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Gascoyne Food Bowl - Targeted flora survey

Background

Strategen-JBS&G (previously Strategen Environmental) was commissioned in 2016 to undertake a detailed flora and vegetation survey to inform an environmental assessment as part of the rezoning of approximately 600 ha of land from 'Rural' to 'Intensive Horticulture' as part of the Gascoyne Food Bowl Initiative. The survey was conducted within four survey areas which encompassed the LPS10 and LPS11 project areas. In 2018, Strategen-JBS&G conducted further field surveys to extend the vegetation and fauna habitat mapping into additional areas, known as area 4, the extension of G and area H and I (survey area).

Strategen JBS&G understands that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPRID) now is seeking to conduct additional surveys to determine the presence of conservation significant flora, a number of which have the potential to occur. This memo outlines the findings of the additional survey within the extension areas to inform any planning applications by the Department.

Scope

The objectives of this survey were understood to be:

- Undertake a targeted survey for potentially occurring priority species
- Prepare a memo report detailing the survey results

A list of the potentially occurring priority species within the survey area is provided below.

Table 1: Priority species potentially occurring within the survey area

Taxon	Priority Status
<i>Schoenia filifolia</i> subsp. <i>arenicola</i>	P1
<i>Abutilon</i> sp. <i>Pritzelianum</i> (S. van Leeuwen) (5095)	P2
<i>Atriplex spinulosa</i>	P1
<i>Abutilon</i> sp. <i>Quobba</i> (H. Demarz) (3858)	P2
<i>Rumex crystallinus</i>	P2
<i>Chthonocephalus tomentellus</i>	P2
<i>Owenia acidula</i>	P2
<i>Sporobolus blakei</i>	P3
<i>Corchorus congener</i>	P4

Methods

A targeted survey was conducted on 3rd September 2020.

Each survey area (Figure 1) was traversed on foot by two botanists with a spacing approximately 20m. This spacing was considered sufficient to provide adequate coverage of the survey area to determine the presence of any conservation significant flora. Where any potential conservation significant flora was located, a sample was taken for positive identification, and the location recorded by GPS.

Results

The survey conducted on the 3rd September 2020 did not locate any priority flora species within any of the survey areas. One specimen was sampled and vouchered as potentially *Corchorus congener*. Subsequent review determined that it was not *C. congener*. A recording was made of a suspected Weed of National Significance (WoNS), subsequent review of the recording determined that it is likely an *Acacia* (*Acacia* sp.), with identification to species level unsuccessful.

Overall, the vegetation condition within the survey areas was degraded to good (Keighery, 1994). Evidence of weed infestation, human activity, and illegal dumping were present within all survey areas. Sections of the survey areas which bordered existing farmland displayed generally high amounts of rubbish, including plastics, scrap metals, petrochemicals, car batteries, and vegetation debris.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results of the targeted flora survey conducted on 3rd September 2020, there are no priority conservation species occurring within the survey areas. The degraded vegetation condition was the result of uncontrolled access and impacts from surrounding farmland.

The survey conducted collected adequate data to confirm the absence of any conservation significant species that may impact on any development applications.

