GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CLEARING PERMIT

Granted under section 51E of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

Purpose Permit number:	CPS 11067/1
Permit Holder:	Pilbara Energy (Generation) Pty Ltd
Duration of Permit:	From 1/12/2025 to 1/12/2030

The permit holder is authorised to clear *native vegetation* subject to the following conditions of this permit.

PART I – CLEARING AUTHORISED

1. Clearing authorised (purpose)

The permit holder is authorised to clear *native vegetation* for the purpose of establishing a wind farm.

2. Land on which clearing is to be done

Mining Leases 46/515, 46/522, 46/535

Miscellaneous Licences 46/74, 46/80, 46/82, 46/83, 46/84, 46/93, 46/114

General Purpose Lease 46/9

3. Clearing authorised

The permit holder must not clear more than 297.21 hectares of *native vegetation* within the areas cross-hatched yellow in Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

PART II – MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

4. Avoid, minimise, and reduce impacts and extent of clearing

In determining the *native vegetation* authorised to be cleared under this permit, the permit holder must apply the following principles, set out in descending order of preference:

(a) avoid the clearing of *native vegetation*;

(b) minimise the amount of *native vegetation* to be cleared; and

(c) reduce the impact of clearing on any environmental value.

5. Weed management

When undertaking any clearing authorised under this permit, the permit holder must take the following measures to minimise the risk of introduction and spread of *weeds*:

(a) clean earth-moving machinery of soil and vegetation prior to entering and leaving the area to be cleared;

(b) ensure that no known *weed*-affected soil, *mulch, fill*, or other material is brought into the area to be cleared; and

(c) restrict the movement of machines and other vehicles to the limits of the areas to be cleared.

6. Directional clearing

The permit holder must:

(a) conduct clearing activities in a slow, progressive manner toward adjacent *native vegetation*: and

(b) allow a reasonable time for fauna present within the area being cleared to move into adjacent *native vegetation* ahead of the clearing activity.

7. Watercourse management

(a) The permit holder must not clear more than 11.5 hectares of *native vegetation* growing in association with a *watercourse* or *drainage line* within the areas cross-hatched red in Figure 2 of Schedule 1.

(b) Where a *watercourse* or *drainage line* 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.

8. Flora management

(a) Where *threatened flora* and/or *priority flora* species are identified in the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1, the permit holder shall engage a *botanist* to demarcate all *threatened flora* and *priority flora* individuals located within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

(b) The permit holder shall ensure no clearing of *threatened flora* and/or *priority flora* occurs.

(c) Where a *priority ecological community* is identified in the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1, the permit holder shall engage a *botanist* to demarcate all *priority ecological communities* located within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

(d) The permit holder shall ensure no clearing of *priority ecological communities* occurs.

9. Fauna management – *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) (EPBC Act Endangered and BC Act Critically Endangered)

(a) Within two months prior to clearing activities, the permit holder must engage a *fauna specialist* to inspect the areas to be cleared within the areas cross-hatched red on Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6 of Schedule 1 for the presence of *Pezoporus occidentalis* in accordance with the *Pezoporus occidentalis (night parrot) Guidelines*.

(b) For the duration of clearing activities, the permit holder must engage a *fauna specialist* to inspect the area to be cleared for the presence of *Pezoporus occidentalis*.

(c) Clearing activities may not occur within fifty (50) metres of any area where fauna referred to in condition 9(a) or condition 9(b) are identified.

(d) Where fauna is identified under condition 9(a) or condition 9(b), the permit holder must within 14 calendar days provide the following records to the *CEO*:

(i) the number of individuals identified;

(ii) the date each individual was identified;

(iii) the location where each individual was identified recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees; and

(iv) details pertaining to the circumstances of any death of, or injury sustained by, an individual.

10. Fauna management – *Dasyurus hallucatus* (northern quoll) (*EPBC Act* and *BC Act* Endangered)

(a) Within two weeks prior to and for the duration of clearing activities, the permit holder must engage a *fauna specialist* to inspect the area to be cleared within cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1 for the presence of *Dasyurus hallucatus* and/or *Dasyurus hallucatus* dens.

(b) Where a *Dasyurus hallucatus* den is identified under condition 10(a), the permit holder must:

(i) demarcate all *Dasyurus hallucatus* dens located within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1; and

(ii) ensure that no clearing within fifty (50) metres of any *Dasyurus hallucatus* den occurs between October and March of any given year.

(c) Clearing activities must cease in any area where fauna referred to in condition 10(a) are identified until either:

(i) the *Dasyurus hallucatus* individual(s) has moved on from that area to adjoining *suitable habitat*; or

(ii) the *Dasyurus hallucatus* individual(s) has been removed by a *fauna specialist*.

(d) Any *Dasyurus hallucatus* individual(s) removed in accordance with condition 10(a)(c)(ii) must be relocated by a *fauna specialist* to a *suitable habitat*.

(e) Where fauna and/or *Dasyurus hallucatus* dens are identified under condition 10(a), the permit holder must within 14 calendar days provide the following records to the *CEO*:

(i) the number of individuals and/or *Dasyurus hallucatus* dens identified;

(ii) the date each individual and/or *Dasyurus hallucatus* den was identified;

(iii) the location where each individual and/or *Dasyurus hallucatus* den was identified recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees;

(iv) the number of individuals removed and relocated;

(v) the relevant qualifications of the *fauna specialist* undertaking removal and relocation;

(vi) the date each individual was removed;

(vii) the method of removal;

(viii) the date each individual was relocated;

(ix) the location where each individual was relocated to, recorded using a GPS unit set to GDA2020, expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees; and

(x) details pertaining to the circumstances of any death of, or injury sustained by, an individual.

11. Fauna management – *Falco hypoleucos* (grey falcon) (*EPBC Act* and *BC Act* Vulnerable)

(a) Within two weeks prior to and for the duration of clearing activities, the permit holder must engage a *fauna specialist* to inspect the area to be cleared within cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1 for the presence of trees containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos*.

(b) Where trees containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos* are identified under condition 11(a), the permit holder shall engage a *fauna specialist* to demarcate all trees containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos* within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

(c) The permit holder must not clear within ten (10) metres of trees containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos* found within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

12. Fauna management – *Dasycercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara) (Priority 4)

(a) Within two weeks prior to and for the duration of clearing activities, the permit holder must engage a *fauna specialist* to inspect the area to be cleared within cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1 for the presence of *Dasycercus blythi* and/or *Dasycercus blythi* burrows.

(b) Where a *Dasycercus blythi* burrow is identified under condition 12(a), the permit holder must demarcate all *Dasycercus blythi* burrows located within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

(c) Clearing activities within 50 metres of any *Dasycercus blythi* burrow identified under condition 12(a) must cease until a *fauna specialist* determines that there are no *Dasycercus blythi* individual(s) occupying the *Dasycercus blythi* burrow.

(d) Clearing activities must cease in any area where fauna referred to in condition 12(a) are identified until either:

(i) the *Dasycercus blythi* individual(s) has moved on from that area to adjoining *suitable habitat*; or

(ii) the *Dasycercus blythi* individual(s) has been removed by a *fauna specialist*.

(e) Any *Dasycercus blythi* individual(s) removed in accordance with condition 12(d)(ii) must be relocated by a *fauna specialist* to a *suitable habitat*.

(f) Where fauna and/or *Dasycercus blythi* burrows are identified under condition 12(a), the permit holder must within 14 calendar days provide the following records to the *CEO*:

(i) the number of individuals and/or *Dasycercus blythi* burrows identified;

(ii) the date each individual and/or *Dasycercus blythi* burrow was identified;

(iii) the location where each individual and/or *Dasycercus blythi* burrow was identified recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees;

(iv) the number of individuals removed and relocated;

(v) the relevant qualifications of the *fauna specialist* undertaking removal and relocation;

(vi) the date each individual was removed;

(vii) the method of removal;

(viii) the date each individual was relocated;

(ix) the location where each individual was relocated to, recorded using a GPS unit set to GDA2020, expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees; and

(x) details pertaining to the circumstances of any death of, or injury sustained by, an individual.

13. Fauna management – *Pseudomys chapmani* (western pebble-mound mouse, ngadji) (Priority 4)

(a) Within two weeks prior to and for the duration of clearing activities, the permit holder must engage a *fauna specialist* to inspect the area to be cleared within the cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1 for the presence of *Pseudomys chapmani* and/or *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds.

(b) Where a *Pseudomys chapmani* mound is identified under condition 13(a), the permit holder must demarcate all *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds located within the area cross-hatched yellow on Figure 1 of Schedule 1.

(c) Clearing activities within 50 metres of any *Pseudomys chapmani* mound identified under condition 13(a) must cease until a *fauna specialist* determines that there are no *Pseudomys chapmani* individual(s) occupying the *Pseudomys chapmani* mound.

(d) Clearing activities must cease in any area where fauna referred to in condition 13(a) are identified until either:

(i) the *Pseudomys chapmani* individual(s) has moved on from that area to adjoining *suitable habitat*; or

(ii) the *Pseudomys chapmani* individual(s) has been removed by a *fauna specialist*.

(e) Any *Pseudomys chapmani* individual(s) removed in accordance with condition 13(d)(ii) must be relocated by a *fauna specialist* to a *suitable habitat*.

(f) Where fauna and/or *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds are identified under condition 13(a), the permit holder must within 14 calendar days provide the following records to the *CEO*:

(i) the number of individuals and/or *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds identified;

(ii) the date each individual and/or *Pseudomys chapmani* mound was identified;

(iii) the location where each individual and/or *Pseudomys chapmani* mound was identified recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees;

(iv) the number of individuals removed and relocated;

(v) the relevant qualifications of the *fauna specialist* undertaking removal and relocation;

(vi) the date each individual was removed;

(vii) the method of removal;

(viii) the date each individual was relocated;

(ix) the location where each individual was relocated to, recorded using a GPS unit set to GDA2020, expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees; and

(x) details pertaining to the circumstances of any death of, or injury sustained by, an individual.

PART III - RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

14. Records that must be kept

The permit holder must maintain records relating to the listed relevant matters in accordance with the specifications detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Records that must be kept

No.	Relevant matter	Specifications
1.	In relation to the authorised clearing activities generally	(a) the species composition, structure, and density of the cleared area; (b) the location where the clearing occurred, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings; (c) the date that the area was cleared; (d) the size of the area cleared (in hectares); (e) actions taken to avoid, minimise, and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing in accordance with condition 4; (f) actions taken to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of *weeds* in accordance with condition 5; (g) the direction of clearing in accordance with condition 6; and (h) actions taken to manage and mitigate impacts to *native vegetation* growing in association of a *watercourse* or *drainage line* in accordance with condition 7.

No.	Relevant matter	Specifications
2.	In relation to flora management pursuant to condition 8	(a) the name and location of each *threatened flora* and/or *priority flora* species, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings; (b) actions taken to demarcate each *threatened flora* and/or *priority flora* species recorded; and (c) actions taken to avoid the clearing of *threatened flora* and/or *priority flora* species.
3.	In relation to *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) fauna management pursuant to condition 9	(a) the records required under condition 9(d); and (b) actions taken to manage and mitigate impacts to *Pezoporus occidentalis* in accordance with condition 9.
4.	In relation to *Dasyurus hallucatus* (northern quoll) fauna management pursuant to condition 10	(a) the records required under condition 10(e); and (b) actions taken to manage and mitigate impacts to *Dasyurus hallucatus* in accordance with condition 10.
5.	In relation to *Falco hypoleucos* (grey falcon) fauna management pursuant to condition 11	(a) the time(s) and date(s) of inspection(s) of the trees containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos* by the *fauna specialist*; (b) a description of the inspection methodology employed by the *fauna specialist*; (c) the location of each tree containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos*, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 2020 (GDA2020), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings; (d) whether the tree(s) containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos* identified show current or past use by *Falco hypoleucos*; and (e) actions taken to demarcate each tree containing *suitably sized stick nests* for *Falco hypoleucos* recorded.
6.	In relation to *Dasycercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara) fauna management pursuant to	(a) the records required under condition 12(f); and (b) actions taken to manage and mitigate

No.	Relevant matter	Specifications
	condition 12	impacts to *Dasycercus blythi* in accordance with condition 12.
7.	In relation to *Pseudomys chapmani* (western pebble-mound mouse, ngadji) fauna management pursuant to condition 13	(a) the records required under condition 13(f); and (b) actions taken to manage and mitigate impacts to *Pseudomys chapmani* in accordance with condition 13.

15. Reporting

(a) The permit holder must provide to the *CEO*, on or before 31 July of each calendar year, a written report containing:

(i) the records required to be kept under condition 14; and

(ii) records of activities done by the permit holder under this permit between 1 January and 31 December of the preceding calendar year.

(b) If no clearing authorised under this permit has been undertaken, a written report confirming that no clearing under this permit has been undertaken, must be provided to the *CEO* on or before 31 July of each calendar year.

(c) The permit holder must provide to the *CEO*, no later than 90 calendar days prior to the expiry date of the permit, a written report of records required under condition 14, where these records have not already been provided under condition 15(a).

DEFINITIONS

In this permit, the terms in Table 2 have the meanings defined.

Table 2: Definitions

Term	Definition
BC Act	*Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA).
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of the department responsible for the administration of the clearing provisions under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.
clearing	has the meaning given under section 3(1) of the EP Act.
condition	a condition to which this clearing permit is subject under section 51H of the EP Act.
department	means the department established under section 35 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (WA) and designated as responsible for the administration of the EP Act, which includes Part V Division 3.
drainage line/s	means a natural depression that carries surface water runoff.
EP Act	*Environmental Protection Act 1986* (WA)
EPBC Act	*Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth)
fauna specialist	means a person who holds a tertiary qualification specialising in environmental science or equivalent, and has a minimum of 2 years work experience in fauna identification and surveys of fauna native to the region being inspected or surveyed, or who is approved by the *CEO* as a

Term	Definition
	suitable fauna specialist for the bioregion, and who holds an appropriate fauna licence issued under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.
fill	means material used to increase the ground level, or to fill a depression.
mulch	means the use of organic matter, wood chips or rocks to slow the movement of water across the soil surface and to reduce evaporation.
native vegetation	has the meaning given under section 3(1) and section 51A of the EP Act.
Pezoporus occidentalis (night parrot) Guidelines	means the *Guidelines for determining the likely presence and habitat usage of night parrot (Pezoporus occidentalis) in Western Australia* (DBCA 2024).
Priority ecological community	means an ecological community described as priority category 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 in the *Species and Communities Program, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Priority Ecological Communities for Western Australia* (as amended).
Priority flora	means those plant taxa described as priority flora classes 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the *Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Threatened and Priority Flora List for Western Australia* (as amended).
suitable habitat for *Dasycercus blythi*	means habitat known to support *Dasycercus blythi* within the known current distribution of the species. This includes spinifex grasslands throughout much of the arid zone and dig burrows in flats between low sand dunes, with home ranges and burrows encompassing both mature spinifex and open regrowth areas (ecologia 2025).
suitable habitat for *Dasyurus hallucatus*	means habitat known to support *Dasyurus hallucatus* within the known current distribution of the species. This often includes some form of rocky area or structurally diverse woodland or forest used for shelter purposes with surrounding vegetated habitats used for foraging and dispersal, as described in '*EPBC Act referral guideline for the endangered northern quoll Dasyurus hallucatus*' (Australian Government 2016).
suitable habitat (*Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot))	means habitat known to support *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) within the known current distribution of the species. This includes patches of long unburnt and structurally complex *Triodia longiceps* (bull spinifex), or related species of *Triodia* (DCCEEW 2025).
suitable habitat for *Pseudomys chapmani*	means habitat known to support *Pseudomys chapmani* within the known current distribution of the species. This includes areas characterised by the presence of sharply incised drainage lines (Start, A. N. 1996). Vegetation is generally dominated by "hard spinifex", typically *Triodia basedowii* or T. *wiseana* (Start, A. N. 1996). *Eucalyptus leucophloea* or *E. gamophylla* are often present but other trees, mallees and a variety of shrubs, commonly *Acacia* and *Senna* spp., may be present (Start, A. N. 1996).
suitably sized stick nests for *Falco hypoleucos*	means nests that provide *Falco hypoleucos* breeding habitat within the known current distribution of the species. This includes the old nests of other birds, particularly those of other raptors and corvids, as described in the approved Conservation Advice for *Falco Hypoleucos* (Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) 2020).
Threatened flora	means a threatened flora as defined in: (a) the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* section 5(1); or (b) the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* section 528.
watercourse	has the meaning given to it in section 3 of the *Rights in Water and*

Term	Definition
	Irrigation Act 1914.
weeds	means any plant – (a) that is a declared pest under section 22 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*; or (b) published in a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions species-led ecological impact and invasiveness ranking summary, regardless of ranking; or (c) not indigenous to the area concerned.

END OF CONDITIONS

Lindsay Bourke
Manager
GREEN ENERGY

Officer delegated under Section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

7 November 2025

Schedule 1

Plan CPS11067/1

The boundary of the area authorised to be cleared is shown in the map below (Figure 1).

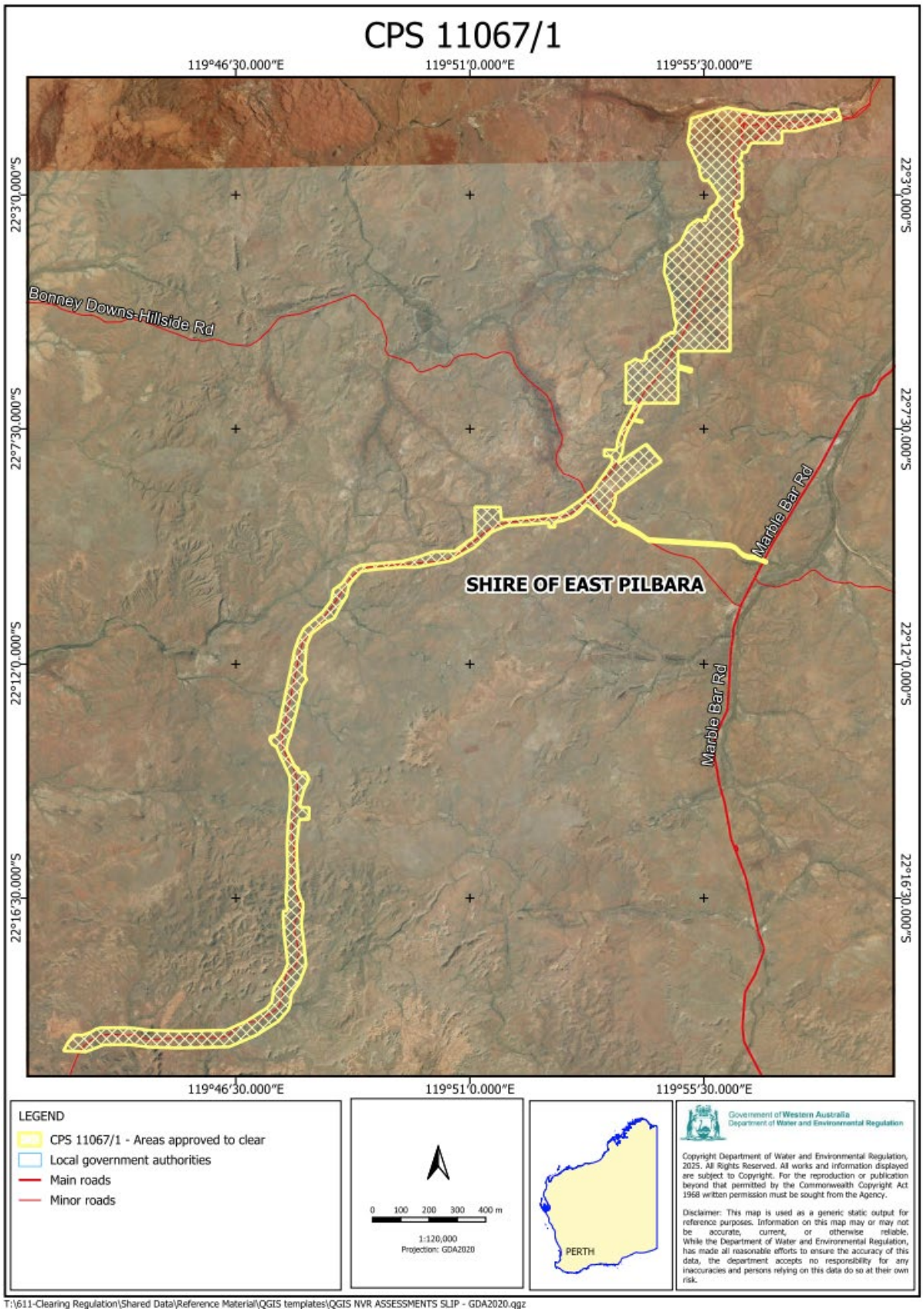

Figure 1: Map of the boundary of the area within which clearing may occur

The boundary of the area within which specific conditions apply is shown in the maps below (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6).

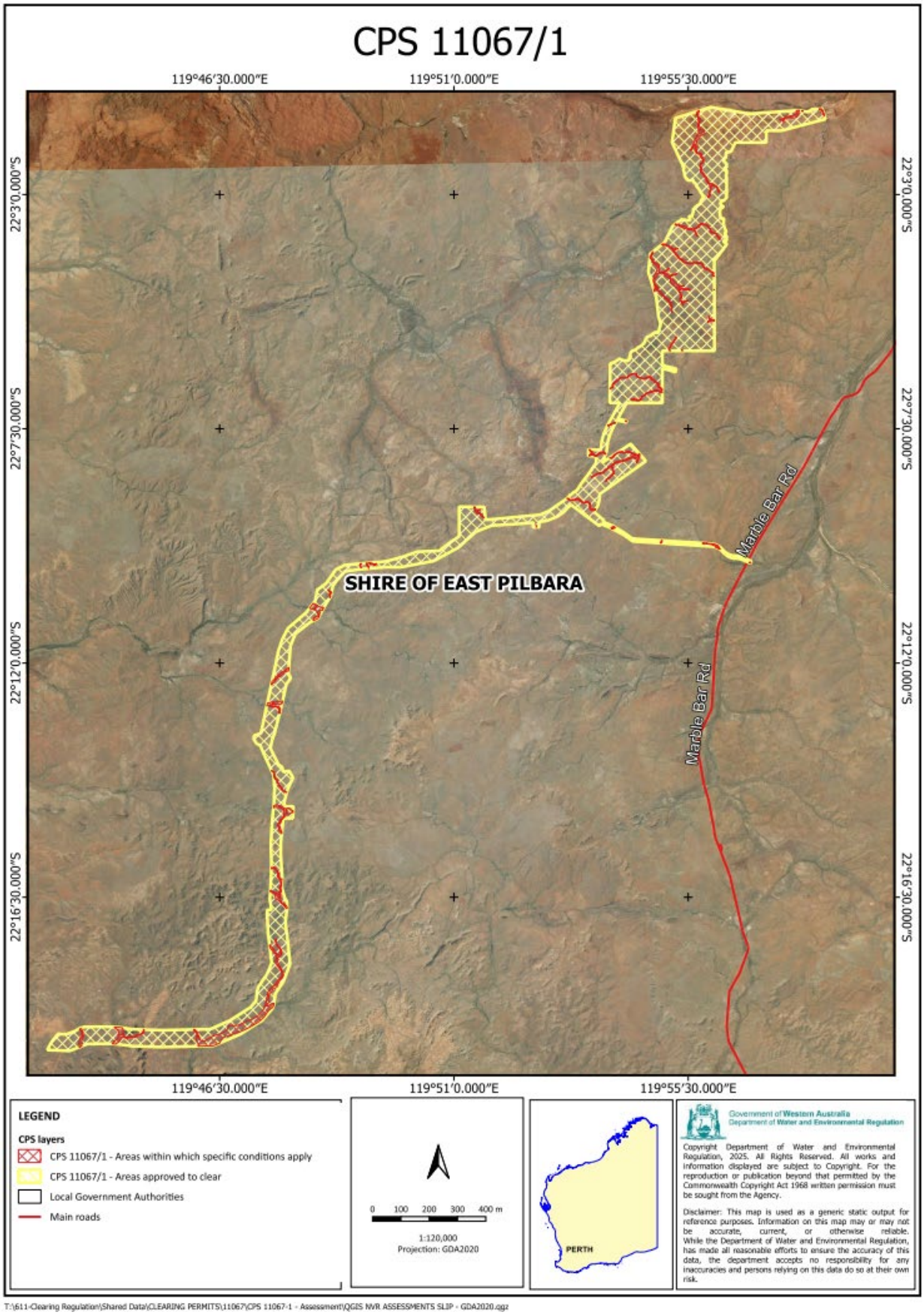

Figure 2: Map of the boundary of the area within which specific conditions apply (1)

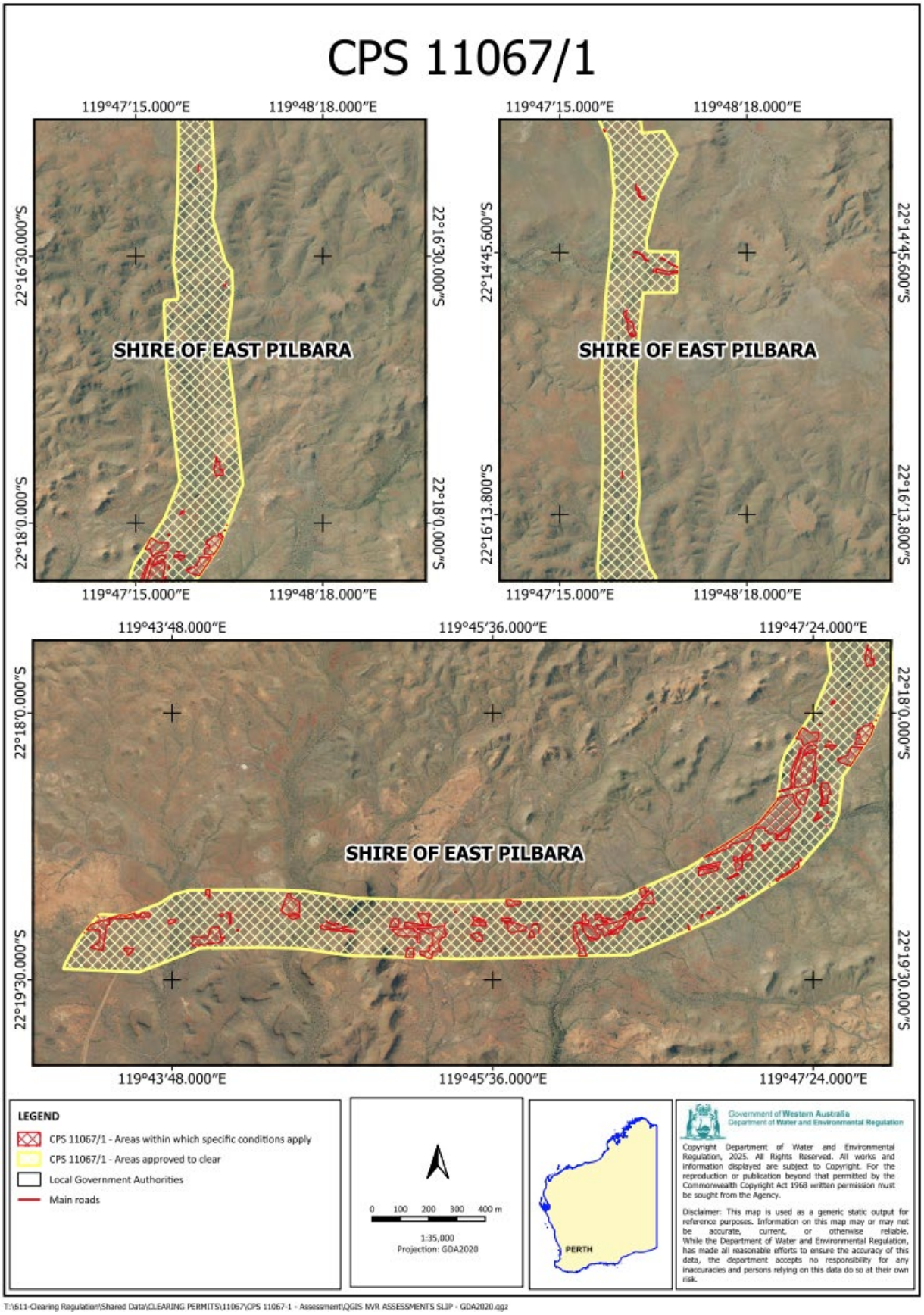

Figure 3: Map of the boundary of the area within which specific conditions apply (2)

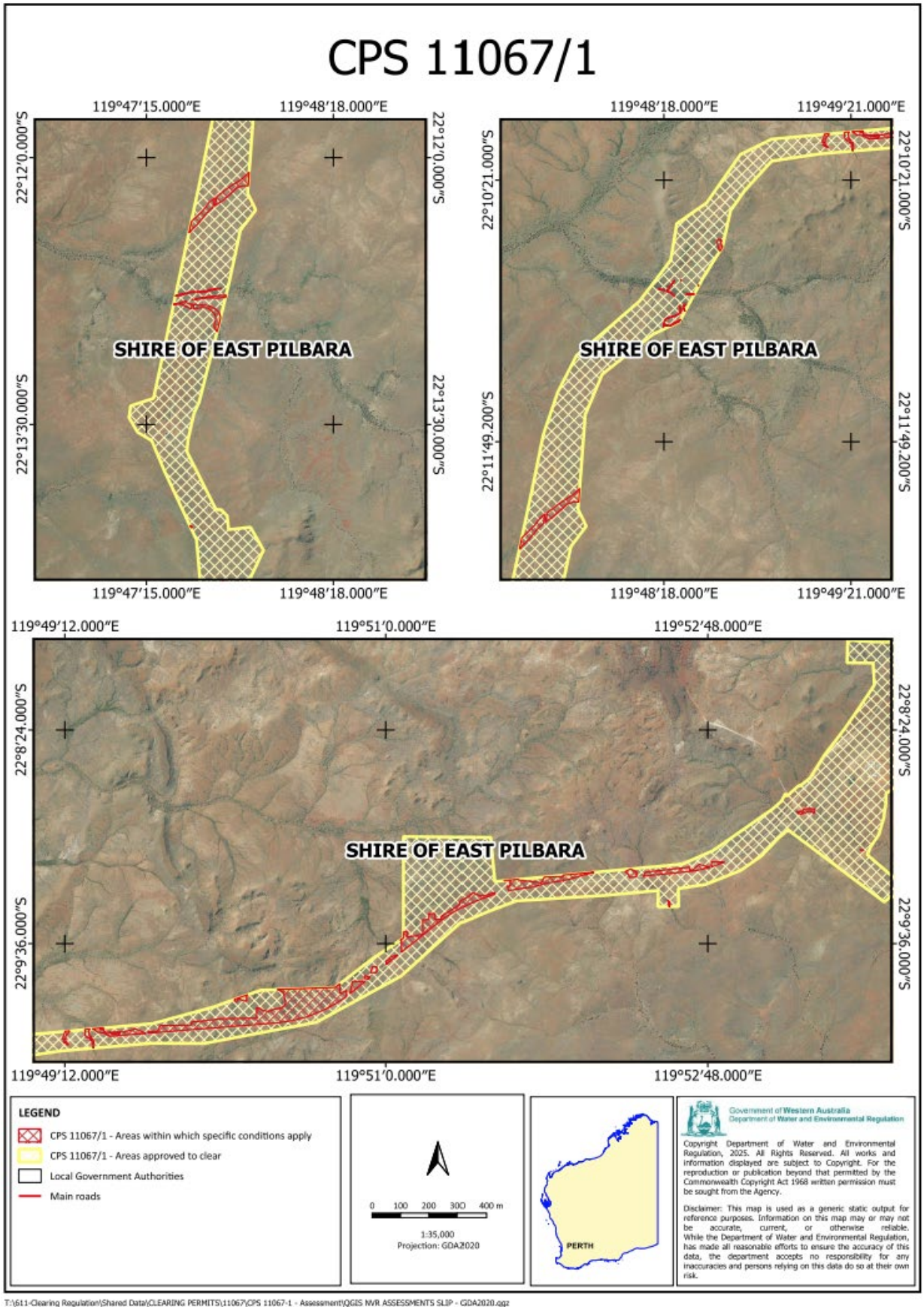

Figure 4: Map of the boundary of the area within which specific conditions apply (3)

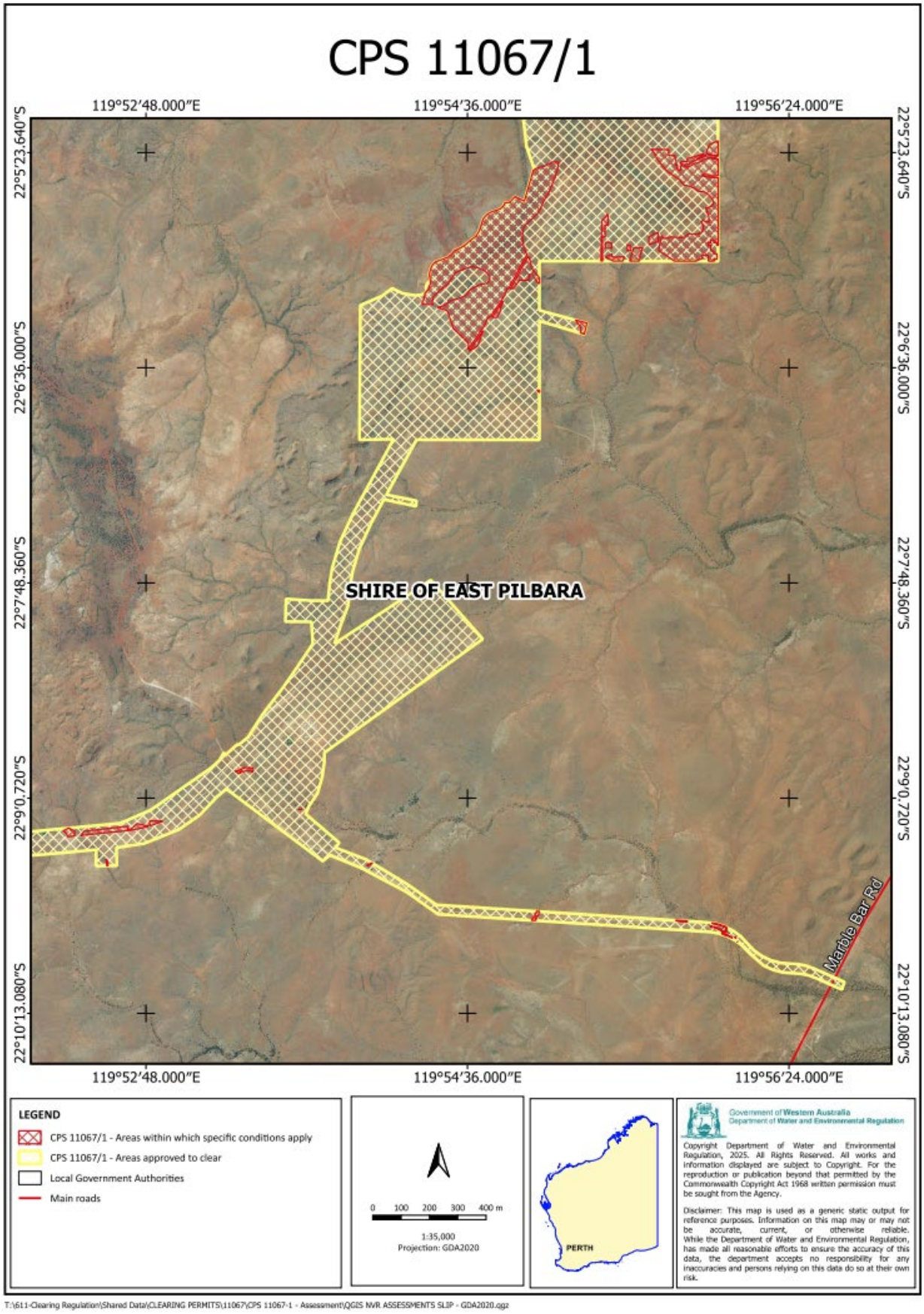

Figure 5: Map of the boundary of the area within which specific conditions apply (4)

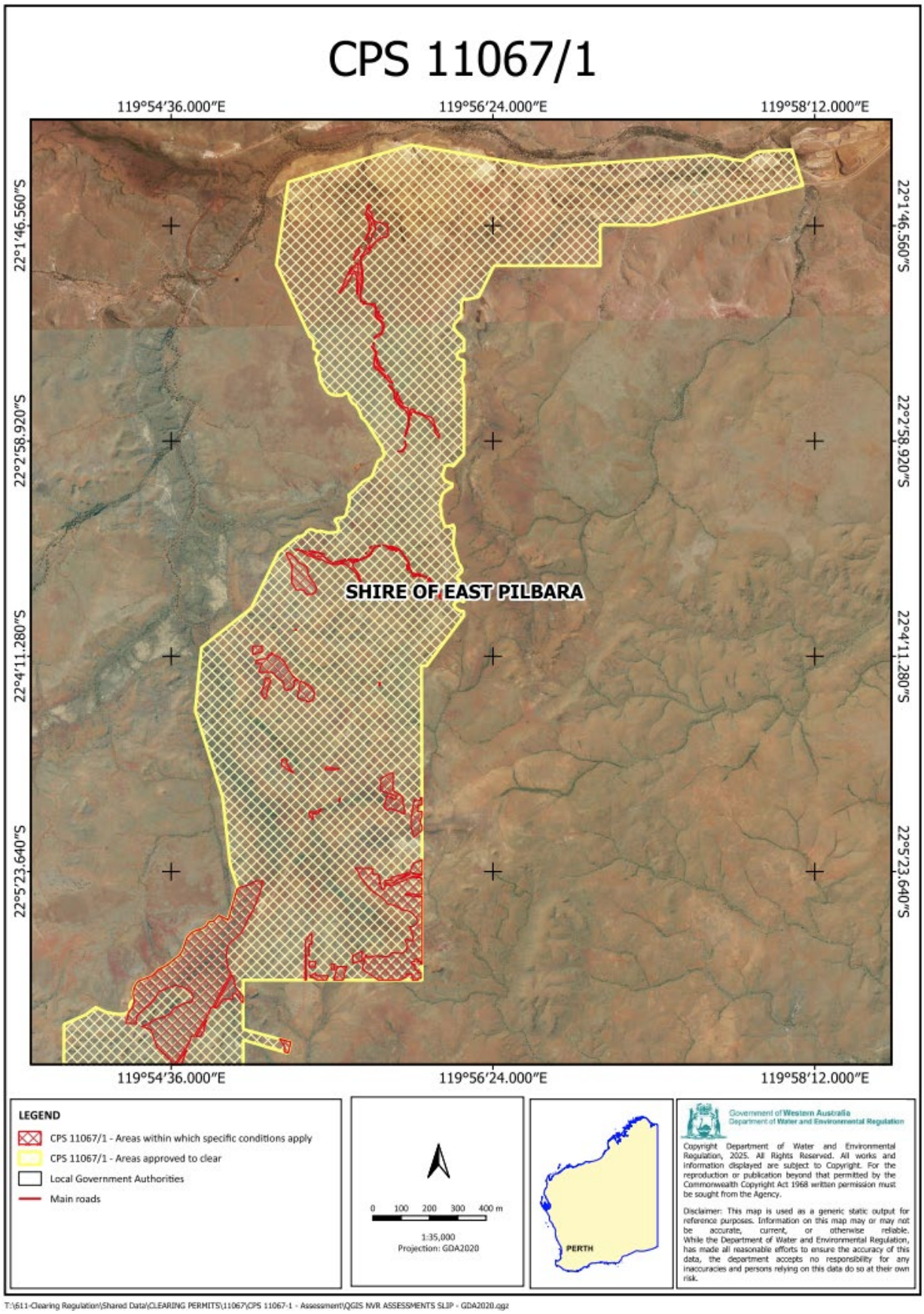

Figure 6: Map of the boundary of the area within which specific conditions apply (5)

Government of Western Australia
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1 Application details and outcome

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	CPS 11067/1
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	Pilbara Energy (Generation) Pty Ltd
Application received:	7 May 2025
Application area:	297.21 hectares of native vegetation within a 3,823.7 hectare footprint
Purpose of clearing:	Establishment of a new wind farm
Method of clearing:	Blade down clearing
Property:	Mining Leases 46/515, 46/522, 46/535 Miscellaneous Licences 46/74, 46/80, 46/82, 46/83, 46/84, 46/93, 46/114 General Purpose Lease 46/9
Location (LGA area/s):	Shire of East Pilbara
Localities (suburb/s):	Nullagine

1.2. Description of clearing activities

The application is to clear 297.21 hectares (ha) of native vegetation scattered over a 3,823.7 ha development envelope (see Figure 1, Section 1.5). The proposed clearing is for the construction, installation and operation of the Nullagine Pilot Wind Project (formerly known as the Bonney Downs Stage 1 Wind Farm Project), which is comprised of:

- up to 17 wind turbines, each with a capacity of 7.6 megawatts (MW);
- 220 kilovolt (kV) and 33 kV transmission lines;
- substations, access tracks and service infrastructure corridors;
- camp and associated infrastructure such as a wastewater treatment plant, fuel storage, power generators, sprayfield and carparks;
- topsoil stockpiles, borrow pits, and laydown and hardstand areas;
- communication infrastructure;
- operations facilities and a mobile concrete batching plant;
- pipelines; and
- a landfill.

The Nullagine Pilot Wind Project forms part of the applicant's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2030. The applicant proposes to undertake clearing over a five-year period between 2025 and 2030, with operation to commence in 2027.

1.3. Decision on application

Decision:	Granted
Decision date:	7 November 2025

Decision area:	297.21 hectares of native vegetation within a 3,823.7 hectare (ha) footprint, as depicted in Section 1.5, below.

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 Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) advertised the application for 21 days and one submission was received. Consideration of matters raised in the public submission is summarised in Appendix A.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (see Appendix B), relevant datasets (see Appendix E.1), the findings of multiple terrestrial fauna and flora and vegetation surveys, the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act (see Appendix C), relevant planning instruments, and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment (see Section 3).

The Delegated Officer also took into consideration that the proposed clearing is for the development of a wind farm to produce renewable energy for the existing Nullagine Iron Ore Mine. The proposal will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region, representing actions towards the State and Federal Government's targets of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing will result in:

- The loss of potentially suitable roosting habitat for *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) (endangered under EPBC Act, critically endangered under BC Act)
- the loss of habitat, including critical habitat, for *Dasyurus hallucatus* (northern quoll) (endangered under EPBC Act and BC Act), most of which is in Excellent condition
- the loss of habitat for *Falco hypoleucos* (grey falcon) (vulnerable under EPBC Act and BC Act), and potentially up to 12 suitably sized stick nests that represent potential future breeding habitat
- the loss of critical habitat for *Liasis olivaceus barroni* (Pilbara olive python) (vulnerable under EPBC Act and BC Act)
- the loss of habitat for *Anilios ganei* (Gane's blind snake) (Priority 1)
- the loss of foraging and dispersal habitat for *Macroderma gigas* (ghost bat) and *Rhinonicteris aurantia* (Pilbara form) (Pilbara leaf-nosed bat) (both vulnerable under EPBC Act and BC Act)
- the loss of potential habitat for the short-range endemic *Antichiropus sloanae* (Roy Hill antichiropus millipede) (Priority 1)
- the loss of suitable foraging habitat for *Dasycercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara) and *Pseudomys chapmani* (western pebble-mound mouse, ngadji) (both Priority 4)
- the loss of habitat for *Leggadina lakedownensis* (northern short-tailed mouse, Lakeland Downs mouse, kerakenga) (Priority 4)
- the loss of 11.5 ha of riparian vegetation
- the potential introduction and spread of weeds into adjacent vegetation, which could impact on the quality of the adjacent vegetation and its habitat values, including a Priority Ecological Community (PEC)
- potential land degradation in the form of water erosion.

After consideration of the available information, as well as the applicant's minimisation and mitigation measures (see Section 3.1), the Delegated Officer determined the proposed clearing can be minimised and managed to be unlikely 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, including to vegetation growing in association with a watercourse or drainage line
- take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds
- maintaining or reinstating existing surface flow where drainage lines are impacted to minimise the risk of water erosion
- demarcation of the clearing area
- undertake slow, progressive one directional clearing to allow terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity
- undertake pre-clearance surveys for *Pezoporus occidsentalis* in accordance with the *Guidelines for Determining the Likely Presence and Habitat Usage of Night Parrot (Pezoporus occidentalis) in Western Australia* (DBCA 2024)
- avoiding clearing within 50 m of any *Dasyurus hallucatus* dens between October and March (the species' breeding season)

- avoiding clearing within 10 m of trees containing suitable stick nests for *Falco hypoleucos*
- avoiding clearing within 50 m of any *Dasycercus blythi* burrows or *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds unless a fauna specialist has determined that there are no individuals occupying the burrows or mounds.

1.5. Site maps

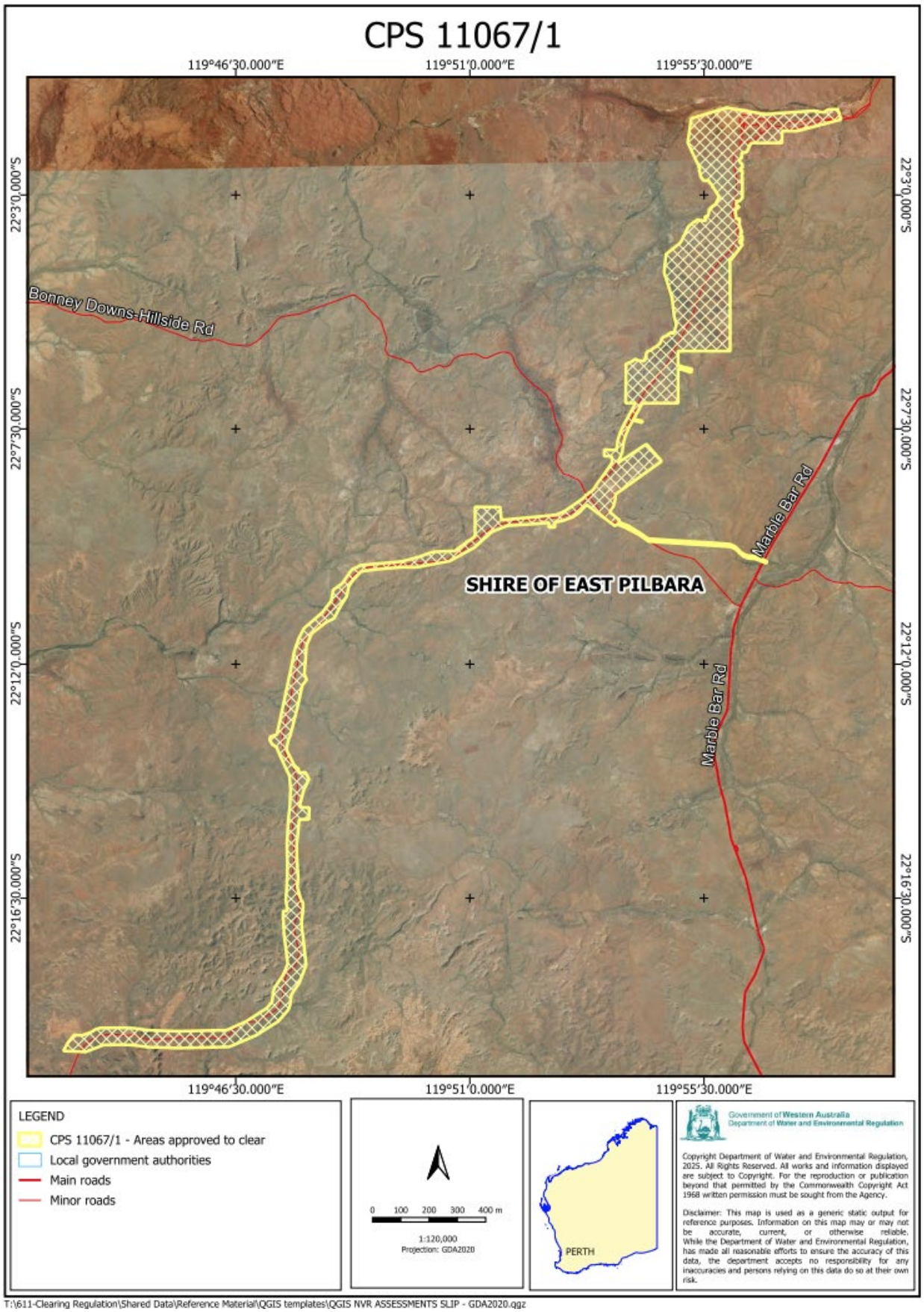

Figure 1: Map of the application area

The areas cross-hatched yellow indicate the areas authorised to be cleared under the granted clearing permit.

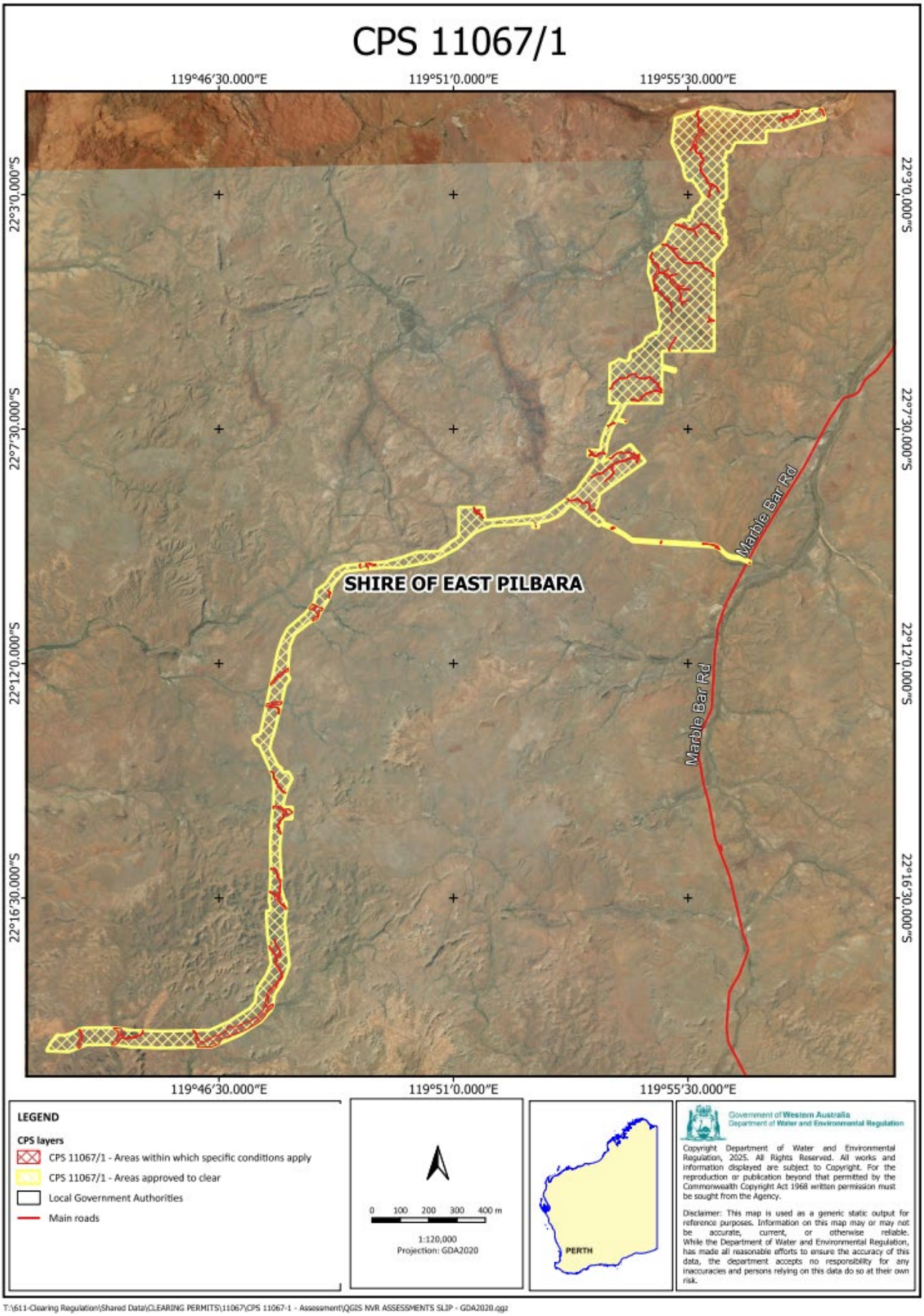

Figure 2: Map of the areas where specific conditions apply (1)

The areas cross-hatched red indicate the areas where specific conditions apply under the granted clearing permit.

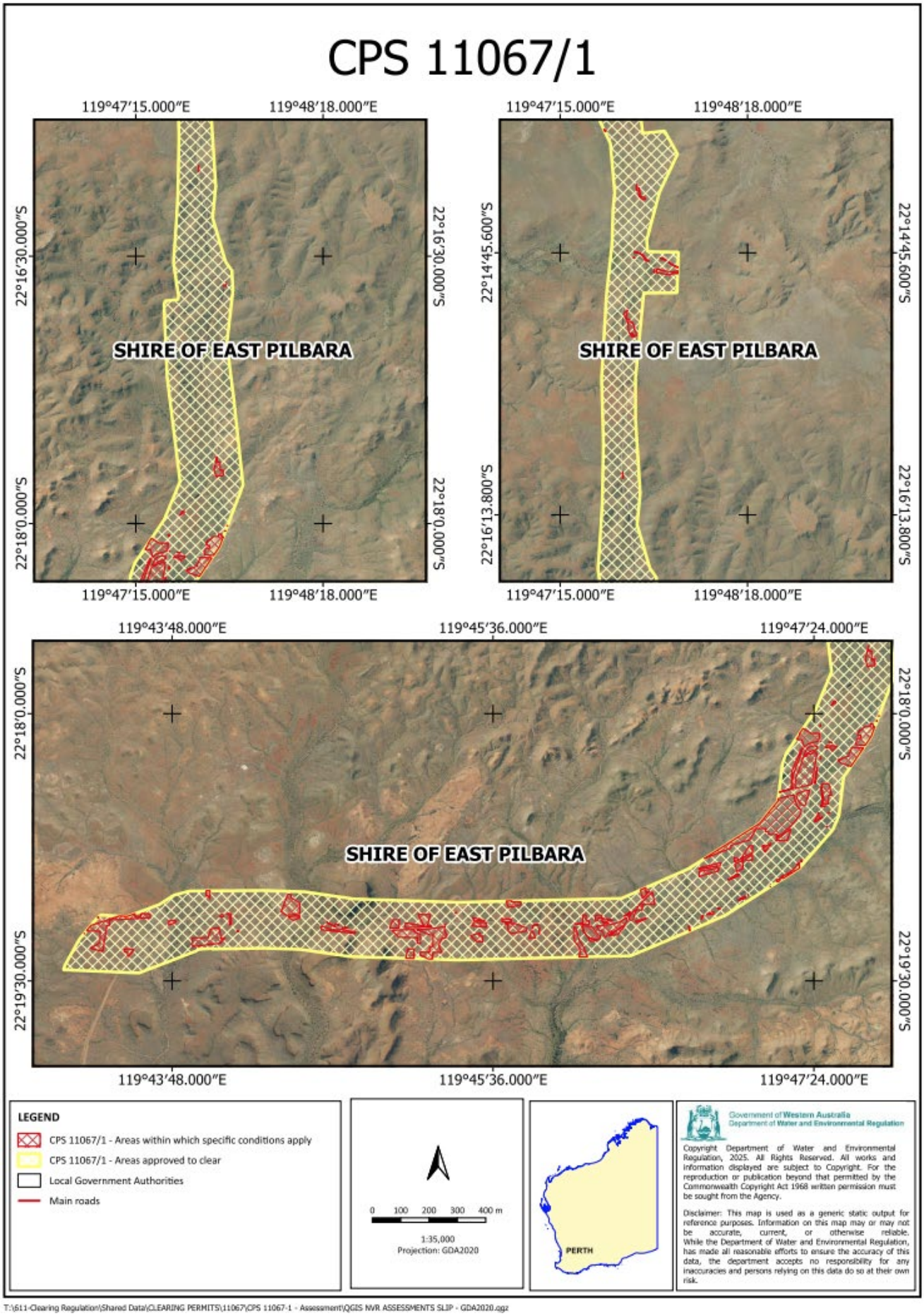

Figure 3: Map of the areas where specific conditions apply (2)

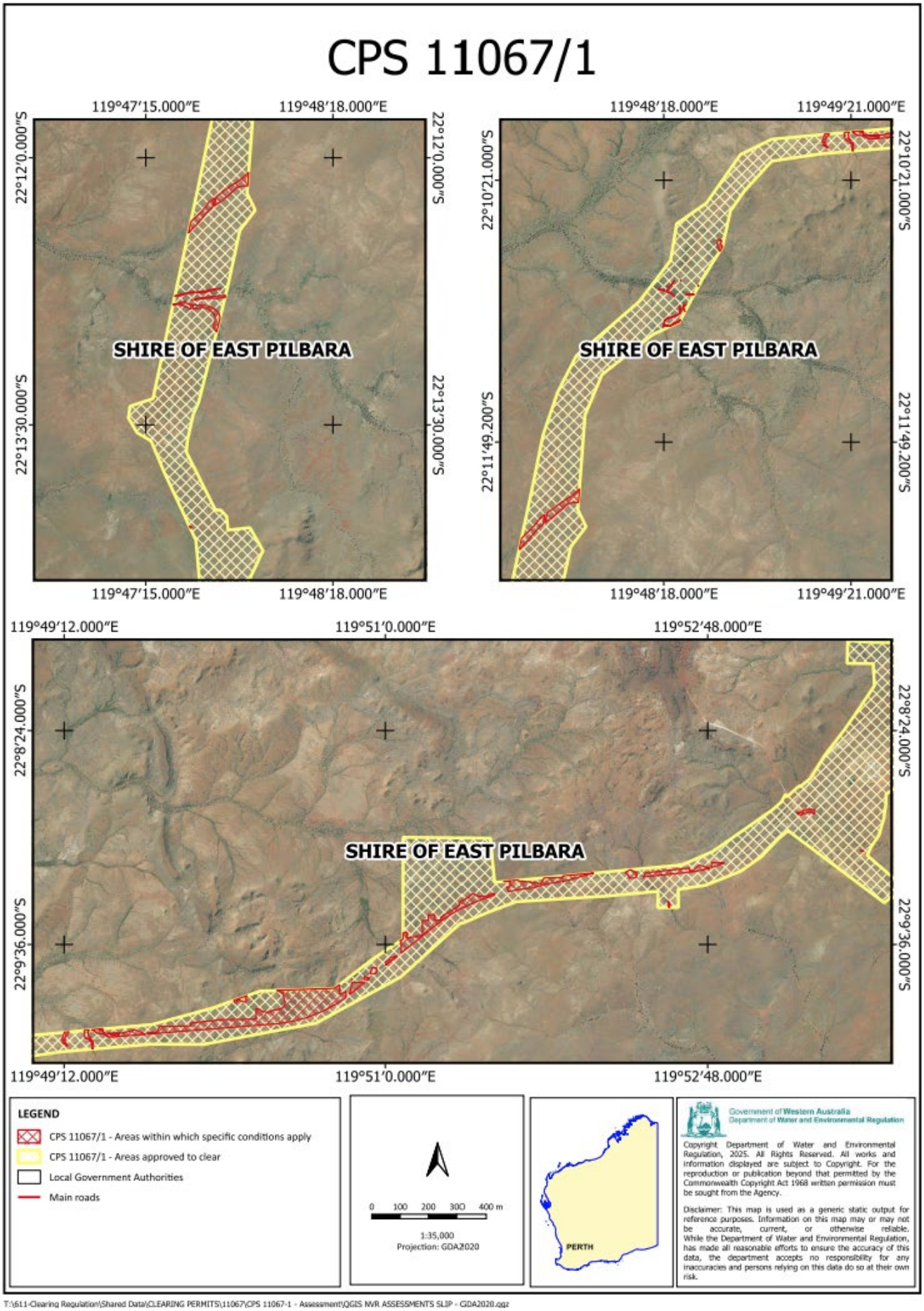

Figure 4: Map of the areas where specific conditions apply (3)

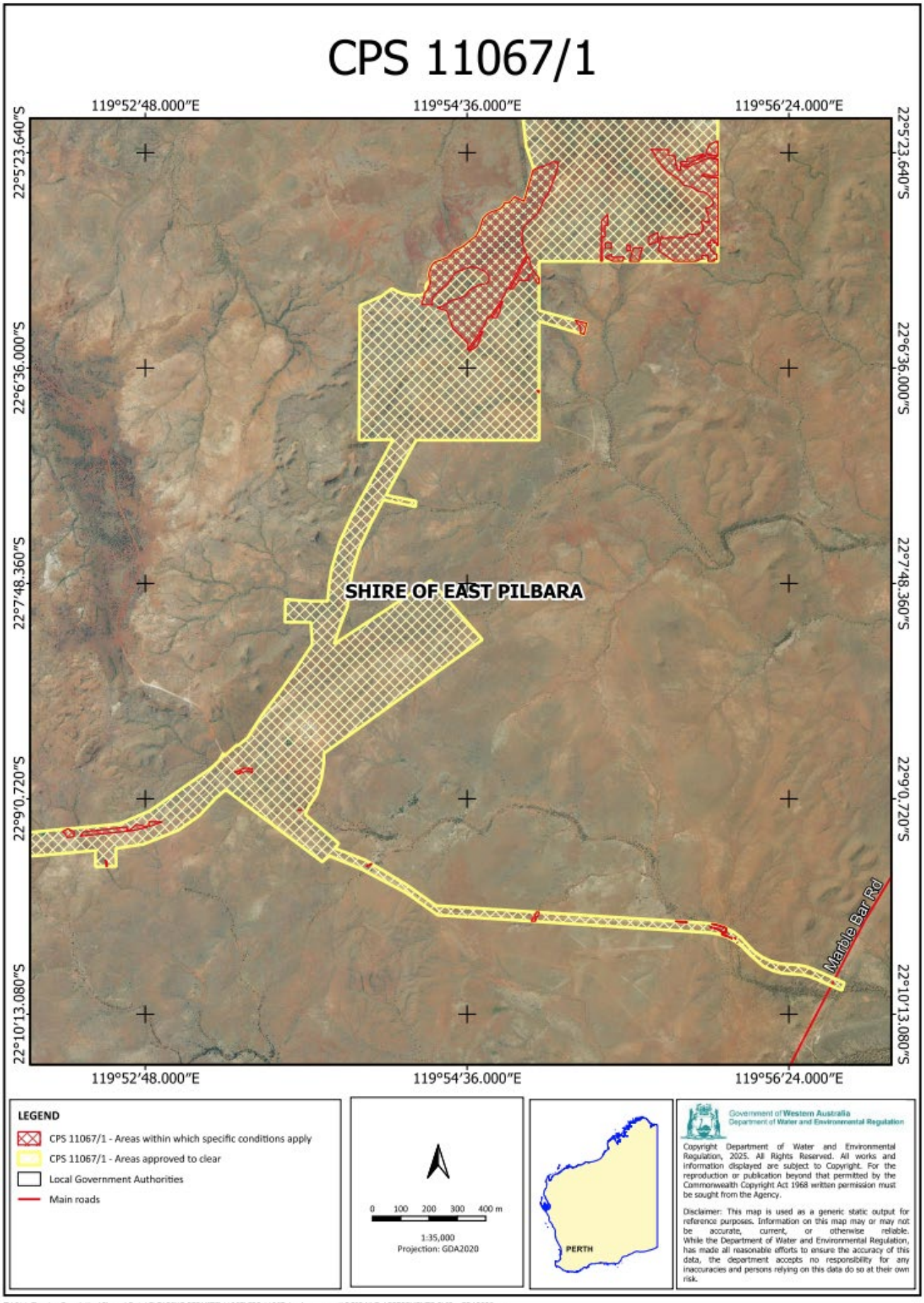

Figure 5: Map of the areas where specific conditions apply (4)

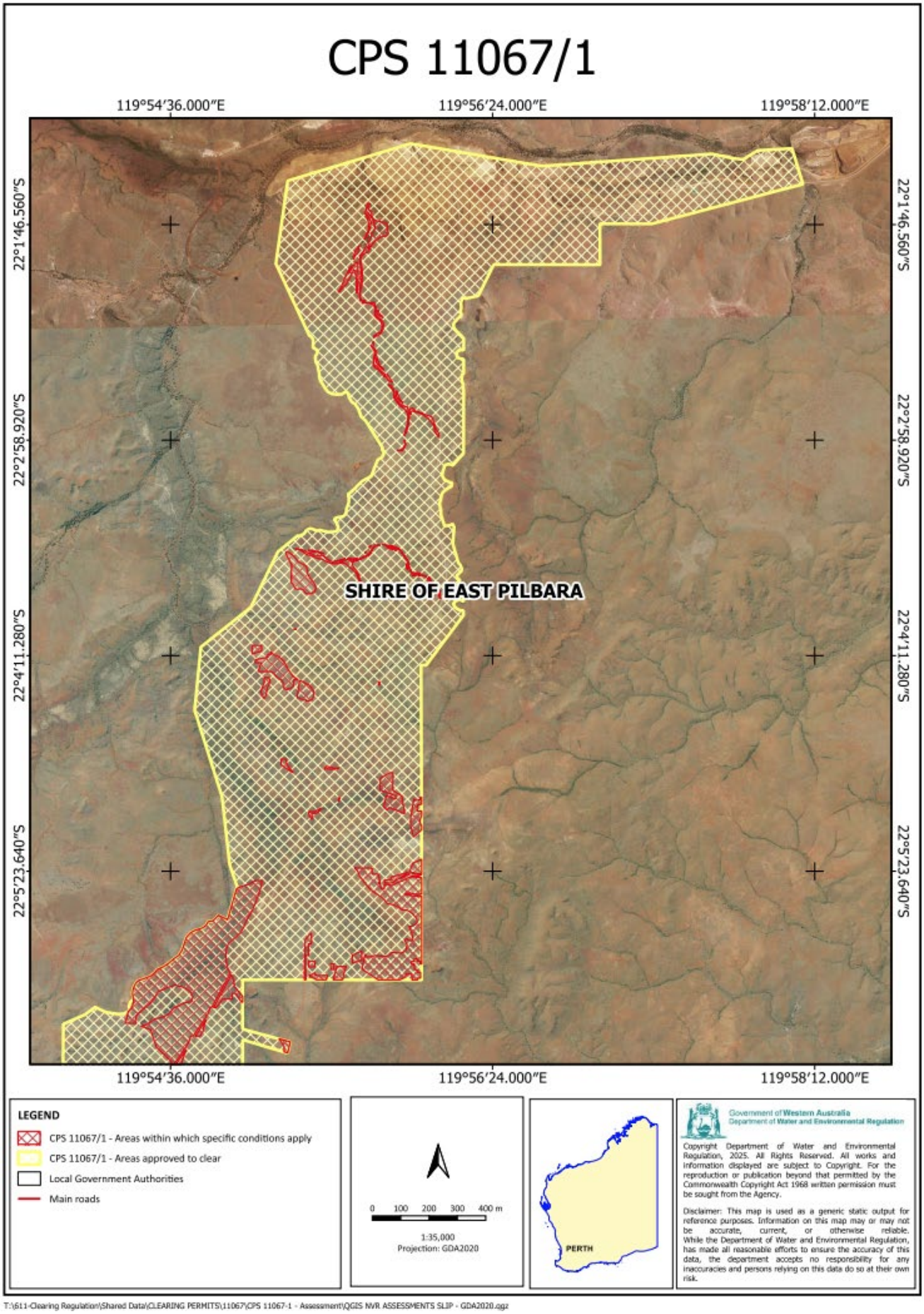

Figure 6: Map of the areas where specific conditions apply (5)

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 (see Section 1.4), the Delegated Officer has also had regard to the objects and principles under section 4A of the EP Act, particularly:

- the precautionary principle
- the principle of intergenerational equity
- the principle of the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity.

Other legislation of relevance for this assessment include:

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act).

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (DER, December 2013)
- *Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits* (DWER, October 2019)
- Technical guidance – *Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2016)
- Technical guidance – *Terrestrial Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2016).

3 Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

The applicant has avoided and minimised impacts through the following measures (Fortescue Ltd 2025):

- designing the project to avoid sensitive environmental receptors such as rocky escarpment fauna habitat, Priority and Threatened Ecological Communities, significant flora, and heritage sites
- considering numerous designs for the project, including moving wind turbine locations to ensure minimal impacts on bird and bat habitat
- utilising previously cleared areas for the existing Nullagine Mine to minimise the need for additional clearing
- positioning access routes and infrastructure to avoid existing drainage lines, where practicable.

The applicant has also committed to implementing the following measures for the project (Fortescue Ltd 2025):

- areas cleared will be progressively rehabilitated in accordance with the Nullagine Pilot Wind Farm Project Mining Proposal and Mine Closure Plan
- weed hygiene requirements described in the applicant's Weed Management Plan will be adhered to
- pre-clearance checks for conservation significant flora and fauna will be undertaken prior to clearing
- managing impacts to conservation significant fauna through implementation of the applicant's Conservation Significant Fauna Management Plan
- dust impacts will be managed in accordance with the applicant's Dust Management Plan.

The Delegated Officer was satisfied that the applicant has made a reasonable effort to avoid and minimise potential impacts of the proposed clearing on environmental values.

3.2. Assessment of impacts on environmental values

In assessing the application, the Delegated Officer has had regard for the site characteristics (see Appendix B) 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 (see Appendix C) identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological values (fauna, adjacent flora and vegetation) and land and water resources. The consideration of these impacts, and the extent to which they can be managed through conditions applied in line with sections 51H and 51I of the EP Act, is set out below.

3.2.1. Biological values (flora and biodiversity) - Clearing Principles (a) and (c)

Assessment

Flora and vegetation surveys (ecologia 2024a; ecologia 2025; SLR 2024) identified the presence of two Priority flora species within the application area, including:

- *Ipomoea racemigera* (Priority 3)

- *Ptilotus mollis* (Priority 4).

The 2025 survey (ecologia 2025) also identified a PEC, the 'Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range', within the application area.

Three vegetation types recorded in the application area are considered locally restricted (Fortescue Ltd 2025):

- EvAcCc
- AaEp
- AaTe.

Priority Flora

According to available databases, there are 21 records of *I. racemigera*, one of which is within 30 km of the application area. A total of 14 individuals were recorded during the 2025 survey (ecologia 2025), one of which was recorded within a creek in vegetation type EvAcCc in the application area.

There are 48 records of *P. mollis* on available databases, including five records within 30 km of the application area. A total of 1, 174 individuals were recorded in the 2025 survey (ecologia 2025), 558 of which were recorded within the application area.

The applicant has advised that no clearing of Priority flora will occur and that any new or previously unrecorded species identified during pre-clearance surveys will be assessed and managed appropriately in consultation with relevant authorities. The proposed clearing is therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on Priority flora.

Priority Ecological Community

Vegetation type VfAl (refer Appendix E) is a species-rich community occurring on clay soils associated with stony gibber plains and low hills. It aligns with the 'Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range', listed as a Priority 1 PEC. According to available databases, there is approximately 178,731.34 ha of this PEC in total. The application area contains 11.53 ha of vegetation type VfAl.

The applicant has advised that vegetation type VfAl, and therefore the PEC, will not be directly impacted by the proposed clearing. The proposed clearing is therefore not considered to have a significant direct impact on the 'Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range' PEC.

Given the applicant's proposed mitigation measures, indirect impacts from the proposed clearing, such as dust deposition or the spreading of weeds, are not considered likely to have a significant impact on the PEC.

Locally restricted vegetation

A flora and vegetation survey undertaken in 2025 (ecologia 2025) identified multiple vegetation types that were considered to be locally restricted, three of which were recorded within the application area. The extent of the three locally restricted vegetation types found within the application area is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Extent of locally restricted vegetation types found within the application area

Vegetation type	Total extent in survey area (ha)	Total extent in application area (ha)	Total proposed clearing (ha)
EvAcCc	5,128.5	236.38	11.5
AaEp	1,214.0	4.20	0
AaTe	588.5	35.49	0.22

The proposed clearing of the EvAcCc vegetation type represents 0.22 per cent of the total extent identified during the survey, and the proposed clearing of the AaTe vegetation type represents 0.04 per cent of the total extent identified. No clearing of vegetation type AaEp is proposed.

Given the low proportion of each vegetation type to be cleared compared to the total extent identified in the survey, the proposed clearing is unlikely to result in a significant impact at a local or regional scale.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, the proposed clearing will result in direct impacts to locally restricted vegetation and may result in indirect impacts to nearby Priority flora and a PEC. However, the potential impacts are not considered to be significant and it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing can be managed by demarcating clearing areas and taking steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds. Advice received from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) also recommended clear demarcation of clearing areas and the implementation of appropriate weed hygiene procedures to minimise the risk of impacts to the nearby PEC (DBCA 2025).

Conditions

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

- weed management, which ensures protocols are put in place to limit the introduction and transportation of weed-affected materials
- demarcation of conservation significant flora species and PECs located within the application area, which ensures unnecessary clearing of nearby Priority flora and PEC is avoided.

3.2.2. Biological values (fauna) - Clearing Principle (b)

Assessment

According to available databases, several conservation significant fauna species have been recorded within 30 km of the application area (refer Appendix B.4). Targeted terrestrial vertebrate fauna surveys undertaken in 2024 (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024) recorded the presence of four conservation significant fauna species and determined that a further three may potentially occur within the application area:

- *Dasyurus hallucatus* (northern quoll) – Endangered (EPBC Act and BC Act)
- *Falco hypoleucos* (grey falcon) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)
- *Macroderma gigas* (ghost bat) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)
- *Rhinonicteris aurantia* (Pilbara form) (Pilbara leaf-nosed bat) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)
- *Dasycercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara) – Priority 4
- *Leggadina lakedownensis* (northern short-tailed mouse, Lakeland Downs mouse, kerakenga) – Priority 4
- *Pseudomys chapmani* (western pebble-mound mouse, ngadji) – Priority 4

Available databases indicate that there is one record of *Liasis olivaceus barroni* (Pilbara olive python) (vulnerable under EPBC Act and BC Act) within the application area. The species was recorded near the application area during the 2025 surveys (ecologia 2025). The 2025 surveys also recorded the presence of *Anilios ganei* (Gane's blind snake) (Priority 1) near the application area (ecologia 2025).

Terrestrial vertebrate fauna surveys undertaken in 2024 (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024) identified five habitat types within the application area (excluding cleared areas). The extent of each habitat type is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Extent of fauna habitat

Habitat type	Total extent in survey area (ha)	Total extent in application area (ha)	Total proposed clearing (ha)
Drainage line/river/creek (major)	2,029.04	114.37	0.34
Drainage line/river/creek (minor)	2,424.40	130.36	10.47
Plain (cracking clays)	5,756.19	7.79	0
Plain (stony/gibber)	81,441.48	3,154.58	282.55
Rocky escarpments (ridges/mesa/cliffs/ outcrops/ breakaways)	2,142.50	76.47	0.01

Small patches of long unburnt spinifex within the stony/gibber plain may provide suitable roosting habitat for *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) (Endangered under the EPBC Act and Critically Endangered under the BC Act), and the cracking clays plain habitat may provide foraging habitat for the species (ecologia 2025).

Available databases also indicate that a Priority 1 invertebrate fauna species, *Antichiropus sloanae* (Roy Hill antichiropus millipede), has been recorded within 30 km of the application area.

***Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot) – Endangered (EPBC Act)/Critically Endangered (BC Act)**

During the day, *Pezoporus occidentalis* conceal themselves in tunnels constructed in low, dense vegetation, and roosting sites have been found in patches of long unburnt and structurally complex *Triodia longiceps* (bull spinifex), or related species of *Triodia* (DCCEEW 2025). Sources of permanent water are likely to be important to the species, and individuals have been recorded using permanent and ephemeral sources of free water, including artificial water points (DCCEEW 2025).

Pezoporus occidentalis was not recorded during the terrestrial vertebrate fauna surveys, using the methods outlined in the *Interim Survey Guidelines for the Night Parrot* (DPAW 2017). The nearest record of *Pezoporus occidentalis* is located approximately 29.5 km from the application area. It was noted that the small patches of long unburnt spinifex

within the stony/gibber plain habitat type may provide roosting habitat, and cracking clays plain habitat may provide foraging habitat for the species (ecologia 2025).

As described in the approved conservation advice for the species (DCCEEW 2025), habitat critical to the survival of *Pezoporus occidentalis* includes breeding and roosting habitat, which most is commonly long-unburnt old growth (>20 years old) *Triodia* patches. The applicant is proposing to clear up to 282.55 ha of the stony/gibber plain habitat, which contains potentially suitable roosting habitat for *Pezoporus occidentalis*. The proposed clearing represents approximately 9 per cent of suitable roosting habitat within the application area, and 0.35 per cent of suitable roosting habitat within the survey area.

While the presence of *Pezoporus occidentalis* within the application area was not confirmed in the previous surveys, long-term surveys in accordance with the requirements of *Guidelines for Determining the Likely Presence and Habitat Usage of Night Parrot (Pezoporus occidentalis) in Western Australia* (DBCA 2024) were not undertaken (ecologia 2025). Further targeted surveys for *Pezoporus occidentalis* in accordance with these guidelines are required to better understand the likelihood of occurrence in the application area.

Advice received from DBCA states that if clearing of potential *Pezoporus occidentalis* habitat cannot be avoided, further targeted surveys should be undertaken (DBCA 2025). The *Guidelines for Determining the Likely Presence and Habitat Usage of Night Parrot (Pezoporus occidentalis) in Western Australia* (DBCA 2024) state that "*the most effective field survey technique for night parrots is passive acoustic survey*". The guidelines provide specifications for the deployment of autonomous recording units (ARUs), which can involve multiple short-term deployments (six non-windy nights). Fauna management conditions imposed on clearing permits typically specify that a fauna specialist is to be engaged and inspect an area within two weeks prior to, and for the duration of clearing activities. In discussion with the proponent, it is understood that the timeframes for deployment of ARU's, retrieval and analysis of data by subject matter experts cannot be achieved within a two-week timeframe.

Given the large extent of the stony/gibber plain habitat within the local area, the proposed clearing is considered unlikely to significantly impact the species. However, a loss of any *Pezoporus occidentalis* individual may be considered significant, and undertaking pre-clearance surveys for the presence of *Pezoporus occidentalis* within areas of potential habitat is required to manage this risk. The proposed clearing is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on *Pezoporus occidentalis* provided that appropriate pre-clearance conditions are implemented.

***Dasyurus hallucatus* (northern quoll) – Endangered (EPBC Act and BC Act)**

Dasyurus hallucatus occur in a variety of habitats across their range and are opportunistic foragers that feed on a broad range of items, switching dietary resources according to season and availability (Hill, B.M. & S.J. Ward 2010). Habitat critical to the survival of the species is defined in the *EPBC Act Referral Guideline for the Endangered Northern Quoll Dasyurus hallucatus* (Department of the Environment (DoE) 2016) (Northern Quoll Referral Guideline) and includes rocky habitats such as ranges, escarpments, mesas, gorges, breakaways, boulder fields, major drainage lines or tree creek lines. Foraging or dispersal habitat is recognised to be any land comprising predominantly native vegetation in the immediate area (i.e. within 1 km) of shelter habitat, quoll records or land comprising predominately native vegetation that is connected to shelter habitat within the range of the species (DoE 2016).

A total of 219 independent motion camera visits were recorded during targeted surveys, with spot pattern analysis identifying at least eight individuals (ecologia 2024b). An additional nine individuals were trapped across four sites (ecologia 2024b). A single visit by an individual was recorded in the southern part of the survey area, which was considered likely to have been a dispersing male rather than a permanent occupant (Spectrum Ecology 2024).

Based on the number of individuals identified and frequency of detections, the northern half of the survey area appears to support a high density, reproductive population of *Dasyurus hallucatus* (ecologia 2025). As outlined in the Northern Quoll Referral Guideline, high density populations which occur in refuge-rich habitat critical to the survival of the species are considered to be populations important for the long-term survival of the species. The low number of records obtained in the southern half of the survey area, suggests that this portion of the study area only supports a low-density population and is unlikely to represent critical habitat for the species (ecologia 2025).

The department sought advice from the DBCA regarding the significance of impacts from the proposed clearing to *Dasyurus hallucatus*. DBCA advised that clearing would result in loss of high-quality habitat, fragmentation, potential displacement or mortality, especially during the breeding season (October–March) (DBCA 2025). DBCA also advised that while the regional impact may be less severe due to the species' broader distribution, the local population is likely to be disproportionately affected, particularly if it serves as a source population or refuge (DBCA 2025). DBCA recommended several pre-clearance conditions to mitigate the potential impacts to *Dasyurus hallucatus*.

Given the large extent of remaining vegetation within the local area and the low comparative extent of vegetation proposed to be cleared (approximately 0.32 per cent of the survey area), the proposed clearing is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on *Dasyurus hallucatus* provided that appropriate pre-clearance conditions are implemented.

***Falco hypoleucos* (grey falcon) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)**

Falco hypoleucos frequents timbered lowland plains, particularly acacia shrublands that are crossed by tree-lined water courses (Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) 2020). The species has been observed hunting in treeless areas and frequents tussock grassland and open woodland, especially in winter (TSSC 2020). *Falco hypoleucos* lay eggs in the nests of other birds and typically choose nests in the tallest trees along watercourses, particularly River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and Coolibah (*E. coolabah*) (TSSC 2020). The reduced availability of nesting trees as a result of clearing is identified in the relevant Conservation Advice as a threat to the species with a high priority for action, defined as "mitigation action and an adaptive management plan required, the precautionary principle should be applied" (TSSC 2020).

Available databases show six records of *Falco hypoleucos* within 30 km of the application area, and individuals were recorded a total of 11 times during the 2024 surveys, with each record from outside of the application area (ecologia 2025). A maximum of two individuals were recorded at any given time, which ecologia (2025) stated was indication that at least one pair of birds regularly utilise habitat within the survey area. Behaviours recorded include soaring and active flight, feeding, perching and standing in an ephemeral waterbody (ecologia 2024). *Falco hypoleucos* may overfly and forage within all habitat types recorded within the application area, and the drainage line/river/creek (major) habitat represents critical breeding and foraging habitat for the species (ecologia 2025).

At least one pair of *Falco hypoleucos* was recorded in the area on multiple occasions (ecologia 2025), and permanent utilisation of the drainage line within the Bonney Downs Creek system by the species appears likely (DBCA 2025).

At least 12 suitably sized stick nests were recorded within minor and major drainage lines (ecologia 2024b). Targeted searches for breeding activity, presence of juvenile or sub-adult birds and nest utilisation were undertaken, however no evidence of these was found (ecologia 2024b). Although no evidence of nest utilisation by grey falcons was recorded during the current surveys, nests identified within the study area represent potential future breeding habitat for the species (ecologia 2025). DBCA advised that the loss of any *Falco hypoleucos* nest tree is likely to have a significant impact on the species (DBCA 2025).

Considering the above, all habitat types within the application area provide suitable foraging habitat for *Falco hypoleucos* and the major and minor drainage line habitats may provide suitable breeding habitat. The applicant is proposing to clear a total of 10.81 ha of the drainage line habitat types, representing 0.24 per cent of the total extent recorded in the 2024 surveys (ecologia; Spectrum Ecology). Clearing 10.81 ha of the drainage line habitats is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on the species given the total extent of suitable breeding habitat known to occur in the local area. However, given that the reduced availability of nesting trees is identified as a key risk to the species in its Conservation Advice (TSSC 2020) and the species is known to occur in the area, avoiding impacts to nests that represent potential future breeding habitat is required to manage the risk of significant impacts.

Noting that *Falco hypoleucos* is a highly mobile species and the large extent of foraging habitat recorded in the local area, the proposed clearing within the other habitat types is unlikely to have a significant impact on the species provided that appropriate conditions to avoid nesting trees are implemented.

***Macroderma gigas* (ghost bat) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)**

Macroderma gigas roost sites include caves, rock crevices and disused mine adits, and numerous observations suggest that the majority of shallow caves, shelters and deep overhangs in the Pilbara are used in at least an opportunistic manner by itinerant individuals, although these are not considered critical habitat (Bat Call WA Pty Ltd (Bat Call WA) 2021). Available data from the Pilbara suggests that *Macroderma gigas* prefers to forage on productive plain areas with thin mature woodland over patchy or clumped tussock or hummock grass (*Triodia* spp.) on sand or stony ground (Bat Call WA 2021). Isolated trees and trees on the edge of thin thickets on the plains, or trees along the edges of watercourse woodlands, appear to be preferred vantage points (Bat Call WA 2021).

No *Macroderma gigas* calls were recorded during the 2024 surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024), however one individual was captured on a motion camera within the major drainage line habitat type (ecologia 2025). Given the location of the site, this record is likely to be associated with foraging or dispersal activities (ecologia 2025). No suitable roost caves or middens were identified during the surveys (ecologia 2025).

The habitat within the application area provides suitable foraging and dispersal habitat for *Macroderma gigas*, however given the lack of nearby roosting sites and the low frequency of calls recorded, habitat within the application area is not considered to be critical for the survival of the species (ecologia 2025). The proposed clearing of the major drainage line habitat represents 0.02 per cent of the total extent of this habitat type identified during the 2024 surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024) and is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on *Macroderma gigas*. The applicant also proposes to clear 0.01 ha of the rocky escarpment habitat which may be utilised opportunistically by *Macroderma gigas*, but is not considered critical habitat. The small extent of the proposed clearing of this habitat type is also considered unlikely to have a significant impact on *Macroderma gigas*.

***Rhinonicteris aurantia* (Pilbara form) (Pilbara leaf-nosed bat) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)**

Rhinonicteris aurantia is generally encountered in rocky areas that provide opportunity for roosting and the species has also been detected in several of the flat terrains, in particular along medium and major drainage lines that radiate away from rocky uplands (Bat Call WA 2022). *Rhinonicteris aurantia* is known to forage very widely and utilises almost all productive and semi-productive habitats and has been observed foraging in *Triodia* hummock grasslands covering low rolling hills and shallow gullies, with scattered *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* along the creeks (Bat Call WA 2022).

Echolocation calls belonging to *Rhinonicteris aurantia* were recorded at a total of 15 sites across the 2024 terrestrial fauna surveys, including a Bird and Bat Site Utilisation Survey (BBSUS) (ecologia 2025). The recorded call patterns do not indicate the presence of a nearby roost, and instead indicate relatively low activity levels across the study area (ecologia 2025). Most calls were recorded at sites within the major drainage line habitat and adjacent to water sources during the wet season (ecologia 2025).

The application area provides suitable foraging and dispersal habitat for *Rhinonicteris aurantia*, however given the lack of nearby roosting sites and the low frequency of calls recorded, habitat within the application area is not considered to be critical for the survival of the species (ecologia 2025). The applicant proposes to clear 0.34 ha of the major drainage line habitat, where most calls where recorded, representing 0.02 per cent of the total extent of this habitat type identified during the 2024 surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024). The proposed extent of clearing is therefore considered unlikely to have a significant impact on *Rhinonicteris aurantia*.

***Liasis olivaceus barroni* (Pilbara olive python) – Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)**

Liasis olivaceus barroni prefers deep gorges and water holes in the ranges of the Pilbara region, staying in close proximity to water and rock outcrops during summer and hiding in caves and rock crevices away from water sources in winter (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA 2008). Critical habitat for the species includes areas which may contain escarpments, gorges, preferably with rock crevices and outcrops near water holes, which attract prey species (ecologia 2025).

Available databases show eight records of *Liasis olivaceus barroni* within 30 km of the application area, including one within the application area. The species was recorded on two occasions outside of the application area during the 2024 surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024). Critical habitat for *Liasis olivaceus barroni* in the application area includes the major drainage line and rocky escarpment habitats (ecologia 2025).

The applicant is proposing to clear 0.34 ha of the major drainage line habitat and 0.01 ha of the rocky escarpment habitat types. Given the small extent of the proposed clearing and the known existing extent of these habitat types in the local area, *Liasis olivaceus barroni* is unlikely to be significantly impacted by the proposed clearing.

***Anilios ganei* (Gane's blind snake) – Priority 1 (BC Act)**

Anilios ganei habitat preferences are not well understood, however it is thought to occur over a wide range of stony habitats (DBCA 2025). The species was recorded during the terrestrial vertebrate fauna surveys, approximately 9.9 km from the application area (ecologia 2025). The stony/gibber plain and drainage line habitat types may encompass suitable habitat for *Anilios ganei* (ecologia 2025).

The applicant is proposing to clear 0.34 ha of the major drainage line habitat, 10.47 ha of the minor drainage line habitat, and 282.55 of the stony/gibber plain habitat types. Given the small extent of the proposed clearing compared to the known existing extent of these habitat types in the local area, *Anilios ganei* is unlikely to be significantly impacted by the proposed clearing.

***Antichiropus sloanae* (Roy Hill antichiropus millipede) – Priority 1**

Antichiropus sloanae is a short-range endemic (SRE) invertebrate species, and its habitat preferences are not well understood.

The applicant did not provide any SRE surveys for the application area, and the terrestrial vertebrate fauna surveys that have been undertaken are not adequate to have recorded the presence of *Antichiropus sloanae* within the application area, if it occurs. The applicant stated that the likelihood of SRE fauna being present within the application area is considered low due to the absence of isolated and mesic habitats, and no SRE species were confirmed during surveys undertaken in 2016 (Fortescue Ltd 2025).

The closest record of *Antichiropus sloanae* to the application area is located within proximity to the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine, which is situated approximately 15.6 km south of the application area. The *Roy Hill Development Project Short-Range Endemic Invertebrate Fauna Desktop Assessment* (2020), prepared by Biologic Environmental Survey Pty Ltd (Biologic) in support of the Revised Proposal for the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine (Assessment no. 2214), states that the species most likely inhabits the moderate suitability hillcrest/hillslope habitat to the north of the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine. Individuals were usually collected in areas where they were protected amongst deep pockets of soil and leaf litter within rocky habitats or on the hillcrest at the base of trees such as *Corymbia hamersleyana* (Biologic 2020).

They are often washed down into drainage areas during rain events but will not necessarily persist in these exposed, unstable habitats (Biologic 2020).

The habitat features of the hillcrest/hillslope habitat is not described in further detail in *Roy Hill Development Project Short-Range Endemic Invertebrate Fauna Desktop Assessment* (Biologic 2020). Rocky habitats that include deep pockets of soil and leaf litter generally align with the descriptions of the stony/gibber plain and rocky escarpment habitat types present within the application area. The applicant proposes to clear up to 282.56 ha of these habitat types in total.

Biologic (2020) extrapolated the extent of the hillcrest/hillslope habitat type using aerial photography to show the extent of habitat that *Antichiropus sloanae* is likely to inhabit in the local area (Figure 5). There is minimal overlap between the extrapolated extent of the hillcrest/hillslope habitat type and the application area, with the northernmost extent of the extrapolated habitat potentially intersecting a small part of the southernmost part of the application area.

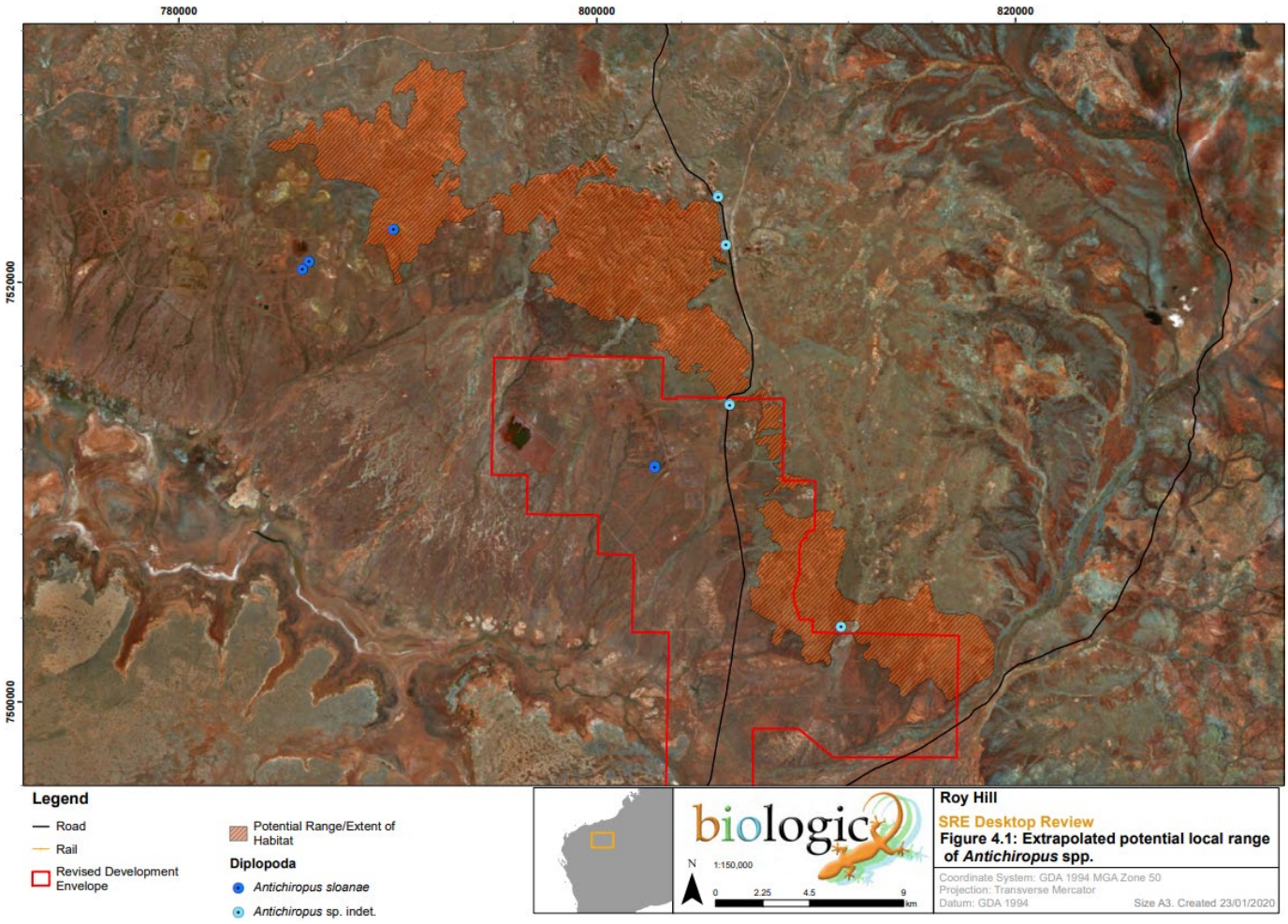

Figure 7: Extrapolated *Antichiropus sloanae* habitat (Biologic 2020)

The EPA's assessment report for the Revised Proposal for the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine (Assessment no. 2214) states that there is approximately 15,891.82 ha of hillcrest/hillslope habitat within the mapped extent and that these habitats extend well beyond the mapped extent, therefore the likelihood that any SRE invertebrate fauna will be restricted to the development envelope is considered very low (EPA 2021). The EPA considered that the proposed clearing of up to 1,623.81 ha of the hillcrest/hillslope habitat for the Revised Proposal for the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine (10.2 per cent of the mapped extent) was not likely to be a material impact on habitat associated with the species and was likely to be consistent with EPA objective for terrestrial fauna (EPA 2021). A Ministerial Statement (1189) allowing the implementation of the Revised Proposal for the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine was published on 19 May 2022, allowing the proposed clearing of up to 1,623.81 ha of the hillcrest/hillslope habitat.

The proposed clearing of up to 282.56 ha of suitable habitat for *Antichiropus sloanae* represents a small increase to the total cleared amount of suitable habitat for the species in the local area. Given the mapped extent of suitable habitat in the local area by Biologic (2020), and the previous decision made on the Revised Proposal for the Roy Hill Iron Ore Mine, the proposed clearing is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on *Antichiropus sloanae* on a local or regional scale.

***Dasycercus blythi* (brush-tailed mulgara) – Priority 4**

Dasycercus blythi occurs in spinifex grasslands throughout much of the arid zone and dig burrows in flats between low sand dunes, with home ranges and burrows encompassing both mature spinifex and open regrowth areas (ecologia 2025). Breeding is thought to occur from late winter to spring (ecologia 2025).

Available databases show eight records of *Dasycercus blythi* within 30 km of the application area, including one within the application area. One individual was recorded at a potential burrow within the application area during the 2024 surveys (ecologia 2025). The stony/gibber plain habitat type provides suitable foraging and burrowing habitat for *Dasycercus blythi* (ecologia 2025).

The applicant proposes to clear 282.55 ha of the stony/gibber plain habitat, representing 0.35 per cent of the total extent of this habitat type identified during the surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024). The proposed clearing may result in impacts to the species on a local scale, including habitat fragmentation, local displacement, and limiting movement across the landscape (DBCA 2025). Given the small proportion of this habitat to be cleared and the large extent of remaining habitat in the local area, *Dasycercus blythi* is unlikely to be significantly impacted by the proposed clearing.

However, given that a burrow was recorded within the application area, avoiding impacts to active burrows, and if required, relocating individuals, is required to manage the risk of significant impacts.

***Leggadina lakedownensis* (northern short-tailed mouse, Lakeland Downs mouse, kerakenga) – Priority 4**

Leggadina lakedownensis occupies a diverse range of habitats from the monsoon tropical coast to semi-arid climates, including spinifex and tussock grasslands, samphire and sedgelands, *Acacia* shrublands, tropical *Eucalyptus* and *Melaleuca* woodlands and stony ranges (ecologia 2025). The species is both nocturnal and solitary, spending the day in simple, single-chambered burrows (ecologia 2025).

Available databases show four records of *Leggadina lakedownensis* within 30 km of the application area, and the species was recorded a total of eight times within the minor drainage line and cracking clay plain habitat types during the 2024 surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024). Two individuals were captured within the southern half of the application area (ecologia 2025).

The applicant is not proposing to clear any of the cracking clay plain habitat within the application area. The applicant proposes to clear 10.47 ha of the minor drainage line habitat, representing 0.43 per cent of the total extent of this habitat type identified during the surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024).

The proposed clearing may result in impacts to the species on a local scale, including habitat fragmentation, local displacement, and limiting movement across the landscape (DBCA 2025). These impacts to *Leggadina lakedownensis* are considered unlikely to be significant due to the large extent of remaining habitat in the local area, which is largely intact and has limited existing fragmentation.

***Pseudomys chapmani* (western pebble-mound mouse, ngadji) – Priority 4**

Pseudomys chapmani has a fragmented distribution in the Pilbara and is known to prefer hilly and/or rocky landscapes, where it constructs distinctive mounds of pebbles around their burrows (ecologia 2025). In the Pilbara, mounds are typically found in areas characterised by the presence of sharply incised drainage lines (Start, A. N. 1996). Vegetation is generally dominated by "hard spinifex", typically *Triodia basedowii* or T*. wiseana* (Start, A. N. 1996). *Eucalyptus leucophloia* or *E. gamophylla* are often present but other trees, mallees and a variety of shrubs, commonly *Acacia* and *Senna* spp., may be present (Start, A. N. 1996). Acacia is usually the dominant genus present in the drainage line habitats (Start, A. N. 1996).

The species has been recorded on numerous occasions and is considered common and widespread in the bioregion (ecologia 2025). Available databases show 44 records of *Pseudomys chapmani* within 30 km of the application area, and evidence of *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds was recorded at 12 sites within the rocky escarpment and stony/gibber plain habitat types (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024). One mound was recorded within the application area, however it was located outside of the proposed clearing area (ecologia 2025).

The proposed clearing of 282.55 ha of the stony/gibber plain habitat represents 0.35 per cent of the total extent of this habitat type identified during the surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024) and is considered unlikely to significantly impact *Pseudomys chapmani*. Similarly, the proposed clearing of 0.01 ha of the rocky escarpment habitat is unlikely to significantly impact the species given the total extent of this habitat type in the local area.

However, given that a mound was recorded within the application area, avoiding impacts to active mounds, and if required, relocating individuals, is required to manage the risk of significant impacts.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, the proposed clearing will result in direct and indirect impacts to several conservation significant fauna species. However, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing can be managed by setting appropriate pre-clearance conditions.

The applicant may have notification responsibilities under the EPBC Act for impacts to *Pezoporus occidentalis* (night parrot), *Dasyurus hallucatus* (northern quoll), *Falco hypoleucos* (grey falcon), *Macroderma gigas* (ghost bat), *Rhinonicteris aurantia* (Pilbara form) (Pilbara leaf-nosed bat), and *Liasis olivaceus barroni* (Pilbara olive python) and their habitats, as set out in the EPBC Act referral guidelines for these species. The applicant has been advised to contact the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to discuss EPBC Act referral requirements.

Conditions

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

- directional clearing to allow fauna to move into adjacent native vegetation
- undertake pre-clearance surveys for *Pezoporus occidsentalis* in accordance with the *Guidelines for Determining the Likely Presence and Habitat Usage of Night Parrot (Pezoporus occidentalis) in Western Australia* (DBCA 2024)
- avoiding clearing within 50 m of any *Dasyurus hallucatus* dens between October and March (the species' breeding season)
- avoiding clearing of trees within 10 m containing suitable stick nests for *Falco hypoleucos*
- avoiding clearing within 50 m of any *Dasycercus blythi* burrows or *Pseudomys chapmani* mounds unless a fauna specialist has determined that there are no individuals occupying the burrows or mounds.

3.2.3. Land and water resources (surface water and soils) - Clearing Principles (f), (g), and (i)

Assessment

Vegetation type EvAcCc is associated with riparian vegetation and supports groundwater dependant vegetation (GDV) and potentially groundwater dependent vegetation (PGDV) (refer Appendix E). The applicant proposes to clear 11.5 ha of this vegetation type EvAcCc, which represents 4.87 per cent of this vegetation type within the application area and 0.22 per cent of the total extent identified during a 2025 flora and vegetation survey (ecologia 2025).

The proposed clearing area is described as predominantly gentle sloping (Fortescue Ltd 2025), with the soils within the application area identified as clay or clay-loams (refer Appendix E). These soils may be susceptible to land degradation from water erosion if vegetation cover is removed, particularly near the multiple non-perennial drainage lines that are present within the application area. The clearing of riparian vegetation may increase the risk of land degradation from water erosion and may result in downstream impact on water quantity and quality.

A flood study undertaken by the applicant (Fortescue Ltd 2025) indicates that the proposed clearing will have minimal impacts on regional or local surface water flow regimes, and that no significant changes to water quality, such as increased sedimentation or contamination, are expected as a result of the proposed clearing (Fortescue Ltd 2025).

The applicant notes that no deep excavations are expected to be required for construction of the project, and that the risk of disturbing acid-sulfate soils is therefore low (Fortescue Ltd 2025). The applicant has not identified a significant risk of erosion or land degradation, and has stated that surface water control and erosion management measures will be implemented during and after clearing to minimise the risk of land degradation (Fortescue Ltd 2025).

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, the proposed clearing will result in impacts to riparian vegetation and may increase the susceptibility of the underlying soils to water erosion.

Due to the small extent of riparian vegetation proposed to be cleared and the distance from the application area to the nearest permanent watercourses, the Nullagine River (5.6 km northeast) and Fortescue Marsh (15.2 km southwest), the proposed clearing is considered unlikely to significantly impact on- or off-site hydrology and water quality. Given the extent of the proposed clearing and the applicant's proposed mitigation measures, the proposed clearing is also considered unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation from water erosion.

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing on riparian vegetation and the risk of land degradation can be managed by limiting the extent of riparian vegetation that is cleared and, where drainage lines are impacted by clearing, redirecting surface water flows to existing drainage lines

Conditions

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

- no more than 11.5 hectares of vegetation growing in association with a watercourse or drainage line may be cleared
- where a drainage line 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

A mining proposal approved under the *Mining Act 1978* is required for the proposed land use. The applicant submitted a mining proposal to the Department of Mines, Petroleum, and Exploration (DMPE) 7 July 2025 (Reg ID: 500678, which is currently under assessment.

The proposed clearing may take fauna listed as threatened under the BC Act. No threatened fauna may be taken unless an authorisation from the Minister for Environment under section 40 of the BC Act is obtained. To apply for an authorisation or for further information on this matter, the applicant is advised to contact DBCA.

It is noted that the proposed clearing may impact on six fauna species which are protected matters under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The applicant may be required to refer the project to DCCEEW for environmental impact assessment under the EPBC Act. The applicant is advised to contact DCCEEW for further information regarding notification and referral responsibilities under the EPBC Act.

Several Aboriginal sites of significance have been mapped within the application area. It is the permit holder's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (WA) and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

End

Appendix A. Details of public submissions

Summary of comments	Consideration of comment
The scale of the proposed clearing is significant and will result in residual environmental impacts. The scale of the proposed clearing is sufficient to significantly impact non-volant species that rely on the application area for breeding, feeding, and refuge. Furthermore, given the recognition of the Pilbara's high species richness and endemism, notably for reptiles, subterranean fauna, and species of conservation significance, the clearing of such a large-scale area is significant. The proposal should be referred by the applicant for assessment under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and also under the EPBC Act.	The department considered the impacts of the proposed clearing on conservation significant fauna species found or likely to be found within the application area (see Section 3.2.2). The department requested advice from DBCA regarding the likely impacts to these conservation significant fauna species, as well as any other considerations the department should have in its assessment. DBCA advice included a discussion of the significance of the impacts of the proposed clearing. This advice has been considered as part of the department's assessment (see Section 3.2.2). DBCA also outlined several recommended pre-clearance conditions for the permit, in the event that the department chose to grant a permit. DBCA's recommended pre-clearance conditions have been included as conditions on the native vegetation clearing permit. The department advised the applicant that they may have notification responsibilities under the EPBC Act and that the applicant should contact DCCEEW to discuss EPBC Act referral requirements (see Section 3.2.2).
The proposal will cause indirect impacts to fauna of conservation significance. No short-range endemic (SRE) species surveys are cited. The applicant states "the likelihood of SRE invertebrates being present in the CPAA is considered to be low", however the supporting documents cite the presence of a SRE millipede species west of the proposal. The document does not address the indirect impacts to groundwater and the risks to stygofauna from pollution or changed groundwater levels/flows, nor does it address the risks to troglofauna. Several species of conservation significance from the study area and are likely to intercept the clearing area, including species listed under the BC Act and the EPBC Act. These species could be impacted either directly or indirectly by the activities of the Proposal and also by the intended purpose of development of the area, being for a wind farm. Some species are reliant on the maintenance of water and of its quality at the many surface water sources in the area, and at Fortescue Marsh.	A review of available GIS Databases undertaken by the department identified the presence of one conservation significant (Priority 1) SRE species within 30 km of the application area, *Antichiropus sloanae* (Roy Hill antichiropus millipede) (see Section B.4). A detailed assessment of impacts to this species has been undertaken in Section 3.2.2 of this decision report. Impacts of the proposed clearing to groundwater are considered under principle (i). The proposed clearing will not disturb groundwater (Fortescue Ltd 2025) and is considered not likely to be at variance to this principle (see Appendix C). Troglofauna live below the surface of the earth and live in caves and voids (EPA 2016). As the proposed clearing will occur above ground and not within any identified caves or voids, impacts to troglofauna have not been considered within the scope of this assessment. Direct and indirect impacts on fauna, including conservation significant species listed under the BC Act and EPBC Act, are considered under principle (a) and principle (b). Impacts to several conservation significant fauna species likely to be present within or near the application area have been discussed in Section 3.2.2 of this decision report. Impacts on the quality of surface water from the proposed clearing are considered under principle (i).

Summary of comments	Consideration of comment
	Impacts to watercourses and wetlands have been considered under principle (f), and impacts relating to the risk of land degradation have been considered under principle (g). These are discussed further in Section 3.2.3 of this decision report, and a condition to ensure that surface water flows are either maintained or reinstated has been set to manage potential impacts to the quality of surface water sources in the area, including Fortescue Marsh.
The proposal is likely to result in the further spread of introduced species. The proponent notes the presence of introduced weed species, including a Declared Pest. While many of these are noted as naturalised in the Pilbara, the proposal will create further opportunities for the spread of weeds and the establishment of weed species as naturalised in new areas. The clearing and creation of additional tracks/roads will support the movement of feral mammals throughout the area. This presents an additional risk to species of conservation significance.	The department recognises the risk of weed species to be spread as a result of the clearing of native vegetation and has included a condition that requires the permit holder to take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds. Introduced fauna species, including the house mouse and feral cat, were recorded at several camera locations during the surveys (ecologia 2025). While the application area is long (approximately 40 km), infrastructure has been positioned to utilise previously cleared areas for the existing Nullagine Mine to minimise the need for additional clearing. Most of the central access road, which is the longest continual access road for the project and presents the largest risk of facilitating the movement of introduced fauna species, has previously been cleared. The proposed clearing includes shorter access tracks to the locations of turbines, and in some areas, widening of the existing central access road. The proposed clearing is considered unlikely to significantly increase the mobility of introduced fauna species within the application area, and potential impacts to conservation significant fauna species as a result of increased mobility is also unlikely to be significant.
The proposal requires additional review against the native vegetation clearing principles. In particular, additional review is required in relation to principles (a), (b), (f), (g), (i), and (j).	The department has undertaken an assessment of the proposed clearing against each clearing principle (see Appendix C) in accordance with *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (DER 2014). The department has considered relevant GIS databases, guidance documentation, and the information provided by the applicant in its assessment (see Appendix E). Where further consideration of a clearing principle was determined to be required, the department has provided further detail on its assessment of impacts on environmental values in Section 3.2 of this decision report.

Appendix B. Site characteristics

B.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. It is adjacent to the applicant's Nullagine Iron Ore Mine and is approximately 45 kilometres (km) north of the Christmas Creek mine. Aerial imagery and spatial data indicates the local area (30-kilometre radius from the centre of the area proposed to be cleared) retains approximately 99 per cent of the original native vegetation cover.
Ecological linkage	There are no known formal ecological linkages mapped within the application area.
Conservation areas	The application area is not located within a mapped conservation area. The nearest conservation areas are two Class C reserves (the De Grey Peak Hill stock route, and a resting place for travellers and stock) vested with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) located approximately 1.3 km east of the application area at the closest points. The Fortescue Marsh, a Class A nature reserve, is located approximately 15.2 km south of the southernmost point of the application area.
Vegetation description	Vegetation surveys undertaken in 2024 (ecologia 2024a; SLR 2024) and 2025 (ecologia 2025) indicate the vegetation within the proposed clearing area consists of nine vegetation types that occur broadly in the survey area. The full survey descriptions are available in Appendix E. This is consistent with the Beard mapped vegetation types: • Chichester Plateau 173, which is described as Hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee *Triodia* spp. *Acacia* spp., *Grevillea* spp. *Eucalyptus* spp • Fortescue Valley 562, which is described as Hummock grassland with scattered bloodwoods and snappy gum *Triodia* spp., *Corymbia dichromophloia*, *Eucalyptus leucophloia*. The mapped vegetation types retain over 99 per cent of the original extent (Government of Western Australia, 2019).
Vegetation condition	Vegetation surveys (ecologia 2024a; SLR 2024; ecologia 2025) indicate the vegetation within the proposed clearing area ranges between Degraded to Excellent condition (Trudgen 1991), with most of the vegetation in Excellent condition: • Excellent – 3,239.79 ha • Very Good – 13.25 ha • Good – 84.30 ha • Poor – 130.82 ha • Degraded – 30.10 ha • Cleared – 325.45 ha The full Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix D.
Climate and landform	The elevation of the application area ranges from approximately 470 mAHD in the north and southwest to 540 mAHD in the south. The application area is characterised by an arid-tropical climate with two distinct seasons; the wet season from November to April, and a dry season from May to October (Fortescue Ltd 2025). The nearest Bureau of Meteorology weather station with comprehensive rainfall data is the Bonney Downs Pastoral Station (No. 4006), located approximately 6.5 km south of the application area. The Marble Bar Station (No. 004106), located approximately 100 km north of the application area, is the closest

<table>
<tr><th>Characteristic</th><th>Details</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>station with available climate data. The stations provide the following information, based on records from 1991 to 2020:
The mean maximum temperature for the area ranged from 42.1°C in December to 27.1°C in June, and the mean minimum temperature ranged from 26.5°C in January to 12.2°C in July (Marble Bar Station (No. 004106)); and
Average annual rainfall is 323.7 millimetres (mm), occurring mainly between December and March and peaking in February (Bonney Downs Pastoral Station (No. 4006)).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Soil description</td><td>The soil is mapped as:
<table>
<tr><th>Map unit</th><th>Name</th><th>Description</th><th>Extent in application area (ha)</th><th>Proportion of application area (%)</th></tr>
<tr><td>282Bn</td><td>Bonney System</td><td>Low rounded hills and undulating stony plains supporting soft spinifex grasslands.</td><td>484.23</td><td>12.7</td></tr>
<tr><td>282Ne</td><td>Newman System</td><td>Rugged jaspilite plateaux, ridges and mountains supporting hard spinifex grasslands.</td><td>70.52</td><td>1.8</td></tr>
<tr><td>282Rk</td><td>Rocklea System</td><td>Basalt hills, plateaux, lower slopes and minor stony plains supporting hard spinifex and occasionally soft spinifex grasslands with scattered shrubs.</td><td>2,349.45</td><td>61.4</td></tr>
<tr><td>282Mk</td><td>McKay System</td><td>Hills, ridges, plateaux remnants and breakaways of meta sedimentary and sedimentary rocks supporting hard spinifex grasslands with acacias and occasional eucalypts.</td><td>637.58</td><td>16.7</td></tr>
<tr><td>282Ro</td><td>Robe System</td><td>Low plateaux, mesas and buttes of limonite supporting soft spinifex and occasionally hard spinifex grasslands.</td><td>261.72</td><td>6.8</td></tr>
<tr><td>282Wo</td><td>Wona System</td><td>Basalt upland gilgai plains supporting Roebourne Plains grass and Mitchell grass tussock grasslands, minor hard spinifex grasslands or annual grasslands/herbfields.</td><td>20.21</td><td>0.5</td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Land degradation risk</td><td>The proposed clearing area is predominantly gently sloping, with no significant risk of erosion or land degradation identified (Fortescue Ltd 2025). The drainage lines intersecting the application area may be prone to erosion if vegetation cover is removed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Waterbodies</td><td>The desktop assessment and aerial imagery indicated that there are numerous unnamed non-perennial watercourses that intersect the area proposed to be cleared, many of which are tributaries of Bonnie Creek or direct water to Fortescue Marsh.

Bonnie Creek is a non-perennial watercourse located directly north and west of the application area, and flows into the Nullagine River located approximately 5.6 km east of the northeastern corner of the application area.

The Fortescue March is located approximately 15.2 km southwest of the southernmost point of the application area.</td></tr>
</table>

Characteristic	Details
Hydrogeography	The application area is located on the northeastern edge of the Hamersley Basin. Two main aquifers, which appear to be connected, have been identified in the application area (Fortescue Ltd 2025): • Superficial formations including alluvium, colluvium, detritals and local calcretes; and • Fractured and weathered bedrock. The application area is within the Pilbara Groundwater Area proclaimed under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RiWI Act). Groundwater in the area is in the 500-1000 mg/L total dissolved solids (TDS) salinity band. Depth to groundwater in the application area ranges from 6-10 m below ground level (mbgl) (Fortescue Ltd 2025). The Nullagine Water Reserve, a Public Drinking Water Source Area under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (CAWS Act), is located approximately 12.9 km northeast of the northeastern edge of the application area. The application area is not within a CAWS Act clearing control catchment.
Flora	There are records of 30 conservation significant flora within 30 km of the application area, of which one is Threatened, 14 are Priority 1, one is Priority 2, 12 are Priority 3, and two are Priority 4. During the 2025 survey (ecologia 2025), 19 conservation significant flora were recorded in the survey area. One was classified as Threatened, three were Priority 1, three were Priority 2, 10 were Priority 3, and two were Priority 4. Of these, two Priority flora were recorded in the application area, one Priority 3 species and one Priority 4 species. No threatened species were recorded in the application area.
Ecological communities	No Threatened Ecological Communities were identified within the application area from a desktop assessment or during the surveys (ecologia 2024a; SLR 2024; ecologia 2025). The 2025 survey (ecologia 2025) identified one Priority Ecological Community within the application area, the 'four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range' (Priority 1).
Fauna	There are records of 23 fauna of conservation significance within 30 km of the application area, comprising one Endangered, five Vulnerable, two Priority 1, four Priority 4, 10 Migratory and one species otherwise in need of special protection (OS). Targeted fauna surveys (ecologia 2024b; Spectrum Ecology 2024) confirmed the presence of four conservation significant fauna species and determined that a further three may potentially occur within the application area. These included one Endangered, three Vulnerable, and three Priority 4 species.

B.2. Vegetation extent

	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current proportion (%) of pre-European extent in all DBCA managed land
IBRA bioregion*					
Pilbara	17,808,657.04	17,731,764.88	99.57	1,801,714.98	10.12
Beard vegetation associations*					
Chichester Plateau 173	1,752,520.89	1,747,677.62	99.72	238,705.37	13.62
Fortescue Valley 562	103,606.82	103,606.82	100	3,457.78	3.34
Post clearing calculation**					

	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current proportion (%) of pre-European extent in all DBCA managed land
Chichester Plateau 173	1,752,520.89	1,747,380.41	99.71	238,705.37	13.62
Fortescue Valley 562	103,606.82	103,568.66	99.96	3,457.78	3.34

*Government of Western Australia (2019)

** Based on the extent of the vegetation association within the application area and the maximum proposed clearing extent

B.3. Flora analysis table

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

Species 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)	Number of known records (total)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
Acacia aphanoclada	P1	Y	Y	Y	15.1	47	Y
Acacia cyperophylla var. *omearana*	P1	Y	Y	N	18.2	18	Y
Acacia levata	P3	Y	Y	Y	27.9	21	Y
Atriplex flabelliformis	P3	N	N	N	18.0	9	Y
Atriplex spinulosa	P1	Y	Y	N	20.5	20	Y
Calotis squamigera	P1	N	N	N	17.5	5	Y
Dolichocarpa sp. Hamersley Station (A.A. Mitchell PRP 1479)	P3	Y	Y	Y	10.5	45	Y
Eleocharis papillosa	P3	N	N	N	16.2	15	Y
Eremophila spongiocarpa	P3	N	N	N	15.4	39	Y
Eremophila youngii subsp. *lepidota*	P4	N	N	N	20.6	49	Y
Eucalyptus rowleyi	P3	Y	Y	N	29.9	35	Y
Euphorbia inappendiculata var. *inappendiculata*	P3	Y	Y	Y	7.3	17	Y
Gompholobium sp. Roy Hill (G. Buller ATF08 AQ14)	P1	Y	Y	Y	25.9	4	Y
Goodenia pedicellata	P1	Y	Y	N	18.5	8	Y
Indigofera ixocarpa	P2	Y	Y	N	17.1	21	Y
Iotasperma sessilifolium	P3	Y	Y	Y	0.1	18	Y
Ipomoea racemigera	P3	Y	Y	Y	Within application area	21	Y
Ptilotus mollis	P4	Y	Y	Y	Within application area	48	Y
Ptilotus wilsonii	P1	Y	Y	N	21.2	4	Y
Quoya zonalis	T	Y	Y	N	15.9	28	Y
Samolus sp. Fortescue Marsh (A. Markey & R. Coppen FM 9702)	P1	N	N	N	16.2	23	Y
Schoenus coultasii	P1	Y	Y	N	15.2	2	Y
Solanum sp. Mosquito Creek (A.A. Mitchell et al. AAM 10795)	P1	Y	Y	Y	14.6	10	Y
Stemodia sp. Battle Hill (A.L. Payne 1006)	P1	Y	Y	Y	0.9	3	Y
Swainsona thompsoniana	P3	Y	Y	Y	0.1	32	Y
Tecticornia globulifera	P1	N	N	N	29.7	23	Y
Tecticornia medusa	P3	N	N	N	25.8	21	Y

Species 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)	Number of known records (total)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
Tecticornia sp. Christmas Creek (K.A. Shepherd & T. Colmer et al. KS 1063)	P1	N	N	N	14.3	29	Y
Themeda sp. Hamersley Station (M.E. Trudgen 11431)	P3	N	N	N	15.4	60	Y
Triodia veniciae	P1	Y	Y	Y	0.1	26	Y

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

B.4. Fauna analysis table

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records within 30 km radius (total)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
Actitis hypoleucos (common sandpiper)	MI	Y	Y	27.11	1	Y
Anilios ganei (Gane's blind snake)	P1	Y	Y	9.85		Y
Antechinomys longicaudata (long-tailed dunnart)	P4	Y	Y	10.23	1	Y
Antichiropus sloanae (Roy Hill antichiropus millipede)	P1	Y	Y	7.76	5	N
Calidris acuminata (sharp-tailed sandpiper)	MI	Y	Y	20.63	3	Y
Calidris ruficollis (red-necked stint)	MI	Y	Y	27.11	3	Y
Charadrius veredus (oriental plover)	MI	Y	Y	20.67	3	Y
Ctenotus nigrilineatus (pin-striped finesnout ctenotus)	P1	Y	Y	17.57	16	Y
Dasycercus blythi (brush-tailed mulgara)	P4	Y	Y	Within application area	8	Y
Dasyurus hallucatus (northern quoll)	EN	Y	Y	Within application area	80	Y
Falco hypoleucos (grey falcon)	VU	Y	Y	2.69	6	Y
Falco peregrinus (peregrine falcon)	OS	Y	Y	13.07	8	Y
Gelochelidon nilotica (gull-billed tern)	MI	Y	Y	20.67	6	Y
Hydroprogne caspia (Caspian tern)	MI	Y	Y	27.11	1	Y
Leggadina lakedownensis (northern short-tailed mouse, Lakeland Downs mouse, kerakenga)	P4	Y	Y	Within application area	4	Y
Liasis olivaceus barroni (Pilbara olive python)	VU	Y	Y	Within application area*	8	Y
Macroderma gigas (ghost bat)	VU	Y	Y	18.43	7	Y
Macrotis lagotis (bilby, dalgyte, ninu)	VU	Y	Y	1.97	82	Y
Pezoporus occidentalis (night parrot)	CR/EN	Y	Y	29.53	5	N
Plegadis falcinellus (glossy ibis)	MI	Y	Y	27.11	1	Y
Pseudomys chapmani (western pebble-mound mouse, ngadji)	P4	Y	Y	Within application area	44	Y
Rhinonicteris aurantia (Pilbara form) (Pilbara leaf-nosed bat)	VU	Y	Y	28.34	1	Y
Tringa glareola (wood sandpiper)	MI	Y	Y	22.81	5	Y
Tringa nebularia (common greenshank)	MI	Y	Y	20.67	3	Y
Tringa stagnatilis (marsh sandpiper)	MI	Y	Y	20.67	1	Y

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records within 30 km radius (total)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]

T: threatened, CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, P: priority, OS: Other specially protected

*GIS Database records only, not from terrestrial fauna surveys (ecologia 2025)

B.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)	Number of known records (total)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range'	P1	Y	Y	Y	Within application area	178,731.34 ha	Y

Appendix C. 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 locally and regionally significant flora, fauna, habitats, assemblages of plants. A portion of the application area is mapped as the 'Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range' (Priority 1) priority ecological community (PEC).	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 foraging and breeding habitat for seven conservation significant fauna species.	At variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.2, 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 does not contain flora species listed under the BC Act.	Not likely to be at variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.*
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.	Not at variance	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		
Principle (e): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared."* Assessment: The extent of the mapped vegetation types and the native vegetation in the local area is consistent with the national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia. The vegetation proposed to be cleared is not considered to be part of a significant ecological linkage in the local area.	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: Given that he nearest conservation area is 1.3 km away from the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to have an impact on the environmental values of nearby conservation areas.	Not likely to be at variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
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: No permanent watercourses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, however multiple non-perennial watercourses are present. One vegetation type (EvAcCc) recorded within the application area is associated with riparian vegetation, with 11.5 ha proposed to be cleared.	At variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.3, above.*
Principle (g): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation."* Assessment: The drainage lines within the application area may be susceptible to erosion if vegetation cover was removed.	May be at variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.3, above.*
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: No wetlands or Public Drinking Water Sources Areas are recorded within the application area, however the application area is located within the Pilbara Groundwater Area. The proposed clearing will not disturb groundwater, as there will be no significant excavation or disturbance of the subsurface (Fortescue Ltd 2025). Many of the non-perennial watercourses that intersect the area proposed to be cleared are tributaries of Bonnie Creek or direct water to Fortescue Marsh. The proposed clearing may impact surface water flows at these watercourses and result in a deterioration of surface water quality in Bonnie Creek or Fortescue Marsh.	Not likely to be at variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.3, above.*
Principle (j): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding."* Assessment: The mapped soils, average annual rainfall, and topographic contours in the surrounding area do not indicate the proposed clearing is likely to contribute to increased incidence or intensity of flooding. A detailed hydrological assessment undertaken by the applicant also indicated that the proposed clearing is unlikely to cause or exacerbate flooding (Fortescue Ltd 2025).	Not at variance	No

Appendix D. 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 E. Biological survey information excerpts

Vegetation types and associated landforms and soils recorded within the application area (Fortescue Ltd 2025).

Vegetation types and landform and soils within application area (Fortescue Ltd 2025)

Vegetation type code	Vegetation type	Conservation significance	Landform and soils	Extent within application area (ha)
AaEp	*Acacia aptaneura*, *Acacia pruinocarpa* tall open shrubland; *Enneapogon polyphyllus*, ±*Triodia brizoides*, ±*Triodia longiceps* low open tussock/hummock grassland.	Locally restricted.	Gravelly plains and undulating plains with reddish-brown clay-loam soils.	4.20
AaTe	*Acacia aptaneura*, *Acacia pruinocarpa*, *Acacia bivenosa* tall open shrubland; *Triodia epactia* low open hummock grassland.	Locally restricted.	Primarily stony plains with red-brown clay-loam soils.	35.49
AiCpTe1	*Acacia inaequilatera* tall sparse shrubland; ±*Corchorus parviflorus* low sparse shrubland; *Triodia epactia*, ±*Triodia brizoides* low hummock grassland.	None.	Low stony hills and undulating plains. Mostly ironstone and basalt with some quartz and calcrete. Reddish brown clay-loam soils.	2,090.88
AiCpTe2	*Acacia inaequilatera* tall sparse shrubland; *Corchorus parviflorus* low sparse shrubland; *Triodia epactia* low hummock grassland.	None.	Primarily associated with minor drainage lines intersecting low stony hills and undulating plains. Reddish brown clay-loam soils.	
AiSgTb	*Acacia inaequilatera*, *Hakea lorea* subsp. *lorea* tall open shrubland; *Senna glutinosa* mid open shrubland; *Triodia brizoides*, *Triodia*	None.	Primarily associated with rocky ridges and outcrops. Reddish brown clay-loam soils.	

	epactia, *Cymbopogon ambiguus* low hummock/tussock grassland.			
ElAbTl	*Eucalyptus leucophloia* subsp. *leucophloia*, ±*Corymbia hamersleyana* low open woodland; *Acacia bivenosa* mid sparse shrubland; *Triodia longiceps*, *Triodia wiseana*, ±*Triodia brizoides* low hummock grassland.	None.	Low stony hills, plains, and undulating plains sometimes with dissecting drainage lines. Often with quartz and calcrete. Reddish brown clay-loam.	883.22
ElGwTe	*Eucalyptus leucophloia* subsp. *leucophloia*, ±*Corymbia hamersleyana* low open woodland; *Grevillea wickhamii* mid sparse shrubland; *Triodia epactia*, *Eriachne lanata*, *Eriachne mucronata* low hummock/tussock grassland.	None. This vegetation unit supports the EPBC Act-listed species *Quoya zonalis* in the north-west corner of the survey area; however, this area is outside and far from the CPAA.	Low rocky hills and ridges with red-brown clay-loam soil.	236.53
EvAcCc (PGDV)	*Eucalyptus victrix*, ±*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* subsp. *refulgens* mid open woodland; *Acacia coriacea* subsp. *pendens*, *Acacia pyrifolia* var. *pyrifolia*, *Atalaya hemiglauca* tall open shrubland; **Cenchrus ciliaris*, *Triodia longiceps*, *Triodia epactia* low tussock/hummock grassland.	PGDV and GDV; locally restricted.	Minor and major creeks and minor gullies.	80.78
EvAcCc (GDV)				155.60
VfAl	*Vachellia farnesiana* mid sparse shrubland; *Aristida latifolia*, *Cynodon convergens*, *Eriachne mucronata* low tussock grassland.	Priority 1 PEC (Four plant assemblages of the Wona Land System - Cracking clays of the Chichester and Mungaroona Range).	Low hills and plains with clay soils, often stony.	11.53
Cleared				325.45
Total				**3,823.67**

Fauna habitats recorded within the application area (Fortescue Ltd 2025).

Fauna habitats within application area (Fortescue Ltd 2025)

Habitat type	Description	Extent within application area (ha)
Drainage line/river/creek (major)	Large creeklines and rivers supporting open woodland of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *Eucalyptus victrix* over and *Acacia coriacea* subsp. pendens over mixed *Cenchrus* and *Triodia* low tussock and hummock grassland.	114.37

Habitat type	Description	Extent within application area (ha)
Drainage line/river/creek (minor)	Shallow incised drainage channels and a higher density of vegetation than surrounding areas. Substrates of gravelly, sand or rocks on clay/loam soils supports scattered trees and shrubs.	130.36
Plain (cracking clays)	Mid-sparse *Acacia synchronicia* and *Vachellia farnesiana* shrubland over low *Aristida latifolia*, *Cynodon convergens*, *Rhynchosia minima* tussock grassland/herbland on cracking gilgai clays.	7.79
Plain (stony/gibber)	Stony or stony sand on undulating plains and low rises with scattered eucalypts over mixed *Acacias* over spinifex hummock grasslands on loam-clay with a stony mantle.	3,154.58
Rocky escarpments (ridges/mesa/cliffs/ outcrops/breakaways)	Rocky features from small-scale rock face to large protruding rocks/boulders and mesas, usually associated with the tops or bases of ridgelines, stony hills and rises.	76.47
Cleared	Anthropogenic clearing with little to no vegetation.	340.22
Total		**3,823.79**

Appendix E. Sources of information

E.1. GIS databases

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

- Aboriginal Heritage Places (DPLH-001)
- Cadastre (LGATE-218)
- Contours (DPIRD-073)
- DBCA – Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia – Western Australia (DBCA-045)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Flood Risk (DPIRD-007)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- Hydrography – Inland Waters – Waterlines
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Imagery
- Local Planning Scheme – Zones and Reserves (DPLH-071)
- Native Title (ILUA) (LGATE-067)
- Pre-European Vegetation Statistics
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- Ramsar Sites (DBCA-010)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)
- Remnant Vegetation, All Areas
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Best Available
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Systems

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- ICMS (Incident Complaints Management System) – Points and Polygons
- Threatened Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened Fauna
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

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