Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Mines and Petroleum**

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1422/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Chevron Australia Pty Ltd**

1.3. Property details

Property: Production Licence L1H
Local Government Area: Shire of Ashburton
Colloquial name: Barrow Island Infill Drilling Programme

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
33.27		As specified in the permit conditions	Petroleum drilling programme and associated works

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 26 May 2016

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description

The vegetation of Barrow Island has been broadly mapped as two vegetation types: Beard vegetation associations 117 and 667 (GIS Database). Beard vegetation association 117: Hummock grasslands, grass steppe; soft spinifex; occurs at the southern end of the island and covers approximately 5% of the 23,500 ha island. The remainder of the island (approximately 22,000 ha), is recorded as Beard vegetation association 667: Hummock grasslands; shrub steppe; scattered shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* and *Triodia* sp. indet. aff. *angusta* (GIS Database).

The clearing permit application area is located on the southern half of the island. The majority (approximately 95%) of the application area is broadly mapped as Beard Vegetation Association 667. The remaining approximately 5% (or approx. 380 ha) of the application area is broadly mapped as Beard Vegetation Association 117. The application area encompasses approximately one third of the total area mapped as Vegetation Association 117.

The flora of Barrow Island is closely related to that of the Cape Range area (CALM, 2002). Vegetation associations are dominated by *Triodia* grasslands and shrubby *Acacia* and *Melaleuca* spp. (RPS, 2007).

The flora and vegetation of Barrow Island has been extensively surveyed over many years. A vegetation survey of Barrow Island conducted by Mattiske and Associates in 1993 identified 34 plant communities, based on landforms, soil type and species composition (RPS, 2007). Astron Environmental Services conducted a review of previous surveys and determined that a total of 377 plant taxa had been recorded over the island, including 28 introduced plant species (Astron, 2010).

Clearing Description

Barrow Island Drilling Programme.
Chevron Australia Pty Ltd (Chevron) proposes to clear up to 33.27 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 9,661 hectares, for the purpose of petroleum production and associated activities. The project is located on Barrow Island, approximately 70 kilometres off the Pilbara coast, west of Karratha, within the Shire of Ashburton.

Vegetation Condition

Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994);

To

Pristine: No obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994).

Comment

This project is not related to the Gorgon gas project which is also located on Barrow Island.

Clearing permit CPS 1422/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum on 2 June 2011 and authorised the clearing of up to 33.27 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 9,661 hectares.

On 13 April 2016, the Permit Holder applied to amend CPS 1422/1 to extend the permit expiry date from 26 May 2016 to 31 May 2021. The amount of clearing authorised and permit boundary will remain unchanged.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

The Barrow Island oilfield has been operating on Barrow Island since the 1960s. The existing clearing permit is for clearing for drill pads, flowlines and access roads to develop additional wells within the existing oilfield area on the island (RPS, 2007).

Barrow Island is an A Class Nature Reserve, managed for the purposes of conservation by the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) (GIS Database). Chevron operations on Barrow Island are conducted in consultation with DPaW.

Chevron Australia Pty Ltd has applied to extend the clearing permit duration by five years.

The amendment application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s.51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Environmental information has been reviewed, and the proposed extension of the permit duration by five years is unlikely to result in any significant change to the environmental impacts of the proposed clearing (GIS Database).

The assessment of the proposed clearing against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment in decision report CPS 1422/1.

Methodology RPS (2007)

GIS Database:
- DPaW Tenure
- Hydrography, linear
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (TEC/PEC) - Boundaries

Planning instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

There are no known native title claims registered over Barrow Island (DAA, 2016). However, the 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 clearing permit application area (DAA, 2016). 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 the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Environment Regulation, the Department of Water, and the Department of Parks and Wildlife, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

Methodology DAA (2016)

4. References

Astron (2010) Barrow Island Infill Drilling Program Flora and Vegetation Survey. Report prepared for Chevron Australia Pty Ltd, by Astron Environmental Services, Western Australia, May 2010.

CALM (2002) A Biodiversity Audit of Western Australia's 53 Biogeographic Subregions in 2002. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.

DAA (2016) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Department of Aboriginal Affairs. http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/ (Accessed 11 May 2016).

Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

RPS (2007) Draft Environmental Management Plan. Windalia Infill Drilling Program. Draft Revision D. Report prepared for Chevron Australia Pty Ltd, by RPS Bowman Bishaw Gorham, Western Australia, January 2007.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DPaW and DER)
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DotE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DotE)
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EP Act	*Environmental Protection Act 1986*, Western Australia
EPBC Act	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Federal Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
PEC	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
RIWI Act	*Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*, Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DPaW (2015) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia}:-

T **Threatened species:**
Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* listed under Schedules 1 to 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).

Threatened fauna is that subset of 'Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'likely to become extinct' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Threatened flora is flora that has been declared to be 'likely to become extinct or is rare, or otherwise in need of special protection', pursuant to section 23F(2) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

The assessment of the conservation status of these species is based on their national extent and ranked according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List categories and criteria as detailed below.

CR **Critically endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.

EN **Endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.

VU **Vulnerable species**
Threatened species considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.

EX **Presumed extinct species**
Species which have been adequately searched for and there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora.

IA **Migratory birds protected under an international agreement**
Birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and the Bonn Convention, relating to the protection of migratory birds. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.

CD **Conservation dependent fauna**
Fauna of special conservation need being species dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 6 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.

OS **Other specially protected fauna**
Fauna otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950,* in Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.

P **Priority species**
Species which are poorly known; or
Species that are adequately known, are rare but not threatened, and require regular monitoring. Assessment of Priority codes 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:**
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, e.g. 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 and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

P2 **Priority Two - Poorly-known species:**
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, e.g. 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 and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

P3 **Priority Three - Poorly-known species:**
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. Such species are in need of 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 Conservation Dependent.
(c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.

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 indigenous to Western Australia.

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare 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 clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.