

Assessment of Proposed Clearing at 297 Riverside Drive Furnissdale against DWER Principles for Clearing

This document describes the proposed clearing at 297 Riverside Drive Furnissdale in the context of the Principles for Clearing published by the DWER.

Principle (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

The clearing consists of 26 individual native plants, including 5 species of native flora being, *Corymbia calophylla* (Marri) – 13 trees, *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded Gum) – 3 trees, *Allocasuarina fraseriana* (Sheoak) – 2 trees, *Banksia attenuata* (Slender Banksia) – 1 tree, *Xylomelum occidentale* (Woody Pear) – 1 tree.

This low level of species diversity reflects the “parkland cleared” condition of the vegetation, the area having been within the grounds of the existing residence for many decades.

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 indigenous to Western Australia.

It will be necessary to clear up to 13 young mature marri trees, which are a known foraging species for the listed black cockatoos Carnaby’s and Forest Red Tailed Black Cockatoos.

Whereas Carnaby’s Black Cockatoos have been observed foraging on this site, it is apparent from the distribution of marri trees in the Furnissdale district, that this site is one of many sites in the district which are periodically utilised for foraging by these this species. It is therefore highly unlikely that any local black cockatoo populations rely upon the 13 marri trees proposed for clearing, for their survival.

There are no marri or other trees present within the site which support hollows which could be used by black cockatoos or other species for nesting.

The physical characteristics of the remnant marri trees, being scattered amongst other native trees in parkland cleared setting indicate that it would have low potential for use as a roosting site.

In regard to foraging value, the DCEEW guidelines for foraging habitat assessment is only applicable to areas greater than 1 ha of foraging vegetation.

Flora survey has shown that there are 13 marri trees with an estimated canopy coverage of 500 m².

There is one *Banksia attenuata* tree within the area, this species being recognised as foraging species for Black Cockatoos. It is reasonable to conclude that this single tree does not register as a relevant factor in assessing the foraging habitat value of this area of land.

The low numbers of marri trees and the small total canopy coverage indicate that the site would be classified as having low value as black cockatoo foraging habitat.

Principle (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.

There are no flora species listed as rare present upon the site, nor any apparent relationship between the remnant vegetation and any species of rare flora.

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.

The native trees and shrubs proposed for clearing are not part of a threatened ecological community have no apparent physical or biological relationship to any known local occurrences of threatened ecological communities.

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.

The vegetation proposed to be cleared is a small degraded remnant within the Furnissdale district, which whilst historically parkland cleared and used for agriculture, but continues to support widespread remnants of marri woodland over an area of approximately 2 km². See **Figure 1**.

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.

The vegetation proposed for clearing lies adjacent to an area of sumpland wetland which meets conservation category criteria and is a part of the same landholding.

Plans for the site include the retention of the wetland in private ownership and its protection within a feral animal proof fence with rehabilitation of flora and habitats, under the guidance of a management group.

In preparing a wetland management plan for the area to be retained and protected, technical analyses have been conducted which indicate that the ongoing survival and health of the wetland is not reliant on the presence of the adjacent upland vegetation, ie the area proposed for clearing.

There are no processes associated with construction or operation of the proposed Park Home development which could lead to ecological impacts within the adjacent wetland. In contrast it is reasonable to conclude that implementation of the overall land development proposal, including fencing of the wetland, removal of feral animals, and revegetation will cause a significant improvement to the wetland's condition and ecological functions over time.

The proposal to retain the wetland and a development setback area of upland vegetation in private ownership has been assessed and approved after assessment by the Shire of Murray.

Principle (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

There is no prospect upon which the proposed clearing will lead to land degradation. The land is presently flat sandplain with scattered remnant trees. Following removal of vegetation as necessary, the land will be transformed to stable urban structures and surfaces.

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.

The presence of a conservation category wetland adjacent to the clearing area and its intention for private conservation is discussed earlier.

The saltmarsh margins of the Serpentine River are zoned as Regional Open Space and lie some 300 m to the north west of the clearing area. The vital ecological processes which maintain the saltmarshes derive from its setting at the margin of the Serpentine River and the essential ecological processes which maintain the saltmarshes derive from its estuarine margin setting, rather from any processes

linking the saltmarsh land to the upland vegetation proposed to be cleared.

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.

There is no likelihood that the clearing of the vegetation as proposed could have any significant effect on the quality of surface or underground water.

Principle (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

The proposed clearing has no likelihood of causing or exacerbating the incidence or intensity of flooding.