Department of Environment
Government of Western Australia

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1442/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Shire of Mount Magnet

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 192 ON PLAN 221356 (MOUNT MAGNET 6638)
Local Government Area: Shire Of Mount Magnet
Colloquial name: Mount Farmer Road Reserve

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
1		Mechanical Removal	Road construction or maintenance

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Beard Vegetation Association 312 - succulent steppe with very open shrubs; very sparse mulga and Acacia sclerosperma over saltbush and bluebush.	The purpose of the clearing permit is for the realignment of a section of Mt Farmer Rd within the Shire of Mount Magnet. The proposed works was requested by Mount Magnet Gold, and comprises a 600m stretch of the Mt Farmer Rd heading north-west from the T-junction at Hill Fifty Rd . Width of the proposed clearing is 16m, which equates to a total clearing area of 0.96 hectares. The area to be cleared has undergone previous disturbance, has little or no understorey with a scattering of isolated shrubs, and is considered to be significantly degraded. The original application for 30 hectares no longer applies, as the the majority of the works included road maintenance, which is considered exempt under Regulation 5, Item 22 (Clearing in existing transport corridors) of the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004.	Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994)	Vegetation condition was deemed 'degraded' as a result of photographs taken along Mt Farmer Rd, including one in close proximity to the area under application (TRIM Ref: DOC 5009).

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

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

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The proposal is for the clearing of one hectare of native vegetation for the purpose of road realignment on Mount Farmer Rd in the Shire of Mount Magnet. The proposed clearing will address a partly funded Black Spot at the request of the nearby mining company . The vegetation type comprises succulent steppe with very open shrubs, very sparse mulga and Acacia sclerosperma over saltbush and bluebush (Shepherd et al., 2001). 100% of this vegetation type still remains in the region, giving it a conservation status of 'least concern' (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002). Given the small area under application, the removal of native vegetation is unlikely to impact the overall biodiversity values of the area.

Methodology

Shepherd et al., 2001
Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002

(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.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The area under application lies within the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) of Murchison, of which 100% of pre-European vegetation remains. Given that the proposed clearing area constitutes a total area of only one hectare, it is unlikely that the area under application is significant for the maintenance of habitat for fauna indigenous to the region.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) - EA 18/10/00
- Shepherd et al (2001)

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

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no mapped declared rare flora (DRF) within 1km of the proposed area to be cleared. The closest DRF is recorded as a Priority 4 flora, Goodenia neogoodenia, located 15.9kms south of Mount Magnet and greater than 16km from the area under application. Therefore the area under application is not likely to include, or be necessary for, the continued existance of rare flora.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Declared Rare and Priority Flora - CALM 01/07/05

(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.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

Mapping indicates there are no existing threatened ecological communities within the Shire of Mount Magnet, therefore the proposed clearing is unlikely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Threatened Ecological Communites - CALM -15/7/03

(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.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The proposed clearing is located within the Murchison Bioregion, of which 100% of native vegetation remains.

The vegetation proposed to be cleared is a component of Beard Vegetation Association 312, of which 100% of the pre-European extent remains. This vegetation type is therefore of 'least concern' for biodiversity conservation (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002).

Given the size of the proposed clearing in comparison to the extent of remaining native vegetation, the area under application is not considered significant as a remnant of native vegetation.

Methodology

Shepherd et al. (2001)
GIS Database:
- Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) - EA 18/10/00
- Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no watercourses or wetlands associated with the proposed clearing site. Although there are several minor non-perennial watercourses within the general region under application, it is not expected that clearing of the the small area under application will have an adverse effect on these watercourses due to their relative position in the landscape, the low topographical gradients of the region and the distance from the proposed clearing site.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Rivers 1:250,000 - GA
- Rivers 1:1,000,000 - GA 01/06/00
- Hydrography, Linear - DOE 1/2/-4
- Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02
- Ramsar Wetlands - CALM 14/02/03
- ANCA Wetlands - CALM 08/01

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

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The proposal to realign Mt Farmer Rd may cause some short term land degradation issues in terms of water logging and soil erosion during works. However these issues should be minimal as the existing roads already have roadside infrastructure in place to prevent land degradation associated with roads (ie table drains and culverts).

The proposed clearing is therefore unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02

(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.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

Mapping indicates there are no conservation areas within 10kms of the area under application, and is therefore not likely to be at variance with this principle.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- CALM Managed Lands and Water - CALM 01/08/04
- Register of National Estate - EA 28/01/03

(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.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The areas under application lie within the Yarramonger Catchment.

Non-DEWCP bores located within a radius of 7.5km from the proposed clearing site indicate static groundwater depth on 01/01/00 was between 9m and 10m below ground level. Groundwater salinity (measured as Total Dissolved Solids) at these sites ranged from 500-675mg/L on the same date. Relative to these figures, the proposed clearing is unlikely to compromise groundwater values.

The proposed clearing for roadworks may cause some short term water quality issues in terms of localised surface water sedimentation during works. However these issues should be minimised as roadworks will include roadside infrastructure to prevent land degradation associated with roads ie. table drains and culverts.

Due to the small and isolated area proposed to be cleared for road realignment, it is unlikely the area under application will exacerbate salinity issues or increase water levels within the shire boundary.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Salinity Mapping LM 25m - DOLA 00
- WIN Groundwater Sites, Other - Non-DEWCP (Current)
- Hydrographic Catchments-Catchments - DOE 23/3/05

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

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
Due to the scale and nature of the proposed clearing, it is unlikely to exacerbate flooding in the local area.

Methodology GIS Database:
- Topographic contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02

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

Comments
No submissions from the public have been received. There is a Native Title Claim over the area under application. The Department of Environment and Conservation's advertising of the application in the West Australian newspaper constitutes legal notification of the native title representative body for the purpose of the future act procedures under the Native Title Act 1993. No response was received from the representative body. Under the Rights in Water and Irrigation (RIWI) Act 1913 the proposed area to be cleared is under review. The proposed clearing does not require regulation under the RIWI Act 1913. There is no works approval required for the proposed works.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- Aboriginal Sites of Significance - DIA 28/02/03
- Native Title Claims - DLI 07/11/05
- RIWI Act, Areas - WRC 05/04/02

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Road construction o maintenance	Mechanical Removal	1	Grant	It is recommended the Shire of Mount Magnet be granted a permit to clear 1.0 hectare of native vegetation for road realignment. Assessment of the application found the proposal is not likely to be at variance to principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) or (j).

5. References

Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002) Biodiversity Action Planning. Action planning for native biodiversity at multiple scales; catchment bioregional, landscape, local. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria.

Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.

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

Photos of Mount Farmer Road, Mt Magnet. DEC TRIM Ref DOC 5009.

Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

6. Glossary

Term	Meaning
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
DAWA	Department of Agriculture
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection (now DoE)
DoE	Department of Environment
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
EPP	Environmental Protection Policy
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
WRC	Water and Rivers Commission (now DoE)