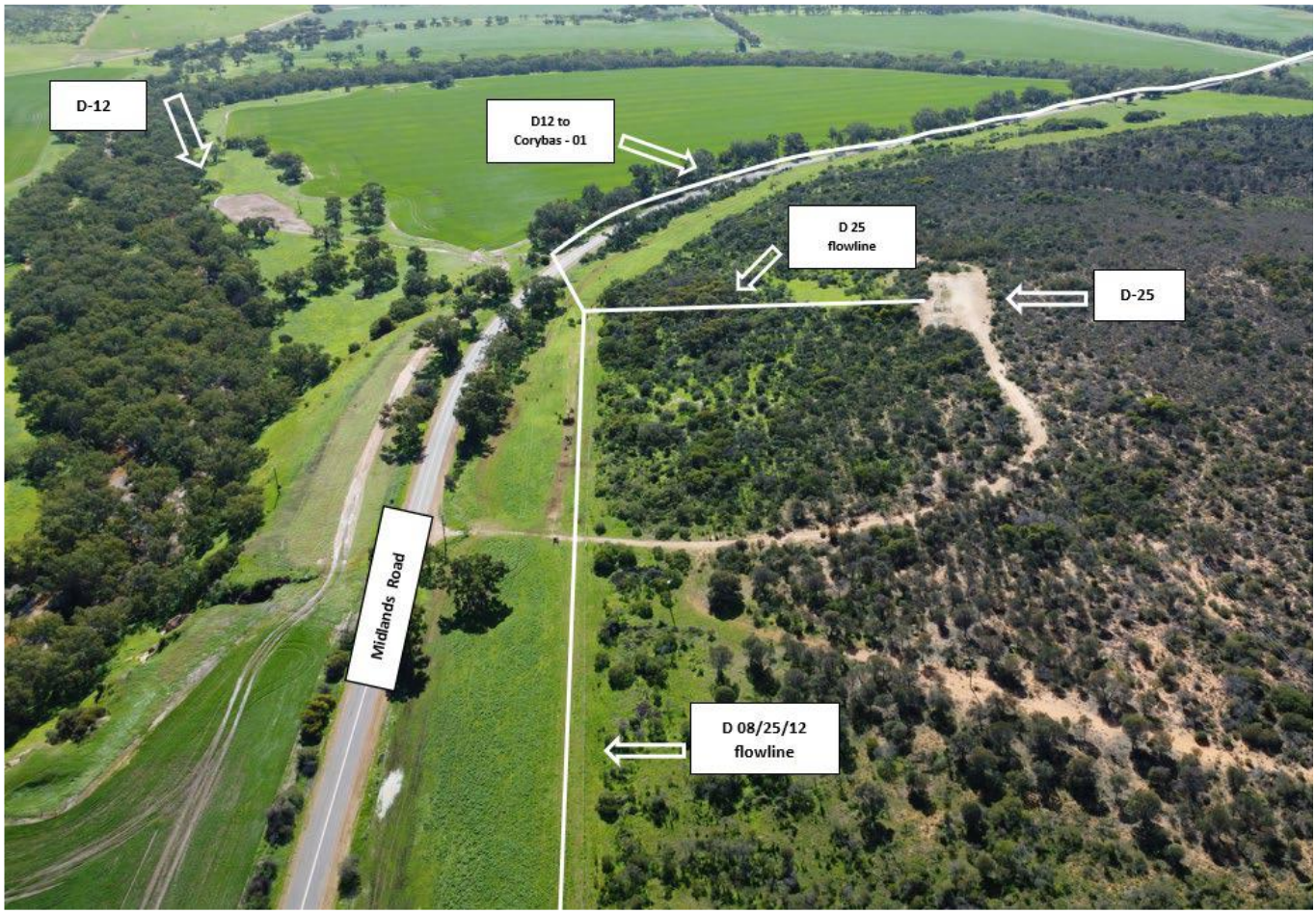

Figure 10: Dongara 08 / 25 / 12 flowline to Corybas-01.

Figure 11: Dongara-12 to Corybas Flowline. Flowline attached to Mountain bridge crossing the Irwin River.

Figure 12: Mountain Bridge; Dongara–12 to Corybas–01 Flowline.

Figure 13: Dongara–16 flowline and Dongara–03 flowline to Dongara Production Facility, crossing the Irwin River.

Appendix E. Sources of information

E.1. GIS datasets

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

- 2 metre contours (DPIRD-072)
- Cadastre (Polygon) (LGATE-217)
- 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)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Local Government Area (LGA) Boundaries (LGATE-233)
- Medium Scale Topo Contour (Line) (LGATE-015)
- Medium Scale Topo Water (Line) (LGATE-018)
- Native Title (Determination) (LGATE-066)
- Native Vegetation Extent (DPIRD-005)
- Pre-European Vegetation (DPIRD-006)
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- Reserves (LGATE-227)
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Best Available (DPIRD-027)
- Townsites (LGATE-248)
- WA Now Aerial Imagery

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Black Cockatoo Roosting Sites
- Forest Red Tailed Black Cockatoo Breeding Sites
- White-Tailed Black Cockatoo Breeding Sites
- Black Cockatoo BC Feeding SCP
- Black Cockatoo Feeding JF
- Black Cockatoo Feeding Areas Buffered
- Black Cockatoo Baudin's Distribution
- Black Cockatoo Forest Red Tail Distribution
- Black Cockatoo Carnaby's Distribution
- 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)

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Glossary

Acronyms:

BC Act	*Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016,* 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 (now DMPE)
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia (now DMPE)
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMPE)
DMPE	Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration
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	*Environmental Protection Act 1986*, Western Australia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EPBC Act	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth 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	*Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*, 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:

Threatened species

T 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

Listed by order of the Minister as extinct under section 23(1) of the BC Act as extinct or extinct in the wild.

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

SP **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.

Priority species

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.