

Title: Application for Native Vegetation Clearing License

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Reference Number (if applicable):

1. Introduction

This application seeks approval to clear native vegetation, the proposed clearing is driven by the necessity to mitigate fire risks associated with high fuel loads on the property. The vegetation identified for removal presents a potential hazard, particularly during peak fire seasons, posing risks to human safety, property, and surrounding ecosystems.

The clearing is part of a broader fire risk management strategy designed to create defensible spaces and reduce the likelihood of fire ignition or spread. The approach aligns with local fire prevention guidelines, prioritising the protection of lives and property while minimising environmental impacts through careful planning and adherence to best practices.

This application outlines the extent of the proposed clearing, the methods to be employed, and measures to compensate for or mitigate any ecological effects. It is submitted with a commitment to balance fire safety imperatives with responsible environmental stewardship.

2. Project Description and reason for clearing

224 Dundobar Road is located within a designated high-risk fire area. To address this, we propose the following measures to balance the preservation of natural habitat with the need to reduce risks to lives and neighbouring properties

2.1 Statement on Partial Clearing of Native Vegetation at 224 Dundobar Road for Bushfire Risk Mitigation

The proposed partial clearing of native vegetation at 224 Dundobar Road is a necessary measure to comply with government legislation in Western Australia and to ensure the safety of residents, properties, and the surrounding community. This action aligns with the following considerations:

Compliance with the Bushfires Act 1954 (WA):

The Bushfires Act 1954 requires landowners and occupiers to manage vegetation on their property to reduce the risk of bushfires. Maintaining a cleared buffer zone minimises fuel loads, which is essential for preventing the rapid spread of fire and for providing safe access for emergency services during bushfire events.

Community and Individual Safety:

The primary purpose of the vegetation clearing is to protect lives and infrastructure from bushfire hazards. Retaining excessive vegetation increases the risk of fire encroachment on built-up areas, particularly during extreme fire weather conditions. Partial clearing balances ecological preservation with necessary safety measures.

Minimising Environmental Impact:

The proposed clearing will be limited to the minimum area required for effective bushfire

mitigation. Where possible, alternative methods of risk reduction will be considered, and any clearing will prioritise the retention of significant flora and fauna habitat.

Support from the Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire-Prone Areas (2021):

These guidelines recommend the implementation of fire management plans and the strategic reduction of vegetation to reduce bushfire intensity and facilitate safer evacuation and firefighting efforts. Clearing in accordance with these guidelines ensures compliance with best practices in bushfire risk management.

In summary, the partial clearing of native vegetation at 224 Dundobar Road is a proactive step to safeguard the community from bushfire risks. While acknowledging the importance of conserving native flora, this action seeks to balance environmental sustainability with legislative requirements and the overarching priority of protecting lives and properties in a bushfire-prone region.

2.2 Statement on Partial Clearing of Native Vegetation at 224 Dundobar Road in the Context of Climate Change and Recent Bushfire Events

The decision to partially clear native vegetation at 224 Dundobar Road is informed not only by legislative requirements but also by the escalating risks posed by climate change and recent bushfire activity in the region. These factors highlight the urgent need for effective mitigation measures to protect lives, properties, and infrastructure while balancing environmental conservation.

Increased Bushfire Risk Due to Climate Change:

Climate change has significantly altered fire weather patterns, resulting in longer fire seasons, more frequent extreme heat events, and reduced rainfall in many parts of Western Australia. These conditions exacerbate the risk of intense and uncontrollable bushfires, particularly in areas with dense vegetation and high fuel loads. Studies show that the likelihood of catastrophic fire conditions has risen in the past decades, necessitating proactive risk management practices, including vegetation clearing.

Recent Bushfire Events in the Area:

The region surrounding 224 Dundobar Road has experienced devastating bushfires in recent years, underscoring the vulnerability of communities in bushfire-prone zones. Fires have destroyed properties, displaced wildlife, and placed lives at risk, serving as a stark reminder of the destructive power of unchecked vegetation in the face of extreme fire weather. These events emphasise the critical need for strategic fuel reduction to mitigate similar risks in the future.

Legislative and Policy Framework:

- **Bushfires Act 1954 (WA):** Mandates the management of vegetation to reduce fire risk, particularly in bushfire-prone areas.
- **Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire-Prone Areas (2021):** Advocates for asset protection zones (APZs) and vegetation management to limit fire spread and intensity, providing clear directives for local government and property owners.

Adaptive Management in Response to Changing Risks:

The partial clearing of native vegetation is a necessary adaptation to evolving climate risks. While this measure may reduce localised biodiversity, it is essential to recognise that unmanaged bushfire impacts can cause far greater ecological and social damage.

Local Community Resilience:

Protecting the area from bushfire risk through proactive measures strengthens the resilience of the local community. It ensures safer evacuation routes, reduces potential fire intensity near encroaching residential zones, and minimises the risk to firefighters and emergency responders.

By addressing the heightened bushfire risks due to climate change and drawing lessons from recent fires in the region, the proposed vegetation clearing at 224 Dundobar Road represents a responsible and measured response to ensure community safety and compliance with Western Australia's bushfire management framework

2.3 Statement on Partial Clearing of Native Vegetation at 224 Dundobar Road in the Context of Health Risks to Trees due to Fire

We propose the removal of all fuel loads below 2 meters to preserve sensitive Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) and Banksia species, which are integral to the local ecosystem. These trees are not only ecologically significant but also highly susceptible to damage from high-intensity fires.

Tuart trees, a keystone species in the region, provide essential habitat for various fauna, including birds, insects, and small mammals. Similarly, Banksia species play a critical role in supporting pollinators such as bees and birds, which are vital for maintaining biodiversity. However, both species are vulnerable to fire due to their physiology and the accumulation of fuel loads, which can create conditions for intense and destructive fires.

Excessive ground-level fuel, such as dry vegetation, fallen branches, and leaf litter, significantly increases the risk of high-intensity fires that can scorch the sensitive root systems and lower canopies of these trees. Repeated exposure to such fires may weaken the trees, reduce their ability to regenerate, and ultimately lead to a decline in their populations.

By strategically removing fuel loads below 2 meters, we aim to mitigate these risks, reducing the intensity and spread of potential fires while safeguarding the long-term health and sustainability of these critical species. This approach balances fire safety with the preservation of the ecological integrity of the area.

The property at 224 Dundobar Road is currently characterised by a dense undergrowth of thick shrubbery beneath the Tuart trees, which contributes to significant fuel loads and poses a heightened fire risk. Additionally, a substantial portion of the Banksia vegetation on the property is either in poor health or has already succumbed, with many plants appearing dead or in advanced stages of decline.

3. Supporting Summary for the Removal of Dead, Dying Trees, Shrubby, and High Fuel Loads

The proposed removal of dead and dying trees, stumps, dense shrubbery, and excessive fuel loads at 224 Dundobar Road is a critical measure to address the significant bushfire risks

associated with the property's location within a high-risk fire area. This initiative balances fire safety imperatives with environmental conservation and aligns with legislative requirements and best practices for bushfire management.

Mitigating Fire Hazards

Excessive fuel loads, including dense undergrowth and dead vegetation, create conditions for high-intensity fires that pose a serious threat to human safety, neighbouring properties, and local ecosystems. The presence of ladder fuels—shrubby, stumps and other low-lying vegetation—further exacerbates the risk by facilitating the rapid spread of fire from the ground to the canopy. This increases the likelihood of catastrophic fire events that can endanger lives and infrastructure.

By strategically removing these hazards, the proposal aims to reduce the intensity and spread of potential fires, ensuring safer conditions for residents and emergency responders. The removal of fuel loads below two meters will also create defensible spaces that comply with the guidelines outlined in the *Bushfires Act 1954 (WA)* and the *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire-Prone Areas (2021)*.

Preservation of Ecologically Significant Species

The property is home to sensitive Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) and Banksia species, which are integral to the local ecosystem. These trees provide critical habitat for a variety of fauna, including pollinators, birds, and small mammals. However, the health of these species is being compromised by dense undergrowth and accumulating fuel loads. The Tuart and Banksia trees are particularly vulnerable to high-intensity fires, which can damage their root systems and lower canopies, ultimately leading to population decline.

Removing excessive fuel loads will help protect these keystone species from fire-related damage, allowing them to thrive and continue supporting the biodiversity of the area. Additionally, the removal of dense shrubbery will facilitate natural regeneration, ensuring the establishment of younger Tuart and Banksia specimens essential for long-term ecological balance.

Addressing Environmental Health Concerns

The property's current vegetation profile includes a significant amount of dead and declining Banksia species, as well as dense shrubbery beneath the Tuart trees. These conditions not only increase fire risks but also inhibit the natural regeneration of native vegetation. Dead and dying plants create a barrier to the growth of healthy understorey flora and contribute to a degraded ecosystem.

Another critical concern is the significant termite infestation affecting numerous trees at 224 Dundobar Road. This infestation has severely compromised the structural integrity of the trees, increasing the risk of collapse and posing a direct threat to the safety of residents and visitors. Alarming, some of these trees have already fallen, highlighting the urgent need for intervention.

The preservation of native flora remains an important environmental objective, the presence of structurally unstable trees due to termite activity necessitates prompt action to mitigate potential hazards. Neglecting to address this issue not only endangers residents' safety but also

risks exacerbating ecological degradation, as uncontrolled tree falls can disrupt surrounding vegetation and ecosystems.

Proactively removing these compromised trees will help prevent injury, property damage, and further deterioration of the local environment. It is essential that appropriate measures be taken without delay to balance conservation efforts with the urgent need to protect the residents safety and maintain the integrity of the area.

Through targeted clearing, this proposal aims to restore the ecological health of the area by removing impediments to regeneration and fostering an environment conducive to the growth of native species. The clearing process will be conducted prioritising the retention of significant healthy habitat.

Adaptation to Climate Change and Recent Bushfire Events

The escalating impacts of climate change, including longer fire seasons, extreme heat events, and reduced rainfall, have heightened the urgency for proactive bushfire management. Recent bushfire events in the region have underscored the devastating consequences of inadequate fuel management, including property destruction, displacement of wildlife, and threats to human safety.

By addressing these challenges through vegetation clearing, the proposal represents an adaptive response to evolving climate risks. Strategic fuel reduction will enhance community resilience, ensuring safer evacuation routes, reducing fire intensity near residential areas, and minimising risks to firefighters and emergency responders.

Power Pole Fires and Associated Risks

The first rain after a long dry period can contribute to power pole fires due to a combination of factors. Over time, dry power poles and electrical equipment accumulate dust, dirt, salt, and pollution. When the first rain or mist arrives, it mixes with these dry contaminants, creating a conductive path for electricity to arc across insulators or between power lines and the pole. This can lead to electrical tracking, where electricity "leaks" along an unintended path, potentially igniting dry materials. Moisture combined with built-up contaminants can also cause a flashover, a sudden electrical discharge across an insulator, which may result in sparks or arcing that can ignite dry vegetation, pole timber, or nearby debris. Additionally, power poles, especially older wooden ones, can become extremely dry and cracked over time. If moisture penetrates these cracks and interacts with live electrical components, it can further increase the risk of ignition, particularly in poles that have internal rot or decay. Vegetation around power poles also plays a role (please see pictures below), as dry grass and leaves accumulated at the base can catch fire if an electrical discharge occurs, posing a significant threat in bushfire-prone areas

In recent weeks, Perth has experienced a significant rise in power pole fires, leading to widespread power outages, particularly in Wanneroo and surrounding areas. Authorities have recorded over 100 pole-top fires, highlighting the severity of the issue. One area of concern is 224 Dundobar Road, where four power poles line the frontage of the property. If one of these poles were to catch fire, the risk of a fast-spreading blaze would be extremely high, especially if the dry undergrowth in the vicinity ignited. Given the recent surge in power pole fires, removing small shrubs, stumps, and bushes at 224 Dundobar Road while replacing them with well-maintained green grass would significantly reduce the risk of fire spreading to the property and surrounds. By eliminating dry, flammable vegetation and maintaining a moisture-rich ground cover, the

likelihood of ignition from falling embers or electrical sparks would be greatly minimised. This proactive approach would create a natural firebreak, helping to protect the property from potential fire hazards.

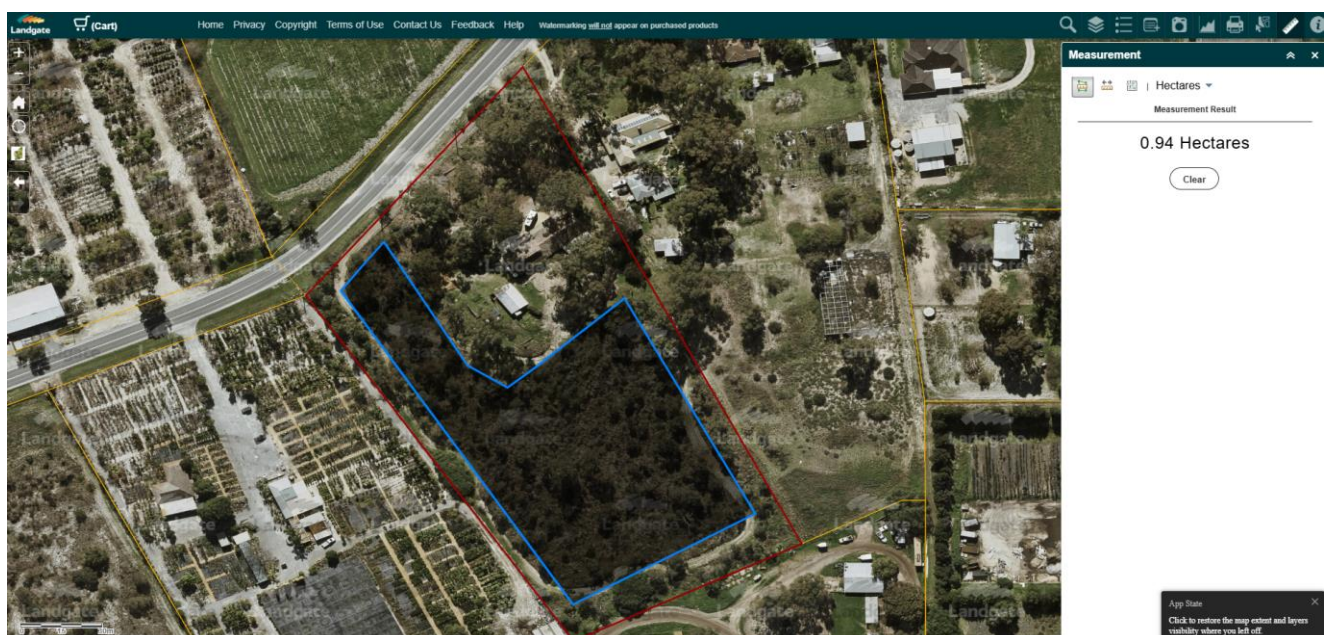
Final Conclusion

The proposed removal of dead, dying trees, dense shrubbery, stumps and high fuel loads at 224 Dundobar Road is a vital step in safeguarding lives, properties, and ecosystems from bushfire risks. This initiative adheres to legislative requirements, aligns with best practices for fire management, and prioritises the preservation of ecologically significant species. By balancing fire safety with environmental stewardship, this proposal supports the long-term health and sustainability of the natural environment.

To enhance fire safety at 224 Dundobar Road, it is important to address the potential risks that the property faces in the event of an uncontrolled fire. Unmanaged vegetation, dead or dying trees, and thick shrubbery can serve as fuel for fires, increasing the risk of fire spreading quickly. By reducing these fire hazards, we can significantly improve the safety of the property, minimising potential damage to structures and surrounding areas.

Moreover, clearing the property of dead trees, termite-infested trees, and thick vegetation will not only reduce the chance of fire spread but also help in maintaining a healthier, more resilient environment. In doing so, we can create a safer space for residents and neighbouring properties, reducing the potential for injury, stress, and other health-related concerns associated with fires.

In conclusion, we are requesting a clearing permit to remove any dead or dying trees, trees infested with termites, thick shrubbery, and stumps, all of which contribute to the fire risks on the property. By addressing these concerns proactively, we aim to ensure the ongoing safety and well-being of the residents and the community.



Map of the area that trees will be removed. Please note that the fire breaks have been reinstated 3 meters around the edge of the property, which has resulted in a reduction of the area to be cleared to less than one hectare. Within this designated area, not all trees will require removal. As previously mentioned above, healthy Tuart and Banksia trees will be preserved. The focus will be on removing dead or dying trees, stumps, and scrub, further minimising the total area affected by the clearing process.



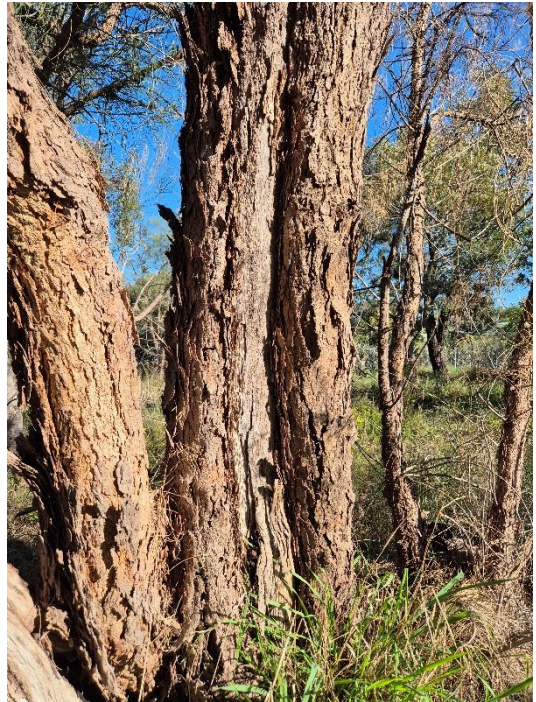
Termite infested trees removed for safety reason next to dwelling.



Termite infested tree.



Termite infested stump.



Another one of many Termite infested trees.



Thick shrubbery.



Dead trees, stumps and thick shrubbery.



Unhealthy and unsafe Banksia trees



Unhealthy Banksia with dense shrubbery



Termite infested tree, with dead and falling branches.



Termite Infested tree with thick shrubbery.



Heavy Fuel loads on the floor with dead shrubbery.



Old Fencing with thick and dead shrubbery.



Termite infested stump.



Termite infested stump.



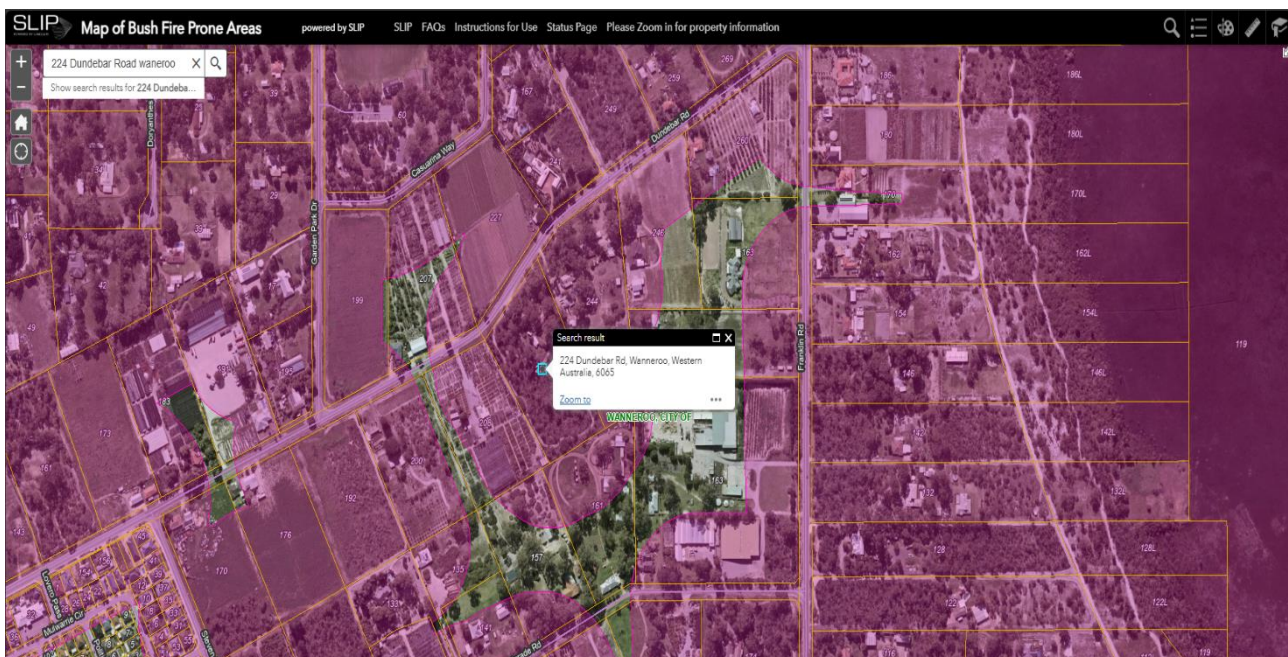
Leaf litter build-up of an area that has previously been cleared.



Leaf litter build-up of an area that has previously been cleared.



Trees at the base of the power poles with dry litter at the base.



224 Dundee Road currently sits in a High-Risk Bush Fire Prone Area as per the www.wa.gov.au map of bush fire prone areas.