



# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details and outcomes

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	11431/1
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	Norton Gold Fields Pty Ltd
Application received:	23 January 2026
Application area:	200 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Mining and supporting infrastructure
Method of clearing:	Mechanical removal
Tenure:	Mining Lease 16/44 Mining Lease 16/396
Location (LGA area):	Shire of Coolgardie
Colloquial name:	Wattlebird Project

### 1.2. Description of clearing activities

Norton Gold Fields Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 200 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 737.2 hectares, for the purpose of mining related infrastructure. The project is located approximately 45 kilometres northwest of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, within the Shire of Coolgardie.

The application is to allow for the recovery of gold from a single open pit ('Wattlebird Open Pit') and will also include a Waste Rock Landform (WRL), Mineralised Waste Rock Dump (MWRD), ROM pad, workshop, topsoil stockpiles and other non-key mining activities (Norton Gold Fields Pty Ltd, 2026a).

### 1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Grant
Decision date:	11 June 2026
Decision area:	200 hectares of native vegetation

### 1.4. Reasons for decision

This clearing permit application was submitted, accepted, assessed, and determined in accordance with sections 51E and 51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE) advertised the application for a public comment for a period of 21 days, and no submissions were received.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (Appendix A), relevant datasets (Appendix E), supporting information provided by the applicant, including the results of a flora and vegetation survey (Appendix D), the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act (Appendix B), proposed avoidance and minimisation measures (Section 3.1), relevant planning instruments and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment (Section 3.3). The Delegated Officer also took into consideration the purpose of the clearing to support mine development.

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing may result in:

- the potential introduction and spread of weeds into adjacent vegetation, which could impact on the quality of the adjacent vegetation and its habitat values;
- the loss of native vegetation that is suitable habitat for malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*);
- the loss of native vegetation that is suitable habitat for southern whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*); and
- potential land degradation in the form of wind erosion.

After consideration of the available information, as well as the applicant's minimisation and mitigation measures (Section 3.1), the Delegated Officer determined the proposed clearing can be minimised and managed to be unlikely to lead to an unacceptable risk to environmental values.

The Delegated Officer decided to grant a clearing permit subject to conditions to:

- avoid, minimise to reduce the impacts and extent of clearing;
- take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds;
- commence construction within six months after undertaking clearing to reduce the risk of erosion;
- undertake slow, progressive one-directional clearing to allow terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity;
- fauna management (malleefowl); and
- fauna management (southern whiteface).

## 2. Legislative context

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the EP Act and the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 (Clearing Regulations).

In addition to the matters considered in accordance with section 51O of the EP Act (Section 1.4), the Delegated Officer has also had regard to the objects and principles under section 4A of the EP Act, particularly:

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

Other legislation of relevance for this assessment include:

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)
- *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Mining Act 1978* (WA)

Relevant agreements (treaties) considered during the assessment include:

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

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation (DER, 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, 2021)
- Technical guidance – Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2016)
- Technical guidance – Terrestrial Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2020)

## 3. Detailed assessment of application

### 3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

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

Evidence was submitted by the applicant, demonstrating that previously disturbed areas will be utilised to preserve existing vegetation (Norton Gold Fields Pty Ltd, 2026b). 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 (Appendix A) and the extent to which the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological, conservation, or land and water resource values.

The assessment against the clearing principles identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological values (fauna). The consideration of these impacts, and the extent to which they can be managed through conditions applied in line with sections 51H and 51I of the EP Act, is set out below.

#### 3.2.1. *Biological values (flora) - Clearing principle (a)*

##### Assessment

A reconnaissance flora and fauna assessment was undertaken by Botanica Consulting (2025a) over the southwest portion of the application area on 5 September 2024. A further survey was conducted by Botanica Consulting (2025b) over the northeast portion of the application area on 13 June 2025.

The flora surveys did not record any conservation significant species within the application area (Botanica Consulting, 2025a; 2025b). However, following an additional desktop assessment of the application area, the species discussed below may have suitable habitat within the application area.

*Eremophila praecox*, Priority 2, is a broom-like shrub that occurs on red/brown sandy loam on undulating plains (WA Herbarium, 1998-). There are 52 Western Australian Herbarium (1998-) records distributed across the Coolgardie, Murchison and Nullarbor IBRA regions. Potentially suitable habitat occurs within the application area in the form of Eucalypt woodlands over *Eucalyptus salmonophloia*. Previous surveys have not recorded this flora species within the application area.

*Notisia intonsa*, Priority 3, is a small herb that occurs in eucalypt woodlands on brown clay loam (WA Herbarium, 1998-). There are 29 Western Australian Herbarium (1998-) records distributed across the Avon Wheatbelt, Coolgardie, Esperance Plains, Mallee and Murchison IBRA bioregions. While potentially suitable habitat occurs within the region, the species has not been recorded in previous surveys.

*Eucalyptus educta*, Priority 2, is a straggling and spreading mallee that occurs on granite rocks (WA Herbarium, 1998-). There are 46 Western Australian Herbarium (1998-) records distributed across the Coolgardie, Murchison, Swan Coastal Plain and Yalgoo IBRA subregion. Potentially suitable habitat occurs within the region, however the species has not been recorded in previous surveys.

### Conclusion

Given the widespread availability of suitable habitat in the surrounding region, and the degraded nature of the application area due to historical mining activities, the proposed clearing is unlikely to be significant for the conservation of the above priority flora species.

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing conservation significant flora can be managed to be environmentally acceptable by implementing standard avoid and minimise and weed management conditions.

### Conditions

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

- avoid, minimise to reduce the impacts and extent of clearing; and
- take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds.

## 3.2.2. Biological values (fauna) - Clearing principle (b)

### Assessment

A reconnaissance flora and fauna assessment was undertaken by Botanica Consulting (2025a) over the southwest portion of the application area on 5 September 2024. A further survey was conducted by Botanica Consulting (2025b) over the northeast portion of the application area on 13 June 2025. Targeted fauna surveys have been conducted over the survey area for malleefowl by Terrestrial Ecosystems (2025), and for arid bronze azure butterfly and inland hairstreak butterfly by Botanica Consulting (2025c).

The fauna surveys did not record any conservation significant species within the application area (Botanica Consulting, 2025a; 2025b; 2025c; Terrestrial Ecosystems, 2025). However, following an additional desktop assessment of the application area, the following species may have suitable habitat within the application area.

### **Malleefowl**

Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), Vulnerable, occur in a wide range of habitats generally consisting of a sandy substrate with trees between 3 and 8 metres in height and shrub layer providing horizontal cover (DCCEEW, 2024). The large ground-dwelling bird favours long unburned and ungrazed mallee and constructs nests in sandy soils and leaf litter by building large mounds used for egg incubation (DCCEEW, 2024). A targeted fauna survey found no malleefowl mounds within the project area, however there is suitable habitat throughout the application area (Terrestrial Ecosystems, 2025).

### **Arid bronze azure butterfly**

Arid bronze azure butterfly (ABAB) (*Ogyris petrina*), Critically Endangered, has a severely fragmented and restricted geographic distribution across two remaining subpopulations in Western Australia. The species are known to have a complex dependency on the co-occurring sugar ant (*Camponotus* sp. nr. *terebrans*) to complete its life cycle, with ABAB larvae living entirely in the sugar ants' nest during their development (WABSI, 2022). The preferred habitat for ABAB is described as vegetation of mature mixed gimlet (*Eucalyptus salubris*) and salmon gum (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*) woodlands on red-brown loam soils, with an open understorey (DBCA, 2020).

The survey guidance for ABAB recommends that prior to surveying for the butterfly, an ant survey is first conducted (DBCA, 2020). Terrestrial Ecosystems (2025) has conducted a survey for *Camponotus* sp. nr. *terebrans* in the Binduli South Project area. This survey was conducted in accordance with the *Camponotus* sp. nr. *terebrans* survey guidelines and did not detect the species (DBCA, 2020; Terrestrial Ecosystems, 2025). Therefore, ABAB is unlikely to occur in the Terrestrial Ecosystems (2025) survey area. Although the application area contains many smooth barked Eucalypts, many of these were in a low-lying/drainage depression, therefore these would not suit the host sugar ant *Camponotus* sp. nr. *terebrans* (Botanica Consulting, 2025c). The limited extent of suitable habitat within the application area were surveyed, and no host sugar ants were identified.

### Inland hairstreak butterfly

Inland hairstreak butterfly (*Jalmenus aridus*), Priority 2, is known from two locations near Kalgoorlie. This species has however, been recorded from another 10 locations within an area extending approximately 121 kilometres north to south by 42 kilometres east to west (Eastwood et al., 2023). The preferred habitat for this species is open woodland with mature *Senna artemisioides* ssp. *filifolia* and mixed flowering shrubs (*Eremophila*, *Scaevola* and *Maireana*) with open areas of well drained exposed ground adjoining the host plants (Eastwood et al., 2023). Inland hairstreak caterpillars feed on the flowers of *Senna artemisioides* ssp. *filifolia* which have been recorded across several vegetation units within the application area (Botanica Consulting, 2025a). It was concluded that the patches of *Senna artemisioides* ssp. *filifolia* were too sparse and not large enough to support a subpopulation of the invertebrate population (Botanica Consulting, 2025c). Furthermore, many of the *Senna artemisioides* ssp. *filifolia* were growing in areas where there was a significant overstorey of tall trees which is not suitable for *Jalmenus aridus*. The species has a symbiotic relationship with the ant species *Froggattella kirbii*, which was not recorded within the application area (Eastwood et al., 2023; Botanica Consulting, 2025c).

### Southern whiteface

Southern whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*), Vulnerable, occurs across most of mainland Australia, within open woodlands and shrublands where there is an understorey of grasses shrubs, or both (DCCEEW, 2023). This species is unobtrusive, foraging on the ground amongst leaf litter, and nests within tree hollows or low foliage and shrubs (DCCEEW, 2023; Menkhorst et al., 2019). This species breeds from July to October and builds large domed nests of grass, bark and roosts in tree crevices and low bushes (DCCEEW, 2023). Botanica Consulting (2025a) noted that it is possible that the species will occur within the southwest portion of the application area. Follow-up flora and fauna surveys by Botanica Consulting (2025b) found that the fauna species was unlikely to occur in the northeast portion of the application area.

### Other conservation significant fauna

Three conservation significant avian species have been recorded within the local surrounds (20 kilometres) of the application area (GIS Database). These species utilise a wide range of habitats including coastal and/or wetlands and freshwater/saline sources. The existing records in the local surrounds were located at Rowles Lagoon, approximately 20 kilometres from the application area. There is no suitable breeding or roosting habitat within the application area for these conservation significant avian species and as a result, the proposed clearing is not likely to lead to significant impacts to these species.

### Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing on potentially suitable conservation significant fauna habitat can be managed by implementing fauna management conditions for malleefowl and southern whiteface as well as a directional clearing condition to ensure that any remaining populations of native fauna living in the area to be cleared are not harmed during the clearing process.

The applicant may have notification responsibilities under the EPBC Act for impacts to malleefowl and southern whiteface and their habitats, as set out in the EPBC Act. 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:

- slow directional clearing to allow malleefowl to move into adjacent vegetation ahead of the clearing activity;
- fauna management (malleefowl); and
- fauna management (southern whiteface).

## 3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The clearing permit application was advertised on 2 April 2026 by the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to this application.

There is one native title claim (WC2017/007 - Marlinyu Ghoorlie) over the area under application (DPLH, 2026). This claim has been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant group. The mining tenure has been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993*, and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore, the granting of a clearing permit is not a future act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2026). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

It is noted that the proposed clearing may impact on malleefowl, which is a protected matter under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The proponent may be required to refer the project to the

(Commonwealth) Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for environmental impact assessment under the EPBC Act. The proponent is advised to contact the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for further information regarding notification and referral responsibilities under the EPBC Act.

Other relevant authorisations required for the proposed land use include:

- A Programme of Work approved under the *Mining Act 1978*
- A Mining Development and Closure Proposal approved under the *Mining Act 1978*

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

**End**

**Appendix A. Site characteristics**

**A.1. Site characteristics**

Characteristic	Details						
Local context	The area proposed to be cleared is part of an expansive tract of native vegetation in the extensive land use zone of Western Australia. It is surrounded by landscape and vegetation of the Coolgardie bioregion. The proposed clearing area is part of the development of the Wattlebird Mine Area and occurs over previously disturbed land.						
Ecological linkage	According to available databases, the application area does not contain any known or mapped ecological linkages (GIS Database).						
Conservation areas	The nearest conservation area (Credo Reserve) is located approximately 7 kilometres northwest of the application (GIS Database).						
Vegetation description	<p>The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation association 468: Medium woodland; salmon gum &amp; Goldfields blackbutt (GIS Database).</p> <p>Two flora and vegetation surveys have been conducted over the application area by Botanica Consulting (2025a; 2025b). The following vegetation associations were recorded within the southwest portion of the application area (Botanica Consulting, 2025a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CLP-EW1 (1):</b> Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus salmonophloia</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Acacia hemiteles/Eremophila scoparia</i> and low open shrubland of <i>Ptilotus obovatus</i> on clay-loam plain;</li> <li>• <b>RH-EW1 (1):</b> Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus clelandiorum/E. oleosa</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Eremophila caperata</i> and low sparse shrubland of <i>Cratystylis conocephala/Eremophila pustulata</i> on hillslope;</li> <li>• <b>RH-EOW1:</b> Mid open woodland of <i>Eucalyptus salubris/E. clelandiorum</i> over mid sparse shrubland of <i>Eremophila</i> sp. Mt Jackson (G.J. Keighery 4372) and low sparse shrubland of <i>Cratystylis subspinescens</i> on hillslope; and</li> <li>• <b>OD-EW1 (1):</b> Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus salmonophloia</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Acacia hemiteles/Eremophila scoparia</i> and low open shrubland of <i>Ptilotus obovatus</i> in open depression Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus salmonophloia</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Acacia hemiteles/Eremophila scoparia</i> low chenopod shrubland of <i>Maireana sedifolia</i> and <i>Atriplex nummularia</i> in open depression.</li> </ul> <p>The following vegetation associations were recorded within the northeast portion of the application area (Botanica Consulting, 2025b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CLP-EW1 (2):</b> Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus salmonophloia</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Eremophila scoparia</i> over low chenopod shrubland of <i>Maireana sedifolia</i> and <i>Atriplex nummularia</i> on clay-loam plain;</li> <li>• <b>CLP-EW3:</b> Low woodland of <i>Eucalyptus ravidia</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Eremophila scoparia</i> over low chenopod shrubland of <i>Maireana sedifolia</i> and <i>Atriplex vesicaria</i> on clay-loam plain;</li> <li>• <b>RH-EW1 (2):</b> Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus clelandiorum</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Eremophila caperata</i> and low sparse shrubland of <i>Atriplex vesicaria</i> on hillslope; and</li> <li>• <b>OD-EW1 (2):</b> Mid woodland of <i>Eucalyptus salmonophloia</i> over mid open shrubland of <i>Acacia hemiteles/Eremophila scoparia</i> low chenopod shrubland of <i>Maireana sedifolia</i> and <i>Atriplex nummularia</i> in open depression.</li> </ul>						
Vegetation condition	Vegetation surveys of the application area found the vegetation to be in Very Good, Good and Completely Degraded condition (Trudgen, 1991). The full Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C.						
Climate and landform	The application area is located in an arid to semi-arid zone with an annual average rainfall of 241.4 millimetres (BoM, 2026). The Kalgoorlie area receives evenly distributed but unreliable rainfall (Milewski, 1992).						
Soil description	The soil is mapped as falling within the Gumland and Kanowna systems which are dominated by friable non-cracking clay and red loamy earth, and calcareous loamy earth (DPIRD, 2026).						
Land degradation risk	<p>The application area lies within the Gumland and Kanowna land systems (GIS Database). These systems have been mapped and described as (Waddell &amp; Galloway, 2023):</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Land system</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Degradation and erosion risk</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gumland system</td> <td>Alluvial plains, supporting eucalypt woodlands with halophytic shrub understoreys</td> <td>Alluvial plains, drainage tracks and foci are susceptible to erosion if perennial shrub cover is</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Land system	Description	Degradation and erosion risk	Gumland system	Alluvial plains, supporting eucalypt woodlands with halophytic shrub understoreys	Alluvial plains, drainage tracks and foci are susceptible to erosion if perennial shrub cover is
Land system	Description	Degradation and erosion risk					
Gumland system	Alluvial plains, supporting eucalypt woodlands with halophytic shrub understoreys	Alluvial plains, drainage tracks and foci are susceptible to erosion if perennial shrub cover is					

Characteristic	Details		
			substantially reduced, as are footslopes if protective mantles are distributed.
	Kanowna system	Undulating stony plains on metasedimentary and felsic volcanoclastic rocks with saline drainage tracts, supporting scattered eucalypt woodlands and halophytic shrublands	Susceptible to water erosion particularly in areas where perennial shrub cover is substantially reduced.
Waterbodies	The desktop assessment and aerial imagery indicated that three non-perennial, minor watercourses transect the area proposed to be cleared (GIS Database).		
Hydrogeography	The application area is not within any Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA). The mapped groundwater salinity is 14,000 – 35,000 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids which is described as saline (GIS Database).		
Flora	There are no records of conservation significant flora species within the application area (Botanica Consulting, 2024; 2025; GIS Database). There are eight conservation significant flora species within the local surrounds (20 kilometres) of the application area (GIS Database).		
Ecological communities	The application area does not form part of any known or mapped Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities. The closest record is part of the Priority 3 Ecological Community 'Emu Land System' located approximately 33 kilometres northeast of the application area (GIS Database).		
Fauna	There are no records of conservation significant fauna species within the application area (GIS Database). There are nine conservation significant fauna species located in the local surrounds (20 kilometres) of the application area.		
Fauna habitat	<p>Two fauna habitat assessments have been conducted by Botanica Consulting. The first survey (2025a) was carried out over the southwest portion of the application area, while the second survey (2025b) was carried out over the northeast portion of the application area. A total of three broad fauna habitats were identified within the application area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eucalypt</i> woodlands on rocky slope;</li> <li>• <i>Eucalypt</i> woodland on clay loam plain; and</li> <li>• <i>Eucalypt</i> woodland in open depression.</li> </ul>		

**A.2. Vegetation extent**

	Pre-European area (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current extent in all DBCA Managed Land (proportion of pre-European extent) (%)
IBRA Bioregion - Coolgardie	12,912,204.35	12,648,491.39	97.96	2,114,349.37	16.37
Beard vegetation associations - State					
Veg Assoc No. 468	592,022.32	583,902.76	98.63	135,197.44	22.84
Beard vegetation associations - Bioregion					
Veg Assoc No. 468	583,357.71	575,360.61	98.63	130,719.16	22.41

Government of Western Australia (2019)

**A.3. Flora analysis table**

With consideration for the site characteristics set out above, relevant datasets (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]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records (total)	Likelihood of occurrence?
<i>Eremophila praecox</i>	P2	Y	<10	52	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.1
<i>Notisia intonsa</i>	P3	Y	<20	29	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.1
<i>Atriplex lindleyi</i> subsp. <i>conduplicata</i>	P3	N	<20	5	Unlikely
<i>Eucalyptus educta</i>	P2	Y	<20	46	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.1
<i>Rumex crystallinus</i>	P2	N	<20	3	Unlikely
<i>Ptilotus rigidus</i>	P1	N	<20	21	Unlikely
<i>Calandrinia lefroyensis</i>	P1	N	<20	11	Unlikely
<i>Lepidium fasciculatum</i>	P3	N	<20	13	Unlikely

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

#### A.4. Fauna analysis table

The following conservation significant fauna species have been recorded within 20 kilometres of the application area (GIS Database).

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records (local area)	Likelihood of occurrence
Malleefowl ( <i>Leipoa ocellata</i> )	VU	Y	<5	29	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.1
Glossy ibis ( <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> )	MI	N	<15	1	Unlikely
Blue-billed duck ( <i>Oxyura australis</i> )	P4	N	<20	8	Unlikely
Ruddy turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> )	MI	N	<20	2	Unlikely
Common sandpiper ( <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> )	MI	Y	<20	5	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.2
Wood sandpiper ( <i>Tringa glareola</i> )	MI	N	<20	3	Unlikely
Common greenshank ( <i>Tringa nebularia</i> )	MI	Y	<20	2	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.2
Oriental plover ( <i>Charadrius veredus</i> )	MI	N	<20	3	Unlikely
Peregrine falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> )	OS	Y	<20	2	Possible – discussed in Section 3.2.2
Arid bronze azure butterfly (ABAB) ( <i>Ogyris petrina</i> )	CR	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Unlikely – discussed in Section 3.2.2
Inland hairstreak butterfly ( <i>Jalmenus aridus</i> )	P2	Y	Unknown	Unknown	Unlikely – discussed in Section 3.2.2

T: threatened, CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, MI: migratory, CD: conservation dependent, OS: other specially protected, P: priority

#### Appendix B. Assessment against the clearing principles

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Environmental value: biological values		

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<p><u>Principle (a):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biodiversity.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The area proposed to be cleared may contain habitat necessary for the maintenance of conservation significant flora. Vegetation groups and fauna habitats are unlikely to represent an area of higher biodiversity than surrounding areas.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	Yes <i>Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.</i>
<p><u>Principle (b):</u> <i>“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.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The area proposed to be cleared contains habitat necessary for the maintenance of conservation significant fauna.</p>	May be at variance	Yes <i>Refer to Section 3.2.2, above.</i>
<p><u>Principle (c):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The area proposed to be cleared does not contain any known Threatened flora species listed under the BC Act (Botanica Consulting 2025a; 2025b; GIS Database)</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (d):</u> <i>“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.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>No Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or Priority Ecological Communities (PECs) have been recorded within the application area, and there are no TECs or PECs mapped near the application area (GIS Database).</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<b>Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas</b>		
<p><u>Principle (e):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The application area falls within the Murchison Bioregion of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) (GIS Database). Over 97 per cent of pre-European vegetation still exists in the Coolgardie Bioregion (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The vegetation proposed to be cleared is not considered to be part of a significant ecological linkage in the local area (GIS Database).</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (h):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>Given the distance to the nearest conservation area, the proposed clearing is not likely to have an impact on the environmental values of nearby conservation areas.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<b>Environmental value: land and water resources</b>		
<p><u>Principle (f):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>There are no permanent watercourses or wetlands within the area proposed to be cleared (GIS Database).</p> <p>There are three non-perennial, minor watercourses within the application area which flow briefly following significant rainfall.</p> <p>The potential impacts to riparian vegetation can be managed with the implementation of a vegetation management condition.</p>	At variance	No
<p><u>Principle (g):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The soils and land systems within the application area are susceptible to erosion where perennial shrub cover is substantially reduced (DPIRD, 2026).</p>	At variance	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<p>The application area intersects a potentially contaminated site (GIS Database). The site was reported as possibly contaminated and requiring investigation in June 2010. Report documenting investigations have not been submitted and as a result, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation recommend that clearing works should be carried out in accordance with an appropriate health, safety, and environmental management plan, including unexpected finds protocol in the events that contaminated soil or materials are encountered (DWER, 2026).</p> <p>A staged clearing condition is necessary to minimise and manage the potential impacts to land degradation within the application area.</p>		
<p><u>Principle (i):</u> <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.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>There are no Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA) within or in close proximity to the application area (GIS Database). The closest PDWSA is located approximately 22 kilometres northeast of the application area, for these reasons, the proposed clearing is unlikely to affect salinity, pH levels, or nutrient levels of the PDWSA. The minor watercourses that transect the application area are non-perennial and are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed clearing (Botanica Consulting 2025a).</p> <p>Due to the current levels of groundwater salinity in the application area it is unlikely that the proposed clearing would result in an incremental increase in groundwater salinity, nor cause deterioration in the quality of the groundwater.</p> <p>As a result significant impacts to surface water and underground water are considered unlikely.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No
<p><u>Principle (j):</u> <i>“Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.”</i></p> <p><u>Assessment:</u></p> <p>The climate in the region is arid to semi-arid with an average annual rainfall of 241.4 millimetres (BoM, 2026). Average annual evaporation is between 2,400 and 2,800 millimetres, exceeding rainfall. Rainfall is primarily received over summer, with the occasional rainfall in winter (Milewski, 1992).</p> <p>There are no permanent watercourses or waterbodies within the application area (GIS Database). Seasonal drainage lines are common in the region and temporarily localised flooding may occur briefly following heavy rainfall events (CALM, 2002).</p> <p>The proposed clearing is unlikely to increase the incidence or intensity of natural flooding events.</p>	Not likely to be at variance	No

**Appendix C. Vegetation condition rating scale**

Vegetation condition is a rating given to a defined area of vegetation to categorise and rank disturbance related to human activities. The rating refers to the degree of change in the vegetation structure, density and species present in relation to undisturbed vegetation of the same type. The degree of disturbance impacts upon the vegetation’s ability to regenerate. Disturbance at a site can be a cumulative effect from a number of interacting disturbance types.

Considering its location, the scale below was used to measure the condition of the vegetation proposed to be cleared. This scale has been extracted from Trudgen, M.E. (1991) *Vegetation condition scale* in National Trust (WA) 1993 Urban Bushland Policy. National Trust of Australia (WA), Wildflower Society of WA (Inc.), and the Tree Society (Inc.), Perth.

**Measuring vegetation condition for the Eremaean and Northern Botanical Provinces (Trudgen, 1991)**

Condition	Description
Excellent	Pristine or nearly so, no obvious signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement.
Very good	Some relatively slight signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement. For example, some signs of damage to tree trunks caused by repeated fire, the presence of some relatively non-aggressive weeds, or occasional vehicle tracks.
Good	More obvious signs of damage caused by human activity since European settlement, including some obvious impact on the vegetation structure such as that caused by low levels of grazing or slightly aggressive weeds.

Condition	Description
Poor	Still retains basic vegetation structure or ability to regenerate it after very obvious impacts of human activities since European settlement, such as grazing, partial clearing, frequent fires or aggressive weeds.
Very poor	Severely impacted by grazing, very frequent fires, clearing or a combination of these activities. Scope for some regeneration but not to a state approaching good condition without intensive management. Usually with a number of weed species present including very aggressive species.
Completely degraded	Areas that are completely or almost completely without native species in the structure of their vegetation; i.e. areas that are cleared or 'parkland cleared' with their flora comprising weed or crop species with isolated native trees or shrubs.

**Appendix D. Photographs of the vegetation**

The following vegetation types were identified within the southwest portion of the application area by Botanica Consulting (2025a):



Figure 1. CLP-EW1 (1): Eucalypt woodlands



Figure 2. RH-EW1 (1): Eucalypt woodlands



Figure 3. RH-EOW1: Eucalypt open woodlands

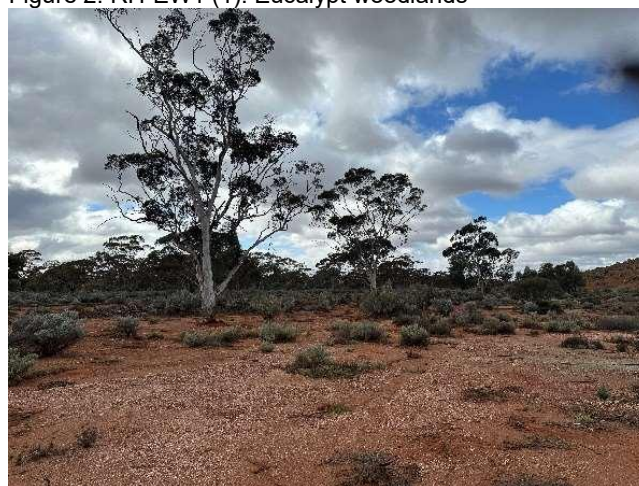


Figure 4. OD-EW1: Eucalypt woodlands

The following vegetation types were identified within the northeast portion of the application area by Botanica Consulting (2025b):



Figure 5. CLP-EW1 (2): Eucalypt woodlands



Figure 6. CLP-EW3: Eucalypt woodlands



Figure 7. RH-EW1 (2): Eucalypt woodlands



Figure 8. OD-EW1 (2): Eucalypt woodlands

## Appendix E. Sources of information

### E.1. GIS datasets

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

- Cadastre (Polygon) (LGATE-217)
- Clearing Instruments Activities (Areas Approved to Clear) (DWER-076)
- Clearing Instruments Conditions (Areas Subject to Conditions) (DWER-077)
- Clearing Regulations - Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Clearing Regulations - Schedule One Areas (DWER-057)
- Contaminated Sites Database - Restricted (DWER-073)
- DBCA - Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA - Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- DBCA Fire History (DBCA-060)
- Geographic Names (GEONOMA) (LGATE-013)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- Hydrographic Catchments - Basins (DWER-027)
- Hydrographic Catchments - Catchments (DWER-028)
- Hydrographic Catchments - Divisions (DWER-029)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- IBSA Survey Details (DWER-118)
- Local Government Area (LGA) Boundaries (LGATE-233)
- Localities (LGATE-234)
- Medium Scale Topo Contour (Line) (LGATE-015)
- Medium Scale Topo Water (Line) (LGATE-018)
- Medium Scale Topo Water (Polygon) (LGATE-016)
- Native Title (Determination) (LGATE-066)
- Native Title (NNTT) (LGATE-004)

- Native Vegetation Extent (DPIRD-005)
- Pre-European Vegetation (DPIRD-006)
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)
- Reserves (LGATE-227)
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Best Available (DPIRD-027)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Project Areas (DPIRD-070)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Systems (DPIRD-064)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Zones (DPIRD-017)
- Townsites (LGATE-248)
- WA Now Aerial Imagery

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Threatened and Priority Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened and Priority Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened and Priority Fauna
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities
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## Glossary

### Acronyms:

<b>BC Act</b>	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> , Western Australia
<b>BoM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
<b>DAA</b>	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
<b>DAFWA</b>	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
<b>DCCEEW</b>	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australian Government
<b>DBCA</b>	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
<b>DEMIRS</b>	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (now DMPE)
<b>DER</b>	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
<b>DMIRS</b>	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia (now DMPE)
<b>DMP</b>	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMPE)
<b>DMPE</b>	Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration
<b>DoEE</b>	Department of the Environment and Energy (now DCCEEW)
<b>DoW</b>	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
<b>DPaW</b>	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
<b>DPIRD</b>	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
<b>DPLH</b>	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
<b>DRF</b>	Declared Rare Flora (now known as Threatened Flora)
<b>DWER</b>	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
<b>EP Act</b>	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia

<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
<b>EPBC Act</b>	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Commonwealth Act)
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>ha</b>	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
<b>IBRA</b>	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
<b>PEC</b>	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
<b>RIWI Act</b>	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
<b>TEC</b>	Threatened Ecological Community

**Definitions:**

**DBCAs (2023) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia:**

**Threatened species**

**T** Listed by order of the Minister as Threatened in the category of critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under section 19(1), or is a rediscovered species to be regarded as threatened species under section 26(2) of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act).

**Threatened fauna** is the species of fauna that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

**Threatened flora** is the species of flora that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

The assessment of the conservation status of threatened species is in accordance with the BC Act listing criteria and the requirements of [Ministerial Guideline Number 1](#) and [Ministerial Guideline Number 2](#) that adopts the use of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Red List of Threatened Species Categories and Criteria](#), and is based on the national distribution of the species.

**CR Critically endangered species**

Threatened species considered to be “*facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as critically endangered under section 19(1)(a) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 20 and the ministerial guidelines.

**EN Endangered species**

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as endangered under section 19(1)(b) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 21 and the ministerial guidelines.

**VU Vulnerable species**

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as vulnerable under section 19(1)(c) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 22 and the ministerial guidelines.

**Extinct species**

Listed by order of the Minister as extinct under section 23(1) of the BC Act as extinct or extinct in the wild.

**EX Extinct species**

Species where “*there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 24 of the BC Act).

**EW Extinct in the wild species**

Species that “*is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; and it has not been recorded in its known habitat or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 25 of the BC Act).

Currently there are no threatened fauna or threatened flora species listed as extinct in the wild.

**Specially protected species**

**SP Specially protected species**

Listed by order of the Minister as specially protected under section 13(1) of the BC Act. Meeting one or more of the following categories: species of special conservation interest; migratory species; cetaceans; species subject to international agreement; or species otherwise in need of special protection.

Species that are listed as threatened species (critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable) or extinct species under the BC Act cannot also be listed as specially protected species.

**MI Migratory species**

Fauna that periodically or occasionally visit Australia or an external Territory or the exclusive economic zone; or the species is subject of an international agreement that relates to the protection of migratory species and that binds the Commonwealth; and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 15 of the BC Act).

Migratory species include birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) or The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and fauna subject to the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (Bonn Convention), an environmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Program. Migratory species listed under the BC Act are a subset of the migratory animals, that are known to visit Western Australia, protected under the international agreements or treaties, excluding species that are listed as Threatened species.

**CD Species of special conservation interest (conservation dependent fauna)**

Species of special conservation need that are dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 14 of the BC Act).

Currently only fauna are listed as species of special conservation interest.

**OS Other specially protected species**

Species otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 18 of the BC Act).

Currently only fauna are listed as species otherwise in need of special protection.

**Priority species****P Priority species**

Priority is not a listing category under the BC Act. The Priority Flora and Fauna lists are maintained by the department and are published on the department's website.

All fauna and flora are protected in WA following the provisions in Part 10 of the BC Act. The protection applies even when a species is not listed as threatened or specially protected, and regardless of land tenure (State managed land (Crown land), private land, or Commonwealth land).

Species that may possibly be threatened species that do not meet the criteria for listing under the BC Act because of insufficient survey or are otherwise data deficient, are added to the Priority Fauna or Priority Flora Lists under Priorities 1, 2 or 3. These three categories are ranked in order of prioritisation for survey and evaluation of conservation status so that consideration can be given to potential listing as threatened.

Species that are adequately known, meet criteria for near threatened, or are rare but not threatened, or that have been recently removed from the threatened species list or conservation dependent or other specially protected fauna lists for other than taxonomic reasons, are placed in Priority 4. These species require regular monitoring.

Assessment of priority status is based on the Western Australian distribution of the species, unless the distribution in WA is part of a contiguous population extending into adjacent States, as defined by the known spread of locations.

**P1 Priority One - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, none on conservation lands**

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, for example, agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

**P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, some on conservation lands**

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, for example, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

**P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species – known from several locations**

Species that are known from several locations and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. These species need further survey.

**P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring**

- (a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.
- (b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for vulnerable but are not listed as a conservation dependent specially protected species.
- (c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species or lists of conservation dependent or other specially protected species, during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.
- (d) Other species in need of monitoring.

**Principles for clearing native vegetation:**

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.
- (d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.
- (e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.
- (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.
- (i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.
- (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.