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:	10916/1
Permit type:	Purpose Permit
Applicant name:	Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd
Application received:	15 January 2025
Application area:	10 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Rail maintenance and associated activities, upgrading and maintaining existing communication facility and maintaining existing access tracks.
Method of clearing:	Mechanical Removal
Tenure:	Miscellaneous Licences 47/67, 47/228
Location (LGA area):	Shire of Ashburton
Colloquial name:	Tom Price Mainline Maintenance Works

1.2. Description of clearing activities

Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 10 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 10.36 hectares, for the purpose of rail maintenance and associated activities. The project is located approximately 45 kilometres south of Roebourne, within the Shire of Ashburton.

The application is to allow for the upgrade and maintenance of the existing communication facility and existing access track.

1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Grant
Decision date:	26 February 2026
Decision area:	10 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 F), including the results of a flora and vegetation survey (Appendix D), and fauna survey (Appendix E), 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 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 conservation significant flora;
- the loss of native vegetation that is suitable habitat for conservation significant fauna;
- impacts to environmental values of a conservation estate; and
- potential land degradation in the form of soil 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;
- restricting clearing activities to daylight hours; and
- commence construction no later than three months after undertaking clearing to reduce the risk of erosion.

1.5. Site map

A site map of proposed clearing is provided in Figure 1 below.

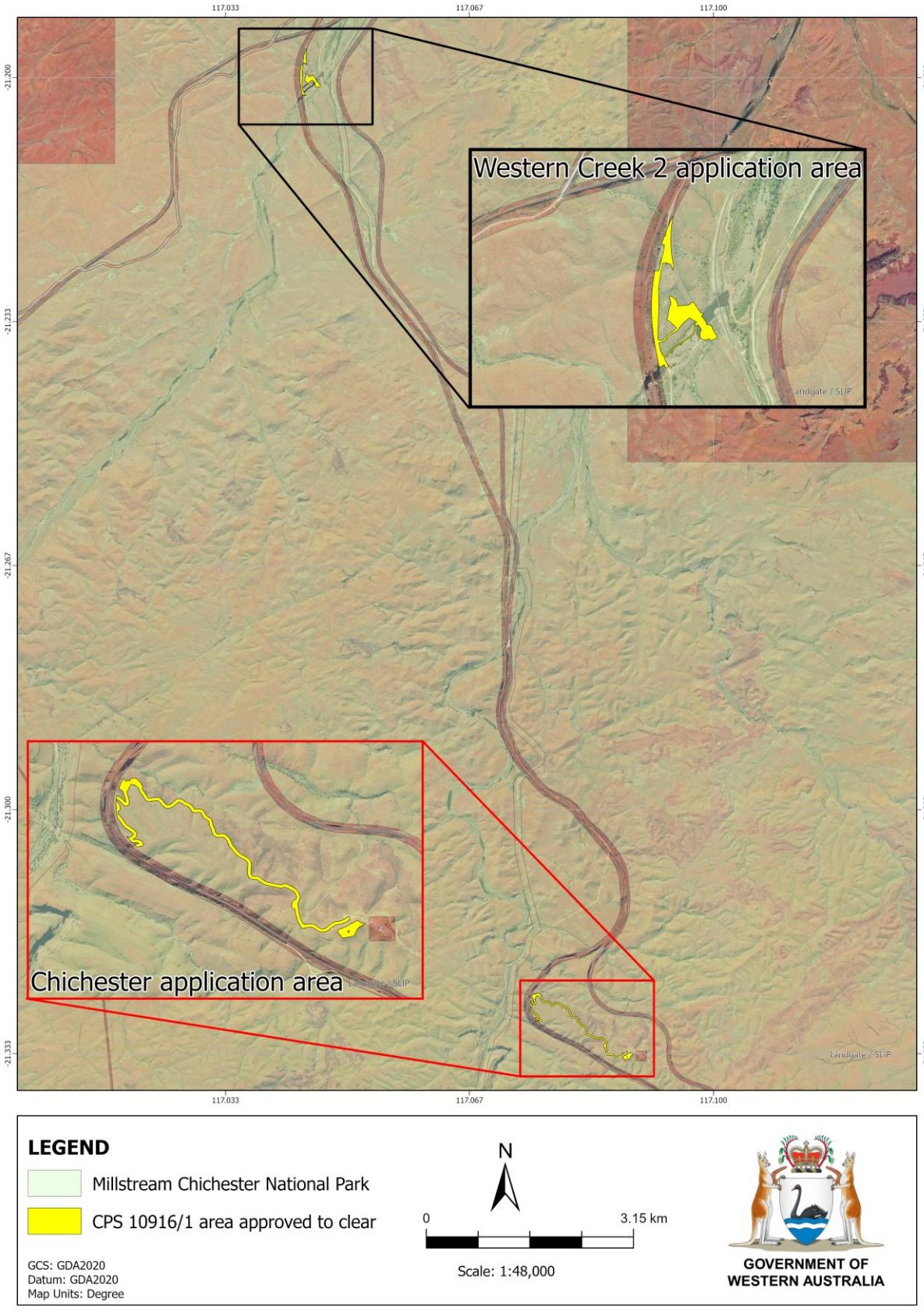


Figure 1. Map of the application area. The yellow area indicates the area within which conditional authorised clearing can occur under the granted clearing permit. Western Creek 2 and Chichester application areas labelled respectively.

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
- the polluter pays principle

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)
- *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (WA) (CAWS Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Mining Act 1978* (WA)
- *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RIWI Act)

Relevant agreements (treaties) considered during the assessment include:

- Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
- China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
- Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

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)
- Technical guidance – *Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2016)
- Technical guidance – *Terrestrial Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2020)
- Water Quality Protection Notice (WQPN) (10): WQPN 10 - Contaminant spills - emergency response plan – Roads, railways and telecommunications infrastructure.
- WQPN (25): WQPN 25: Land use compatibility tables for public drinking water source areas
- WQPN (28): WQPN 28 - Mechanical servicing and workshops – Roads and railways
- WQPN (29): WQPN 29 - Mobile mechanical servicing and cleaning - Roads and railways.
- WQPN: (44): WQPN 44 - Roads near sensitive water resources – Roads and railways.
- WQPN (56): WQPN 56 - Tanks for fuel and chemical storage near sensitive water resources – Roads and railways.
- WQPN (65): WQPN 65 – Toxic and hazardous substances.
- WQPN (83): WQPN 83 - Infrastructure corridors near sensitive water resources – Roads, railways and telecommunications infrastructure.
- WQPN (84): WQPN 84 - Rehabilitation of disturbed land in public drinking water source areas – Roads and railways.
- Brochure: Construction depots near sensitive water resources Department of Water and Environmental Regulation – Roads, railways and telecommunications infrastructure.

3. Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

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. The applicant has stated that the extent of the application area and the amount of clearing requested has been refined to include only areas that are necessary for the essential works to be completed, and that existing cleared areas will be utilised wherever possible (Robe River, 2025). Additionally, the applicant has included previously cleared areas into the requested clearing amount to take into account any potential re-growth. The applicant has stated the following as minimisation measures:

- Rehabilitation of cleared areas that are no longer required for the purpose for which they were cleared will be carried out on completion of the authorised activity.
- Cleared areas will be reprofiled to reflect the previously undisturbed landform then ripped on the contour to impede erosion.
- Stockpiled topsoil and cleared vegetation will be returned to the disturbed areas to promote vegetative regeneration, and rehabilitated areas will be monitored annually for the quality of native regrowth and weed infestations.
- Weed spraying is conducted annually where required.

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 identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological values (fauna, 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) - Clearing Principle (a)

Assessment

Flora

Astron Environmental Services (Astron) conducted a reconnaissance vegetation and flora survey over the application area and broader survey area covering approximately 47.1 hectares (Astron, 2023). The survey was conducted from 19 to 26 July 2023, following dry seasonal conditions and no rain in the four weeks prior (Astron, 2023). Dry seasonal conditions and a recent fire that had affected approximately two thirds of the Chichester application area, were identified as a potential limitation in assessing vegetation assemblages and conservation significant flora (Astron, 2023).

Pre-existing disturbance is present in both Chichester and Western Creek application areas in the form of access tracks and other infrastructure. The application area also contains areas that were previously cleared and have experience regrowth of native vegetation (Robe River). Within both application areas aerial imagery indicates the majority of the clearing will occur in or near areas previously disturbed, however there are some areas of the Western Creek 2 application area that have not been significantly impacted by edge effects.

Priority flora
One priority species was recorded within the application area, and two priority species were considered to potentially occur within the application area (Astron, 2023);

- **Confirmed:** *Pentalepis trichodesmoides* subsp. *hispida* (P3);
- **Potentially occurring:** *Trianthema* sp. Python Pool (G.R. Guerin & M.E. Trudgen GG 1023) (P2); and
- *Triodia basitricha* (P3).

The following priority flora species were not considered in the Astron (2023) flora survey; however, the application area contains suitable habitat:

- *Goodenia obscurata* (P3); and
- *Indigofera rivularis* (P3).

Within the application area there is one record of *Pentalepis trichodesmoides* subsp. *hispida* (Astron, 2023). Based upon aerial imagery it appears that this record is within an overgrown track (GIS Database). In the broader survey area Astron (2023) recorded an additional three locations of this species, with a total of eight individuals being recorded, all within rocky hillslope and drainage line habitat (Figure 6). This species is known from 15 records across Chichester, Fortescue, Hamersley, Roebourne regions, and has been recorded next to railways and in areas three years post fire (Orchard & Cross, 2012; WA Herbarium, 1998-). There is potential for additional individuals to be present within the Chichester application area that may not have been visible at the time of the survey due to being recently burnt (Figure 4) (Astron, 2023).However, given there are known individuals adjacent to the application area and suitable habitat extends outside of the application area the proposed clearing of this species within the application area is unlikely to significantly impact this species at a regional level. The proposed clearing may have a local impact on this species population within Millstream National Park; however suitable habitat does extend outside of the application area.

Trianthema sp. Python Pool (G.R. Guerin & M.E. Trudgen GG 1023) is an annual herb that is may potentially occur within loamy soils in vegetation units P1 and P2 (approximately 1.2 hectares) within the Western Creek 2 application area (Astron, 2023; WA Herbarium, 1998-). This species typically flowers March to July and records of this species often note its frequency as being locally common or in abundance when recorded (Astron, 2023; WA Herbarium, 1998-). Within Millstream Chichester National Park this species has previous been recorded in scattered patches in open bare areas at the end of small drainage lines (Davis & Wage, 2013). It is thought that these bare patches are subject to sustained periods of flooding (pooling) during the wet season and are therefore unsuitable areas for Triodia to colonise (Davis & Wage, 2013). Based on known suitable habitat discussed within Davis & Wage (2013), P1 vegetation adjacent to MiD3 vegetation would likely contain the most suitable habitat for this species to occur in, however targeted traverses of the P1 and P2 vegetation units were unsuccessful in determining the presence/absence of this species. Inadequate rainfall may have resulted in this species not being present or detectable at the time of the survey (Astron, 2023). Whilst rainfall conditions impacted detectability of this species suitable habitat within the application area is limited, if present it is unlikely the proposed clearing will have a significant impact on this species at a regional level, however, may have an impact at a local level.

Triodia basitricha is known from 49 in the western and central Pilbara region of Western Australia, and also from Barlee Range Nature Reserve south of the Pilbara (Barrett & Barrett, 2015; WA Herbarium, 1998-). This species is known to inhabit slopes or crests of rocky hills, which may indicate a more 'refugial habitat' requirement, within the application area this species is most likely to occur on rocky hillslopes and crests of HS1 and HS2 vegetation units (approximately 3.9 hectares) within the Chichester application area (Astron, 2023; Barrett & Barrett, 2015). Vegetation within the HS1 and HS2 vegetation units was recently burnt within the Chichester application area at the time of the flora survey, which may have impacted this species detectability at the time of the flora survey (Astron, 2023). Whilst this species may have been potentially undetectable at the time of the survey, given the number of known records and its wider distribution within the Pilbara, it is unlikely that the clearing of this species will have a significant impact at local or regional level, if present within the application area.

Goodenia obscurata inhabits floodplains or low rocky ridges, growing in red-brown sandy clay or lateritic loam over banded ironstone, with low open woodland of *Acacia* over *Triodia,* or open shrubland with a sparse overstorey of *Corymbia hamersleyana* and *Hakea chordophylla* over *Triodia* (Shepherd & Lepschi, 2023). This species is known from 29 records across the western Pilbara, with a single population recorded from the Carnarvon bioregion, inland from the Exmouth Gulf (Shepherd & Lepschi, 2023). Given the number of known records throughout the west Pilbara, even if individuals are present within the application area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to significantly impact this species.

Indigofera rivularis occurs along rocky creek-lines in open low woodland of eucalypts and acacias on ironstone substrates, often in association with tributaries of the Robe and Ashburton Rivers in the Pilbara (Wilson, 2021). This species is known from 68 records within its known distribution. The application area is currently outside of this species known distribution, and if the species were to be present, this would be considered a range extension of approximately 40 kilometres north (WA Herbarium, 1998-; GIS Database). There is suitable rocky drainage habitat for this species to occur, however this is limited, if present, it is unlikely that the proposed clearing would significantly impact this species.

Introduced flora species
Five introduced flora species; *Aerva javanica, Cenchrus ciliaris*, *Echinochloa colona, Passiflora foetida* var. *hispida* and *Sonchus oleraceus,* were recorded within the broader Western Creek 2 and Chichester survey areas (Figure 3 and 5) (Astron, 2023). None of the species recorded are listed as a WoNS or declared pests in Western Australia under the BAM Act, however weeds have potential to outcompete native flora and reduce biodiversity of an area (Astron, 2023; DPIRD, 2025b). It should be noted that Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris)* was recorded as a major component of the MiD1, MiD3, MiD4, MiD5 and P2 vegetation associations (Astron, 2023).

Conclusion

The proposed clearing will impact some individuals of *Pentalepis trichodesmoides* subsp. *hispida*, however it is unlikely this will significantly impact this species at a regional level, given the presence of records across the Pilbara region and records adjacent to the application area. There is potential for additional priority flora species not recorded during the flora survey to be present within the application area, however given the extent of the proposed clearing and presence for suitable habitat extending beyond the permit boundary it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will significantly impact these species if they were to be present within the application area. Potential impacts to *Trianthema* sp. Python Pool (G.R. Guerin & M.E. Trudgen GG 1023), *Goodenia obscurata* and *Indigofera rivularis*, if present, can be minimised by the implementation of a vegetation management condition to avoid riparian vegetation and where a watercourse is to be impacted by clearing.

The proposed clearing may increase the spread of weeds within and adjacent to the application area, weeds have the potential to outcompete native species and negatively impact biodiversity within and adjacent to the application area. To reduce the spread of weeds within the application area and adjacent areas a weed management condition will be placed on the permit.

Conditions

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

- 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
- vegetation management – avoid riparian vegetation and where a watercourse is to be impacted by clearing, the permit holder shall ensure that the existing surface flow is maintained or reinstated downstream into existing natural drainage lines.

3.2.2. Biological values (fauna) - Clearing Principles (a) and (b)

Assessment

Fauna

Astron Environmental Services (Astron) conducted a basic fauna survey and habitat assessment over the application area and broader survey area covering approximately 47.1 hectares (Astron, 2023). The survey was conducted from 19 to 26 July 2023, following dry seasonal conditions and no rain in the four weeks prior (Astron, 2023). Dry seasonal conditions and a recent fire that had affected approximately two thirds of the Chichester application area were identified as a potential limitation in assessing fauna habitat and opportunistic fauna sightings (Astron, 2023).

The fauna survey identified the following fauna habitats:

- Low Hills and Slopes;
- Major Drainage;
- Minor Drainage;
- Alluvial Plain; and
- Disturbed (pre-existing tracks and infrastructure) (Astron, 2023).

Within the Chichester area of the application area, clearing is proposed to occur within habitat already impacted by edge effects. Within the Western Creek 2 application area, clearing is also proposed to occur within habitats impacted by edge effects, primarily within low hills and slopes habitat. However, some areas of undisturbed major drainage and minor drainage habitat are proposed to be cleared.

Major drainage line habitat within the Western Creek 2 area is considered to be high value, as it has the potential to support a range of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) fauna species, this habitat makes up 0.3 hectares of the application area (Astron, 2023; GIS Database). Major drainage line habitat within the application area is intersected by two large

ephemeral pools in association with artificial boulder piles, based upon aerial imagery, ephemeral pools in association with this watercourse extend within Millstream Chichester National Park (Astron, 2023). The proposed clearing is set to take place in the dry season where water levels are adequate for the proposed works to be completed (Rio Tinto Limited personal communication, 20 February 2026). Clearing within major drainage habitat includes access tracks to access the rail bridge to conduct works underneath the bridge, large trees within major drainage habitat and vegetation within and on the creek embankments will not be impacted (Rio Tinto Limited personal communication, 20 February 2026).

The following species are known to occur within the local surrounds (50 kilometres) and may be impacted by the proposed clearing.

Fork-tailed swift

The fork-tailed swift (*Apus pacificus*, MI) is a non-breeding migratory species to Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). This species is an almost exclusively aerial species, however, when on-ground it occupies a wide range of habitats and is largely independent of terrestrial habitats and landforms (Astron, 2023; Commonwealth of Australia, 2008).

Ghost bat

The ghost bat (*Macroderma gigas*, VU) has a patchy distribution within the Pilbara and Kimberley in Western Australia (Menkhorst and Knight, 2011). In the Pilbara, ghost bats forage in productive plains with thin mature woodlands over patchy or clumped tussock or hummock grasslands (*Triodia* spp.) (Bullen, 2021). Isolated trees and trees along the edges of watercourses and woodlands provide suitable vantage points for ghost bats when foraging (Bullen, 2021). This species roosts within caves, rock crevices and underground mines (Bullen, 2021).

Within the application area, low slopes and hills, minor drainage, major drainage and alluvial plain habitats provide foraging and dispersal habitat for the ghost bat (Astron, 2023). The application area does not contain any suitable roosting habitat or known roost locations within the immediate surrounds (Astron, 2023).

Grey falcon

The grey falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*, VU) occurs in low densities across arid and semi-arid inland Australia (Threatened Species Scientific Committee, 2020). This species frequents timbered lowland plains, acacia shrublands, tree-lined watercourses, open woodlands, treeless areas and tussock grasslands (Astron, 2023; Threatened Species Scientific Committee, 2020). Grey falcons nest in the tallest trees along watercourses particularly in River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and Coolibah (*Eucalyptus coolabah*), or in old nests of other large birds (Threatened Species Scientific Committee, 2020).

Major drainage line habitat within the application area contains scattered tall trees of *Eucalyptus*, *Corymbia,* and *Melaleuca* which may provide suitable nesting habitat for this species (Astron, 2023). The application area contains suitable foraging habitat within low hills and slopes, major drainage line, minor drainage line, and alluvial habitats (Astron, 2023).

Lined soil-crevice skink

Lined soil-crevice skink (*Notoscincus butleri*, P4) occurs in arid rocky areas in the northwest coastal Pilbara (Astron, 2023; Wilson and Smith, 2021). This species is associated with spinifex dominated habitats near creeks and river margins (Wilson and Smith, 2021). The application area provides suitable habitat for this species within alluvial plain habitat and in stony areas adjacent to drainage lines (Astron, 2023).

Migratory shorebirds

There are 18 migratory shorebird species (including the Australian painted snipe) within the local surrounds (50 kilometres) (GIS Database). These species may utilise ephemeral waterbodies, drainage line habitats and adjacent habitats within the application area when inundated with water.

Northern quoll

The northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*, EN) utilises a wide variety of habitats, including rocky areas, eucalypt forest and woodlands, rainforests, sandy lowlands and beaches, shrubland, grasslands and desert (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). Northern quolls require some form of rocky area or structurally diverse woodland and forest for shelter and vegetated habitats within the surrounds for foraging and dispersal (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016). The Western Creek 2 application area provides moderate value foraging and dispersal habitat within low hills and slopes, alluvial plains, and minor and major drainage habitat (Astron, 2023). The northern quoll has a lower likelihood of occurring within the Chichester application area as it lacks preferred habitat (Astron, 2023).

Northern short-tailed mouse

The northern short-tailed mouse (*Leggadina lakedownensis*, P4) inhabits open tussock and hummock grasslands, samphire, sedgelands, *Acacia* shrubland, and savanna woodland on alluvial clay/sandy soils and stony ranges, within the northern Pilbara (Astron, 2023; Menkhorst and Knight, 2011). The Western Creek 2 application area provides suitable habitat within alluvial plain habitat. The Chichester application area does not provide suitable habitat for this species (Astron, 2023). Whilst the application area intersects less than 0.1 ha of alluvial plain habitat, clearing is proposed to occur adjacent to alluvial plain habitat. Adjacent habitats may be utilised by this species if present within the Western Creek 2 application area.

Peregrine falcon

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, OS) is widespread throughout much of Australia, its preferred habitat is coastal and inland cliffs, or open woodlands near waterbodies and watercourses (Astron, 2023; Australian Museum, 2019). This species nests in rocky ledges in tall, vertical cliff faces, and tall trees adjacent to drainage lines in tree hollows or in abandoned nests of other large bird species (Astron, 2023; Australian Museum, 2019). The application area contains suitable foraging habitat for this species in low hills and slopes, major drainage line, minor drainage line, and alluvial habitats, and potentially suitable nesting habitat in major drainage line habitat (Astron, 2023).

Pilbara leaf-nosed bat

The Pilbara leaf-nosed bat (PLNB) (*Rhinonicteris aurantia*, VU) forages in a variety of habitats, particularly highly productive Triodia hummock grasslands with complex riparian zones where water is permanently available (Northover et al., 2023). All habitats within the application area provide moderate foraging habitat for the PLNB (Astron, 2023).

Pilbara olive python

The Pilbara olive python (*Liasis olivaceus barroni*, VU) inhabits rocky habitats close to permanent and semi-permanent water sources, including gorges, rock pools and riparian zones (Astron, 2023; Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). The application area provides suitable foraging and shelter habitat in major drainage areas and suitable foraging and dispersal habitat in minor drainage areas (Astron, 2023).

Western pebble-mound mouse

The western pebble-mound mouse (*Pseudomys chapmani*, P4) is a burrowing rodent species confined to central and east Pilbara, these species construct complex burrows in rocky substrate, topped with 'fortress style' pebble mounds (Firman et al., 2025; Menkhorst and Knight, 2011). This species is considered to have a high likelihood of occurring within the application area, within low hills and slopes habitat (Astron, 2023).

Invertebrates

The Pilbara dragonfly (*Antipodogomphus hodgkini*, P3) is known from limited records within Millstream, an ephemeral watercourse (Theischinger and Endersby, 2009; GIS Database). The Pilbara dragonfly inhabits streams, rivers and riverine pools (Theischinger and Endersby, 2009), ephemeral pools within major drainage habitat may provide suitable habitat for this species. The Pilbara threadtail (*Nososticta pilbara*, P2) is known from watercourses near the intersection of the Fortescue River and Millstream (GIS Database). This species inhabits streams and riverine pools (Theischinger and Endersby, 2009), ephemeral pools within major drainage habitat may provide suitable habitat for this species; however, habitat is not restricted to the application area (GIS Database).

Conclusion

The application area provides suitable habitat for conservation significant fauna species listed above, particularly within major drainage line habitat as it provides ephemeral waterbodies, which can be utilised by a variety of fauna species. However, given the application area only contains 0.3 hectares of major drainage line habitat, and clearing will be conducted during the dry season, the impact is unlikely to be significant to local fauna. Given the extent of the proposed clearing across Western Creek 2 and Chichester areas, and majority of the clearing will occur within vegetation impacted by edge effects, it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will significantly impact the continued conservation of these species. However, to minimise impacts to conservation significant fauna that may be utilising habitat within the application area the conditions below will be implemented.

Conditions

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

- 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 fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity;
- restrict clearing activities to daylight hours; and
- vegetation management – avoid riparian vegetation and where a watercourse is to be impacted by clearing, the permit holder shall ensure that the existing surface flow is maintained or reinstated downstream into existing natural drainage lines.

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The clearing permit application was advertised on 25 February 2025 Year 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, 2025). 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 one registered and four lodged 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.

The application area intersects Ministerial Statement 1074 this proposal includes the approved rail line and eastern deviation and associated infrastructure adjacent to the existing rail line from Cape Lambert to Emu Siding (State of Western Australia, 2018). The seven borrow pits within Millstream Chichester National Park are for use in the construction and maintenance of rail lines and associated infrastructure located within Millstream Chichester National Park (State of Western Australia, 2018). The EPA confirmed based on the information provided by DMPE and the applicant; CPS 10916/1 intersects the boundary for Ministerial Statement 1074, however, the works for CPS 10916/1 are proposed for the original railway line and not the railway line referred to in the Ministerial Statement (EPA, personal communication, 4 February 2026).

In regard to the application area being situation within Millstream Chichester National Park, Robe River Mining Company Pty Ltd will consult with the department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on this proposal in accordance with the procedures

outlined in Reg ID 128521 – Strategic Rail Mining Proposal (DBCA – Environmental Management Branch, personal communication, 31 October 2025).

It is noted that the proposed clearing may impact on Australian painted snipe (*Rostratula australis*), ghost bat (*Macroderma gigas*), grey falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*), Pilbara leaf-nosed bat (*Rhinonicteris aurantia*), Pilbara olive python (*Liasis olivaceus barroni*) and migratory bird species (Appendix A.4), which are a protected matter under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The proponent may be required to refer the project to the (Commonwealth) Department of Climate Change, Energy, the 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 for further information regarding notification and referral responsibilities under the EPBC Act.

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	The area proposed to be cleared is part of an expansive tract of native vegetation in the extensive land use zone of Western Australia (GIS Database). It is adjacent to the Rio Tinto rail line, located within Millstream Chichester National Park. The predominant land use in the region is grazing native pastures, Aboriginal lands and reserves, UCL and Crown reserves, conservation and mining leases (CALM, 2002).
Ecological linkage	According to available databases, the application area does not contain any known or mapped ecological linkages (GIS Database).
Conservation areas	The application area is located within Millstream Chichester National Park (Register of National Estate) (GIS Database).
Vegetation description	The application area occurs within the IBRA Pilbara bioregion in the Chichester subregion (PIL01) (GIS Database). The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation associations: • **Chichester 93:** Shrub steppe, Hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee *Triodia* spp., *Acacia* spp., *Grevillea* spp., *Eucalyptus* spp.; • **Chichester 152:** Grass steppe, Hummock grassland Triodia species; and • **Chichester 587:** Sparse low tree-steppe / Sparse shrub-steppe (GIS Database). A flora and vegetation survey was conducted over the application area by Astron during July 2023. The following vegetation associations were recorded within the application area, in addition to disturbed areas (Astron, 2023; Appendix D): **Hillslope and crests** • **HS1:** *Triodia wiseana* scattered hummock grasses to hummock grassland. *Indigofera monophylla* scattered low shrubs and patches of *Triodia brizoides* are also present in some areas; • **HS2:** *Acacia bivenosa* scattered low shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* open hummock grassland with *Cymbopogon ambiguus* scattered tussock grasses; • **HS3:** *Corymbia hamersleyana* scattered low trees over *Triodia wiseana* open hummock grassland. Patches of *Triodia epactia* are also present in some areas (>0.1 ha); **Plains** • **P1:** *Corymbia hamersleyana* scattered low trees over *Acacia pyrifolia* var. *pyrifolia* scattered tall shrubs over *Triodia epactia* hummock grassland; • **P2:** *Acacia trachycarpa* tall open shrubland over **Cenchrus ciliaris* closed tussock grassland (>0.1 ha); **Major Drainage** • **MaD1:** *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* subsp. *refulgens* and *Sesbania formosa* low open woodland over *Acacia trachycarpa* and *Acacia coriacea* subsp. *pendens* tall open shrubland over **Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Eriachne mucronata* open tussock grassland; **Minor Drainage** • **MiD1:** *Acacia pyrifolia* var. *pyrifolia* scattered shrubs over **Cenchrus ciliaris* open tussock grassland. *Triodia epactia* and *Eragrostis tenellula* are also present in patches; • **MiD2:** *Eucalyptus victrix* scattered low trees over *Acacia bivenosa* tall shrubland over *Triodia angusta* and *Triodia epactia* hummock grassland with *Cassytha capillaris* scattered vine; • **MiD3:** *Terminalia circumalata* scattered low trees over **Cenchrus ciliaris* tussock grassland; • **MiD4:** *Eucalyptus victrix* low open woodland over *Acacia coriacea* subsp. *pendens* and *Acacia bivenosa* tall open shrubland over **Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Themeda triandra* open tussock grassland and *Triodia epactia* very open hummock grassland; • **MiD5:** *Indigofera monophylla* scattered low shrubs to scattered shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* open hummock grassland. **Cenchrus ciliaris* very open tussock grassland also present in some areas; and * denotes weed species
Vegetation condition	The vegetation survey (Astron, 2023) and aerial imagery indicate the vegetation within the proposed clearing area is in Very Good to Completely Degraded condition (Trudgen, 1991). The full Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C.
Climate and landform	The application area is mapped within elevation areas of 130 to 140 meters Australian height datum at Western Creek 2 location, and 260 to 360 meters Australian height datum at the Chichester location (GIS Database). The climate for Chichester region is semi-desert-tropical with an annual rainfall of 275.4 millimetres recorded at Roebourne Aero (BoM, 2025; CALM, 2002).
Soil description and land degradation risk	The soil is mapped as a part of the following land systems (DPIRD, 2025a; Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004; GIS Database):

	• **Capricorn System (282Cp):** Rugged sandstone hills, ridges, stony footslopes and interfluves supporting low acacia shrublands or hard spinifex grasslands with scattered shrubs. Stoniness confers resistance to erosion; and • **River System (289Ri):** Narrow, seasonally active flood plains and major river channels supporting moderately close, tall shrublands or woodlands of acacias and fringing communities of eucalypts sometimes with tussock grasses or spinifex. This system is highly or very highly susceptible to erosion when vegetation cover is removed.
Waterbodies	The desktop assessment and aerial imagery indicates that Western Creek, a minor non-perennial watercourse, transects the application area (Astron, 2023; GIS Database).
Hydrogeography	The application area is located within the Pilbara Groundwater Area proclaimed under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (GIS Database). The application area is located within the Harding Dam Catchment Area, a Public Drinking Water Source Area proclaimed under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (GIS Database). The mapped groundwater salinity is between 500 to 1,000 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids which is described as fresh (GIS Database).
Flora	There are records of 30 priority flora within the local surrounds (50 kilometres), one of these priority flora species was recorded within the application area (Appendix A.3; Astron, 2023; GIS Database). No threatened flora was recorded within the local surrounds (50 kilometres) (Astron, 2023; GIS Database).
Ecological communities	There are no Priority Ecological Communities (PEC) or Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) within the application area (GIS Database). Within the local surrounds (50 kilometres) there are five PEC (Appendix A.5.; GIS Database).
Fauna	There are records of 34 fauna of conservation significance within the local surrounds (Appendix A.4; 50 kilometres).
Fauna habitat	Four broad fauna habitats were identified within the application area, in addition to approximately 7.63 ha of disturbed area (Appendix E; Astron, 2023; GIS Database): • **Low Hills and Slopes:** Low undulating stony hills and extensive foot slopes with dissected valleys and drainage on stony soils; • **Major Drainage:** Major drainage areas, creeklines. Presence of mature *Eucalyptus/ Corymbia* species; • **Minor Drainage:** Minor creeklines and small drainage areas less than ten metres in width on stony soils; and • **Alluvial Plain:** Associated with the flood plain adjacent to drainage lines. Containing tussock grasses and high vegetation cover. Low lying areas with substrate of alluvial silt loamy/ clay.

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 - Pilbara	17,808,657.04	17,731,764.88	99.57	1,801,714.98	10.12
Beard vegetation associations - State					
Veg Assoc 93.	3,044,309.52	3,040,640.98	99.88	59,536.96	1.96
Veg Assoc 152.	306,407.02	306,306.40	99.97	12,971.32	4.23
Veg Assoc 587.	580,728.60	580,696.99	99.99	123,367.39	21.24
Beard vegetation associations - Bioregion					
Veg Assoc 93.	3,042,114.27	3,038,471.67	99.88	59,536.96	1.96
Veg Assoc 152.	177,945.83	177,945.21	99.94	12,971.32	7.29
Veg Assoc 587.	580,728.60	580,696	99.99	123,367.39	21.24

Government of Western Australia (2019)

A.3. Flora analysis table

With consideration for the site characteristics set out above, relevant datasets (Appendix F.1), and biological survey information (Astron, 2023), impacts to the following conservation significant flora required further consideration.

Species name	Suitable habitat features ? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Suitable soil type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records (total)	Pre-survey likelihood of occurrence	Post-survey likelihood of occurrence
Priority 1							
Tephrosia lithosperma	Y	N	N	38	1	Potential	Unlikely
Priority 2							
Cladium procerum	N	Some	Y	23	15	Unlikely	Unlikely
Teucrium pilbaranum	Y	N	Y	23	21	Potential	Unlikely
Trianthema sp. Python Pool (G.R. Guerin & M.E. Trudgen GG 1023)	Y	Y	Y	13	9	Potential	Potential
Priority 3							
Dolichocarpa sp. Hamersley Station (A.A. Mitchell PRP 1479)	Y	N	Y	9	46	Likely	Unlikely
Eriochloa fatmensis	Y	Unknown	Unknown	26	3	Potential	Unlikely
Euphorbia australis var. *glabra*	N	N	Y	32	23	Unlikely	Unlikely
Euphorbia inappendiculata var. *inappendiculata*	Y	N	Y	16	17	Potential	Unlikely
Euphorbia stevenii	Y	N	N	14	17	Potential	Unlikely
Fimbristylis sieberiana	Y	N	N	26	30	Unlikely	Unlikely
Glycine falcata	Y	N	N	30	14	Potential	Unlikely
Goodenia obscurata	Y	Y	Y	26	29	N/A	N/A
Gomphrena cucullata	N	N	Y	36	14	Unlikely	Unlikely
Indigofera rivularis	Y	Y - limited	Y	37	68	N/A	N/A
Ipomoea racemigera	Y	Y	Y	26	23	Potential	Unlikely
Neptunia longipila	Y	N	Y	5	17	Likely	Unlikely
Owenia acidula	N	Y	Y	30	14	Potential	Unlikely
Paspalidium retiglume	Y	N	Y	9	12	Likely	Unlikely
Pentalepis trichodesmoides subsp. *hispida*	Y	Y	Y	0	15	Potential	Recorded
Solanum albostellatum	Y	Y	Y	26	14	Potential	Unlikely
Solanum sp. Red Hill (S. van Leeuwen et al. PBS 5415)	N	Y	Y	42	24	N/A	N/A
Swainsona thompsoniana	Y	N	Y	18	33	Potential	Unlikely
Terminalia supranitifolia	Y	Y	N	28	54	Potential	Unlikely
Themeda sp. Hamersley Station (M.E. Trudgen 11431)	Y	Y	Y	9	61	Likely	Unlikely
Triodia basitricha	Y	Y	Y	32	49	Potential	Potential
Triodia pisoliticola	N	N	N	23	70	Unlikely	Unlikely
Uvedalia clementii	Y	Some	N	19	10	N/A	N/A
Vigna triodiophila	Y	Y - limited	N	17	21	Unlikely	Unlikely
Priority 4							
Livistona alfredii	Y	Y	Y	24	36	Potential	Unlikely
Rhynchosia bungarensis	N	Y - limited	Y	42	115	Unlikely	Unlikely

A.4. Fauna analysis table

With consideration for the site characteristics set out above, relevant datasets (Appendix F.1), and biological survey information (Astron, 2023), impacts to the following conservation significant fauna required further consideration.

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Post-survey likelihood of occurrence
Birds					
Australian painted snipe (*Rostratula australis*)	EN	Y	Y	2	Low
Caspian tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)	MI	N	N	20	Low
Common greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)	MI	Y	Y	44	Low
Common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)	MI	Y	Y	5	Low
Fork-tailed sift (*Apus pacificus*)	MI	Y	Y	42	Low
Glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)	MI	Y	Y	41	Low
Grey falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*)	VU	Y	Y	25	Moderate
Gull-billed tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)	MI	N	N	18	Low
Little curlew (*Numenius minutus*)	MI	Y	Y	44	Low
Long-toed stint (*Calidris subminuta*)	MI	N	N	45	Low
Marsh sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*)	MI	N	N	41	Low
Oriental pratincole (*Glareola maldivarum*)	MI	Y	Y	36	Low
Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)	MI	N	N	44	Low
Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)	OS	Y	Y	41	Moderate
Red-necked stint (*Calidris ruficollis*)	MI	N	N	23	Low
Ruddy turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)	MI	N	N	5	Low
Sharp-tailed sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata)*	MI	Y	Y	23	Low
Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)	MI	N	N	44	Low
White-winged black tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)	MI	Y	N	40	Low
Wood sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)	MI	Y	Y	38	Low
Fish					
Fortescue grunter (*Leiopotherapon aheneus*)	P4	N	N	25	N/A
Invertebrates					
Pilbara dragonfly (*Antipodogomphus hodgkini*)	P3	Y	Unknown	25	N/A
Pilbara threadtail (*Nososticta pilbara*)	P2	Y	Unknown	25	N/A
Mammals					
Ghost bat (*Macroderma gigas*)	VU	Y	Y	43	Moderate
Greater bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*)	VU	N	Y	40	Low
Northern coastal free-tailed bat (*Ozimops cobourgianus*)	P1	N	N	43	Low
Northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*)	EN	Y	Y	12	Moderate
Northern short-tailed mouse (*Leggadina lakedownensis*)	P4	Y	Y	31	Moderate
Pilbara leaf-nosed bat (*Rhinonicteris aurantia* (Pilbara form))	VU	Y	Y	25	Moderate
Western pebble-mound mouse (*Pseudomys chapmani*)	P4	Y	Y	41	High
Reptiles					
Four-lined slider (Karratha) (*Lerista quadrivincula*)	P1	N	N	30	Low
Gane's blind snake (*Anilios ganei*)	P1	N	N	25	Low
Lined soil-crevice skink (Dampier) (*Notoscincus butleri*)	P4	Y	Y	35	Moderate
Pilbara olive python (*Liasis olivaceus barroni*)	VU	Y	Y	25	Moderate

A.5. Ecological community analysis table

Community name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Suitable soil type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Mapped extent (ha)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
Chenopod vegetation associations of the Roebourne Plains	P1	N	N	N	43	12.80	Y
Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System (previously 'Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range')	P1	N	N	N	2	1787.31	Y
Horseflat land system of the Roebourne Plains	P3	N	N	Y	11	1744.55	Y
Kanjenjie Land System	P3	N	N	N	26	151.83	Y
Roebourne Plains coastal grasslands with gilgai microrelief on deep cracking clays (Roebourne Plains gilgai grasslands)	P1	N	N	N	40	64.50	Y

T: threatened, CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, P: priority

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 contains conservation significant flora and habitat for conservation significant flora, and fauna.	May be at variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.*
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 contains potential foraging, roosting, breeding, habitat for conservation significant fauna.	At variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.*
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 is unlikely to contain flora species listed under the BC Act (Astron, 2023; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance	No
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 area proposed to be cleared does not contain species that can indicate a threatened ecological community (Astron, 2023; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
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 extent of the mapped vegetation type is consistent with the national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). The vegetation proposed to be cleared is not considered to be part of a significant ecological linkage in the local area (GIS Database).	Not 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 located within Millstream Chichester National Park (Register of National Estate) (GIS Database). The proponent will consult with the department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on this proposal in accordance with the procedures outlined in Reg ID 128521 – Strategic Rail Mining Proposal (personal communication with DBCA, 31 October 2025).	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 Western Creek, a minor non-perennial watercourse transects the application area (GIS Database). The vegetation types associated with this watercourse is Major Drainage (MaD1) and Minor Drainage (MiD1, MiD2, MiD3, MiD4, MiD5, MiD6) (Astron, 2023). Potential impacts to this vegetation as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a watercourse management condition.	At variance	No
Principle (g): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation."* Assessment: The mapped soils are generally not susceptible to soil erosion, however, the River land system is highly susceptible to erosion when vegetation cover is removed. Noting the location of the application area and the condition of the vegetation, the proposed clearing is likely to have an appreciable impact on land degradation. Potential erosion impacts as a result of the proposed clearing can be minimised by the implementation of a staged clearing condition to ensure large areas are not void of vegetation cover for extended periods.	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: Given major and minor drainage lines transect the application area, the proposed clearing may impact surface or groundwater quality. Impacts of the proposed clearing can be minimised through the implementation of a watercourse management condition to avoid the clearing of riparian vegetation and maintain surface flow where practicable. Additionally, given the application area is located within a Public Drinking Water Sources Area (Harding Dam Catchment Area) the proposed clearing may impact surface or ground water quality. Activities proposed for this application are compatible with the PDWSA, however should be managed in accordance with DWER technical advice, relevant water quality protection notes (WQPN) and guidance documents (DWER, 2025).	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: Major and minor drainage habitats within the application area are seasonally flooded following rainfall events, alluvial habitats adjacent to drainage areas are often formed from sediment overflow following flooding events (Astron, 2023). Given seasonal	Not likely to be at variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
flooding naturally within the application area it is unlikely that the clearing of native vegetation will significantly exacerbate this.		

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 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. Vegetation associations descriptions and mapping

Table 1. Vegetation associations and vegetation condition recorded within the survey areas.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
Hillslopes and crests					
HS1 *Triodia wiseana* scattered hummock grasses to hummock grassland. *Indigofera monophylla* scattered low shrubs and patches of *Triodia brizoides* are also present in some areas.	CH01 CH02 CH04 CH05 CH07 CH08 CH10 CH11 CH12 WC1-01 WC1-02	Chichester Western Creek 1	29.8 (63.3)	Poor – Very Good	 Plate 1: Vegetation representing HS1.
HS2 *Acacia bivenosa* scattered low shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* open hummock grassland with *Cymbopogon ambiguus* scattered tussock grasses.	CH13	Chichester	0.4 (0.8)	Very Good	 Plate 2: Vegetation representing HS2.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
HS3 *Corymbia hamersleyana* scattered low trees over *Triodia wiseana* open hummock grassland. Patches of *Triodia epactia* are also present in some areas.	WC2-03 WC2-MP02	Western Creek 2	0.7 (1.5)	Very Good	 Plate 3: Vegetation representing HS3.
Plains					
P1 *Corymbia hamersleyana* scattered low trees over *Acacia pyrifolia* var. *pyrifolia* scattered tall shrubs over *Triodia epactia* hummock grassland.	WC2-04	Western Creek 2	4.0 (8.5)	Poor – Very Good	 Plate 4: Vegetation representing P1.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
P2 *Acacia trachycarpa* tall open shrubland over **Cenchrus ciliaris* closed tussock grassland.	WC2-R03	Western Creek 2	0.3 (0.6)	Poor	 Plate 5: Vegetation representing P2.
Major drainage					
MaD1 *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* subsp. *refulgens* and *Sesbania formosa* low open woodland over *Acacia trachycarpa* and *Acacia coriacea* subsp. pendens tall open shrubland over **Cencrhrus ciliaris* and *Eriachne mucronata* open tussock grassland.	WC2-01	Western Creek 2	2.1 (4.5)	Good	 Plate 6: Vegetation representing MaD1.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
Minor drainage					
MiD1 *Acacia pyrifolia* var. *pyrifolia* scattered shrubs over **Cenchrus ciliaris* open tussock grassland. *Triodia epactia* and *Eragrostis tenellula* are also present in patches.	WC2-02 WC2-MP03	Western Creek 2	0.6 (1.3)	Poor	 Plate 7: Vegetation representing MiD1.
MiD2 *Eucalyptus victrix* scattered low trees over *Acacia bivenosa* tall shrubland over *Triodia angusta* and *Triodia epactia* hummock grassland with *Cassytha capillaris* scattered vine.	WC2-05	Western Creek 2	0.7 (1.5)	Poor - Good	 Plate 8: Vegetation representing MiD2.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
MiD3 *Terminalia circumalata* scattered low trees over **Cenchrus ciliaris* tussock grassland.	WC2-R01	Western Creek 2	0.03 (0.1)	Poor	 Plate 9: Vegetation representing MiD3.
MiD4 *Eucalyptus victrix* low open woodland over *Acacia coriacea* subsp. *pendens* and *Acacia bivenosa* tall open shrubland over **Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Themeda triandra* open tussock grassland and *Triodia epactia* very open hummock grassland.	WC2-R02	Western Creek 2	0.1 (0.2)	Good	 Plate 10: Vegetation representing MiD4.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
MiD5 *Indigofera monophylla* scattered low shrubs to scattered shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* open hummock grassland. **Cenchrus ciliaris* very open tussock grassland also present in some areas.	CH03 CH09	Chichester	0.7 (1.5)	Good – Very Good	 Plate 11: Vegetation representing MiD5.
MiD6 *Terminalia circumalata* and *Acacia coriacea* subsp. *pendens* low woodland over *Triodia wiseana* very open hummock grassland and *Eriachne mucronata* very open tussock grassland.	CH06	Chichester	0.07 (0.1)	Good	 Plate 12: Vegetation representing MiD6.

Vegetation unit code and description	Sample sites	Project area(s)	Total area (ha) (proportion of survey area (%))	Vegetation condition	Representative photographs
Disturbed Areas cleared of vegetation due to anthropogenic activities, including roads/tracks and infrastructure.	N/A	Chichester Western Creek 1 Western Creek 2	7.6 (16.1)	Completely Degraded	N/A

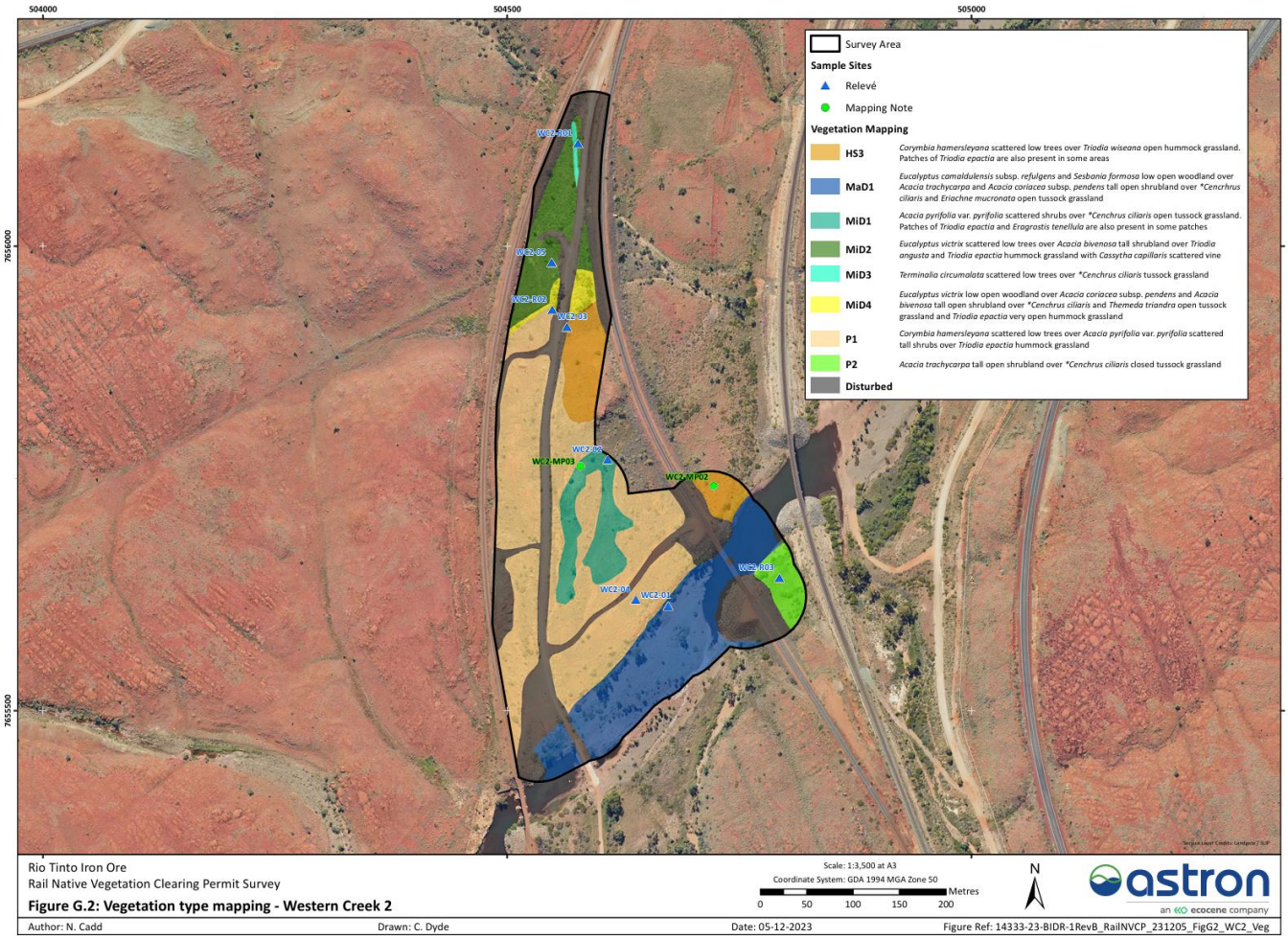


Figure 2. Vegetation mapping within broader survey area of Western Creek 2 application area (Astron, 2023).

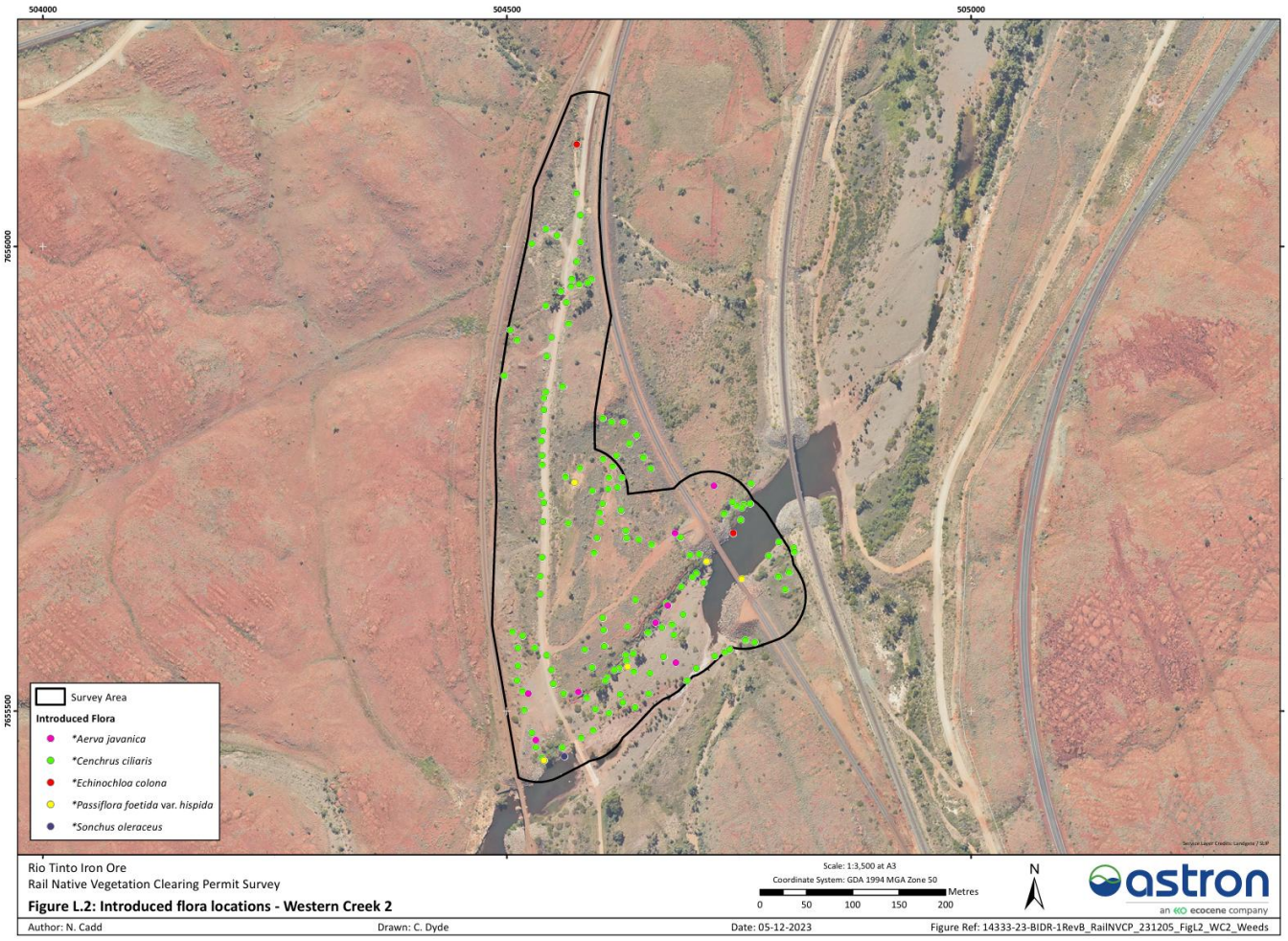


Figure 3. Introduced flora locations within Western Creek 2 application area (Astron, 2023).

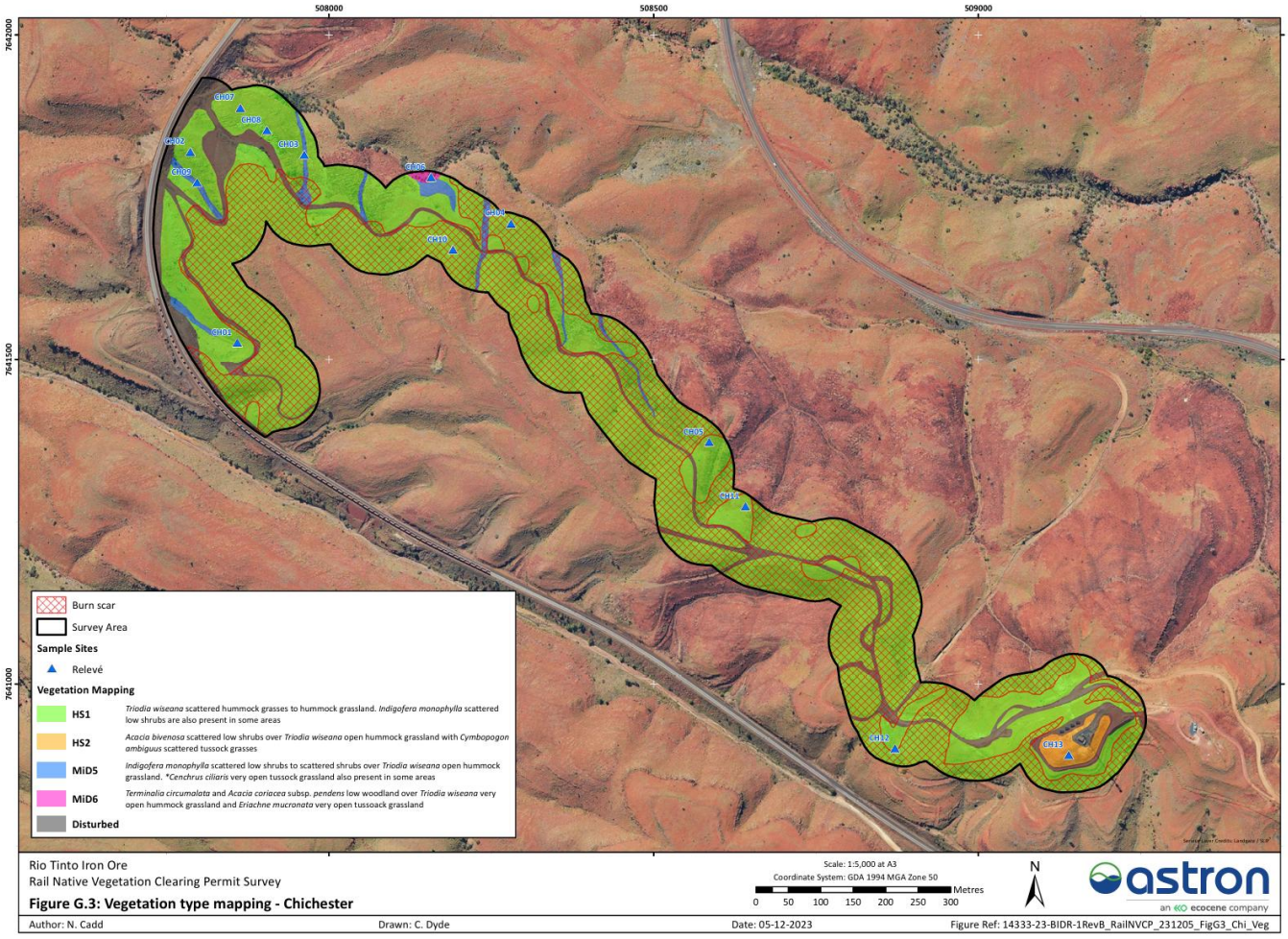


Figure 4. Vegetation mapping and fire scar within broader survey area of Chichester application area (Astron, 2023).

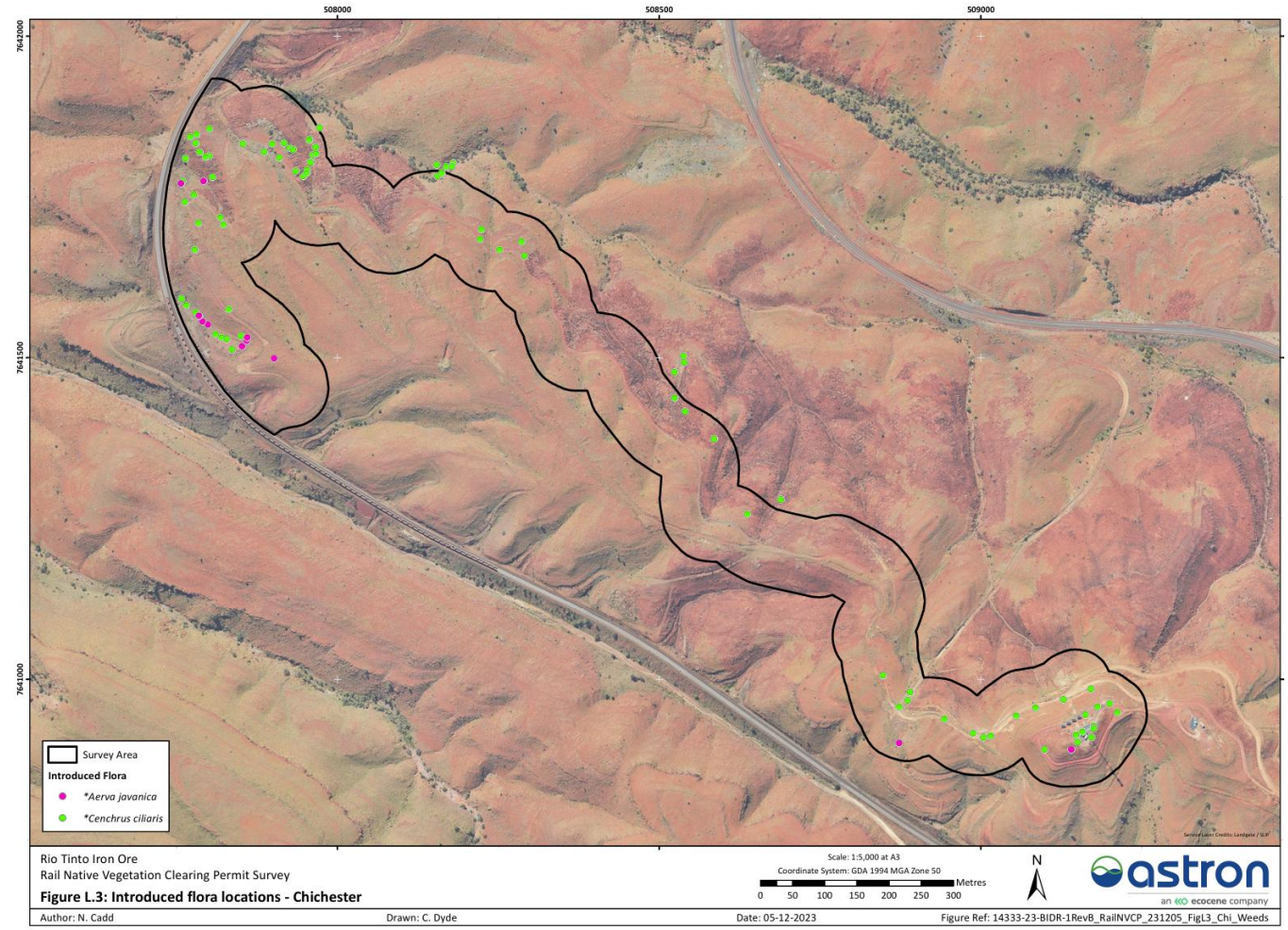


Figure 5. Introduced flora locations within broader survey area of Chichester application area (Astron, 2023).

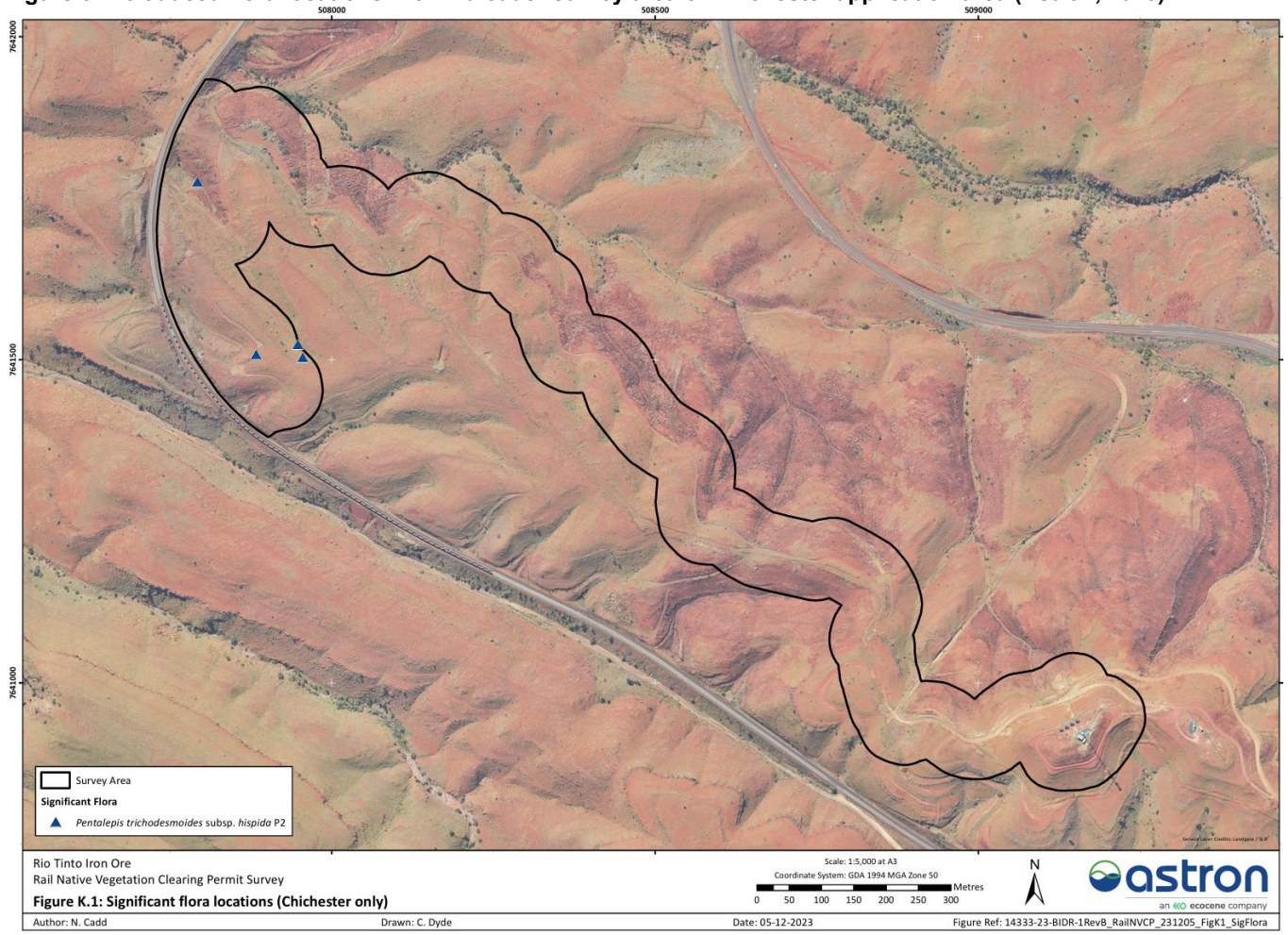
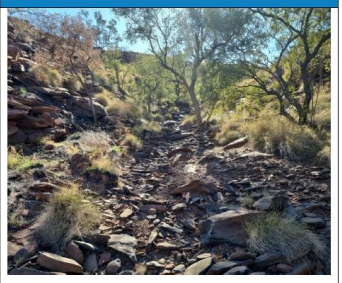


Figure 6. Priority flora locations within broader survey area of Chichester application area (Astron, 2023).

Appendix E. Fauna habitat descriptions and mapping

Table 2. Fauna habitats recorded within the application areas. Note extent within site survey area refers to broader survey area, not application area.

Fauna habitat	Extent within site survey area (proportion)				Broad habitat description	Microhabitats	Sites	Habitat condition	Value (important habitat for potentially occurring significant species)	Representative photo
	Chichester	Western Creek 1	Western Creek 2	Total						
Low Hills and Slopes	28.00 ha (85.6%)	2.39 ha (81.0%)	5.36 ha (46.8%)	35.75 ha (75.9%)	Low undulating stony hills and extensive foot slopes with dissected valleys and drainage on stony soils.	• high *Triodia* cover • small rock piles • exposed bedrock • termite mounds	• HA-02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14	Good to Very Good Quality	**MNES moderate value habitat** Northern Quoll – foraging. Ghost Bat – foraging. Pilbara Leaf-nosed Bat – foraging. **Other significant species** Western Pebble-mound Mouse – foraging and shelter. Peregrine Falcon - foraging.	 Plate 13: Low Hills and Slopes habitat.
Major Drainage	Nil	Nil	2.06 ha (18.0%)	2.06 ha (4.4%)	Major drainage areas, creeklines. Presence of mature *Eucalyptus/Corymbia* species.	• seasonal inundation • seasonal and persistent pools • mature (tall) trees, roosting sites for birds • hollow logs/tree hollows • rock faces • fauna dispersal pathway	• HA-01	Good Quality	**MNES high value habitat** Pilbara Olive Python – foraging and shelter. Grey Falcon - breeding and foraging. **MNES moderate value habitat** Northern Quoll – foraging and dispersal. Ghost Bat – foraging Pilbara Leaf-nosed Bat - foraging **Other significant species** Peregrine Falcon - breeding and foraging. Letter-winged Kite – foraging.	 Plate 14: Major Drainage Line habitat.
Minor Drainage	0.61 ha (1.9%)	Nil	0.53 ha (4.7%)	1.14 ha (2.4%)	Minor creeklines and small drainage areas less than 10 m in width on stony soils.	• thick undergrowth • leaf litter • fauna dispersal pathway	• HA-08, 11	Good to Very Good Quality	**MNES moderate value habitat** Northern quoll – foraging and dispersal. Ghost Bat – foraging. Pilbara Leaf-nosed Bat - foraging. Pilbara Olive Python – foraging and dispersal. Grey Falcon - foraging. **Other significant species** Letter-winged Kite – foraging. Peregrine Falcon - foraging. Lined Soil-crevice Skink – foraging and shelter.	 Plate 15: Minor Drainage Line habitat.
Alluvial Plain	Nil	Nil	0.54 ha (4.7%)	0.54 ha (1.1%)	Associated with the flood plain adjacent to drainage lines. Containing tussock grasses and high vegetation cover. Low lying areas with substrate of alluvial silt, loamy/clay.	• soft soil (burrows) • vegetation cover • leaf litter	• HA-04	Poor to Good Quality	**MNES moderate value habitat** Northern Quoll - foraging and dispersal. Ghost Bat – foraging. Pilbara Leaf-nosed Bat - foraging. Grey Falcon - foraging. **Other significant species** Letter-winged kite – foraging. Lined Soil-crevice Skink – foraging and shelter. Peregrine Falcon – foraging.	 Plate 16: Alluvial Plain habitat.
Cleared/ Disturbed	4.09 ha (12.5%)	0.56 ha (19.0%)	2.97 ha (25.9%)	7.63 ha (16.1%)	Tracks and infrastructure	• N/A	• N/A	Highly Degraded	Low to no value for all significant species	No photo

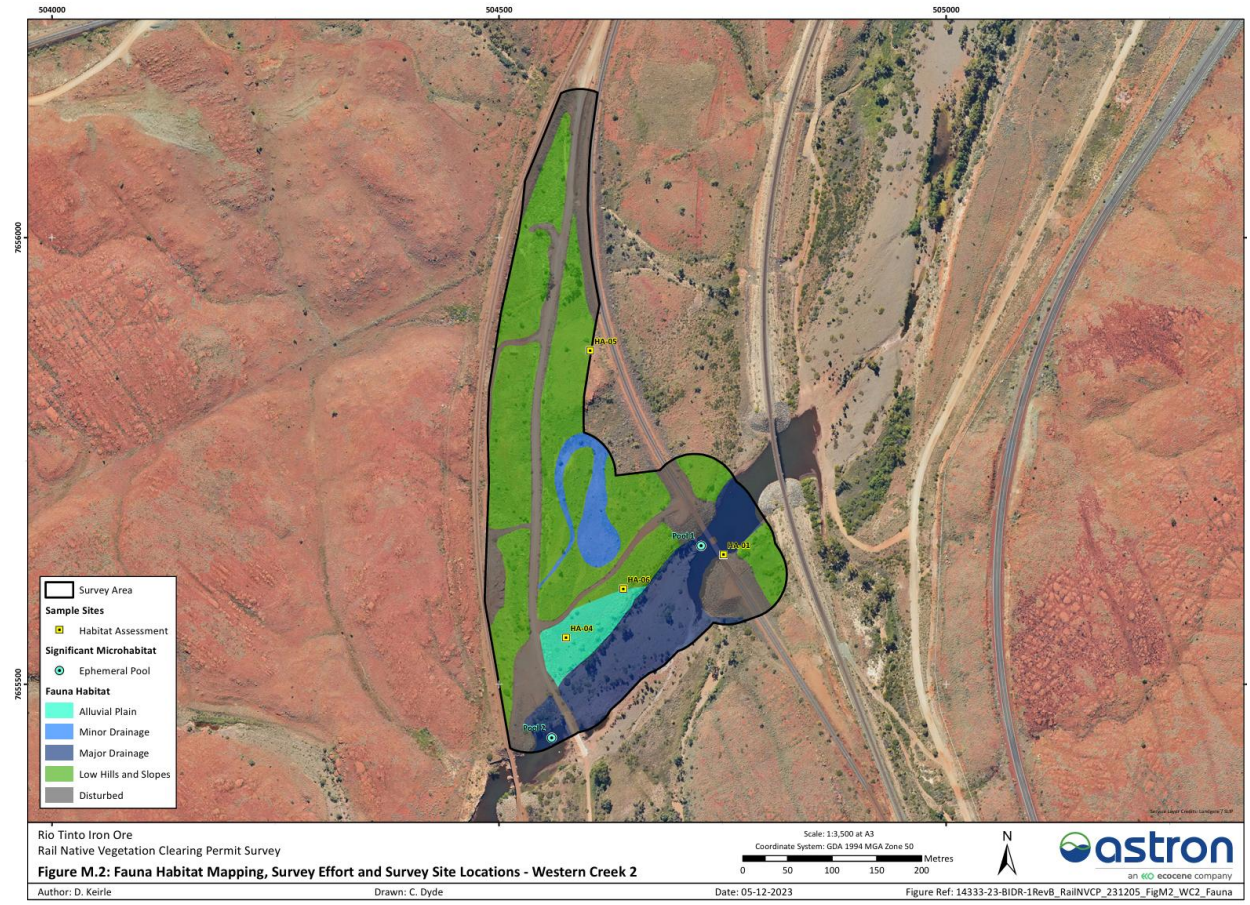


Figure x. Fauna habitat mapping within broader survey area of Western Creek 2 application area (Astron, 2023).

Figure X. Fauna habitat mapping within application area of Western Creek 2 application area (Astron, 2023).

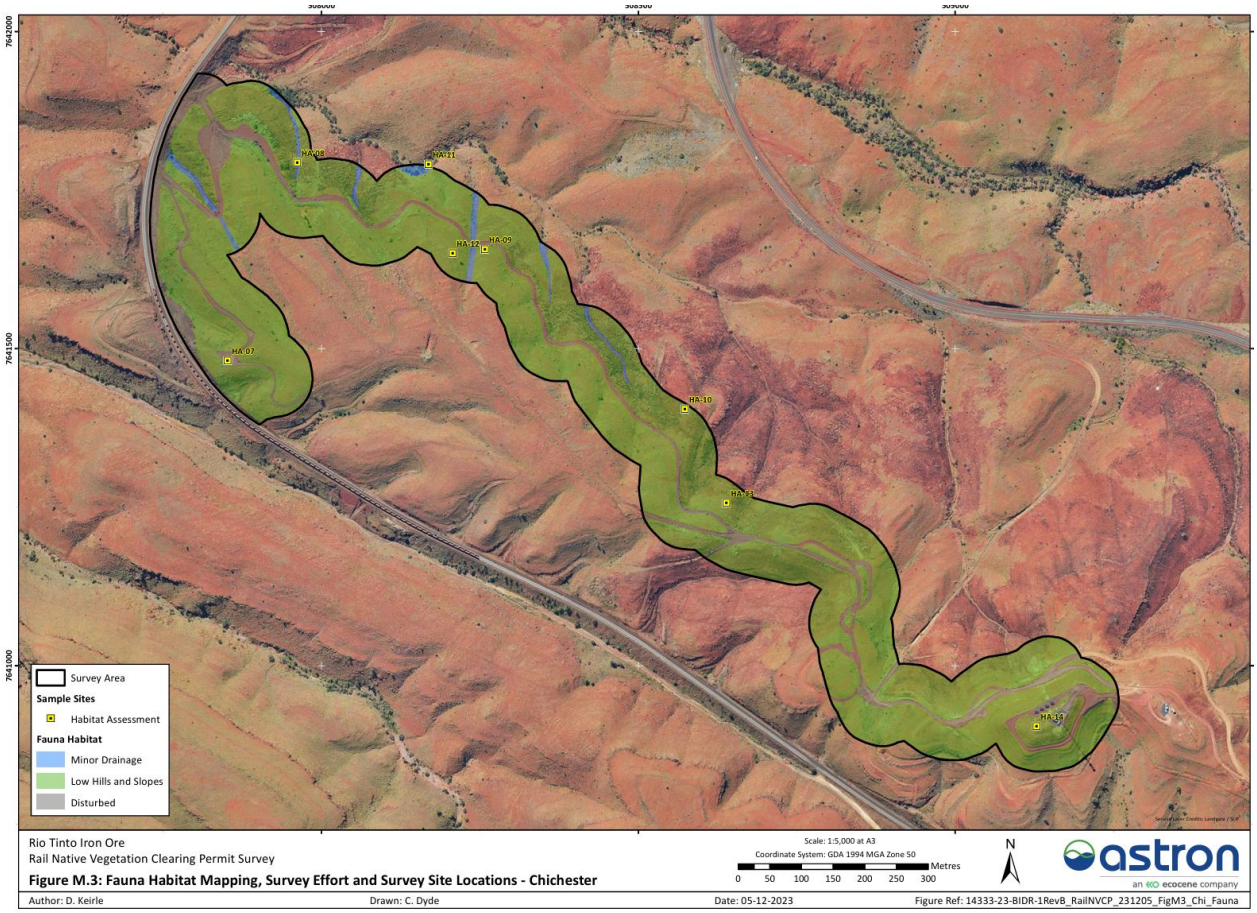


Figure X. Fauna habitat mapping within broader survey area of Chichester application area (Astron, 2023).

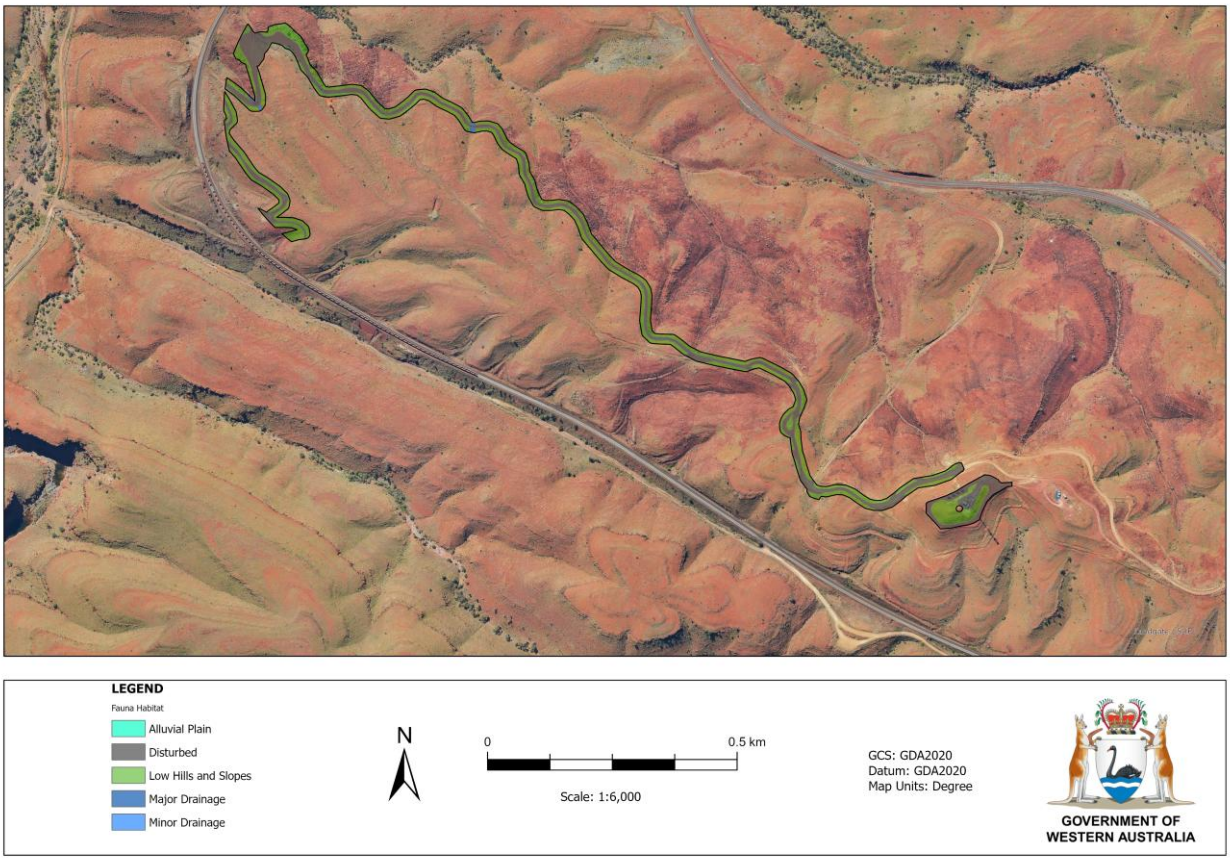


Figure X. Fauna habitat mapping within broader survey area of Chichester application area (Astron, 2023).

Appendix F. Sources of information

F.1. GIS datasets

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

- 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)
- DBCA Fire History (DBCA-060)
- EPA Redbook Recommended Conservation Reserves 1976-1991 (DBCA-029)
- EPA Referred Schemes Pending (DWER-121)
- EPA Referred Significant Proposals (DWER-120)
- EPA Referred Significant Proposals Pending (DWER-103)
- Geographic Names (GEONOMA) (LGATE-013)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Local Government Area (LGA) Boundaries (LGATE-233)
- Localities (LGATE-234)
- Medium Scale Topo Contour (Line) (LGATE-015)
- Mineral Field Boundaries (DMIRS-005)
- Native Title (Determination) (LGATE-066)
- Native Title (Fed Court) (LGATE-005)
- Native Title (NNTT) (LGATE-004)
- Native Vegetation Extent (DPIRD-005)
- Pre-European Vegetation (DPIRD-006)
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)
- Reserves (LGATE-227)
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Rivers (DWER-036)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Best Available (DPIRD-027)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Systems (DPIRD-064)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Western Australia attributed by WA Soil Group (DPIRD-076)
- Townsites (LGATE-248)
- WA Now Aerial Imagery
- Water Allocation Plans and Statements (DWER-086)
- Waterways Conservation Act Management Areas (DWER-072)
- WRIMS - Groundwater Areas (DWER-085)
- WRIMS - Surface Water Areas (DWER-082)
- WRIMS - Surface Water Resources (DWER-081)
- WRIMS - Surface Water Subareas (DWER-080)

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)

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4. 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.