



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1749/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Woodside Energy Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 301 ON PLAN 46449 (- GAP RIDGE 6714)
Local Government Area: Shire Of Roebourne
Colloquial name: Property is Lot 500 on Plan 55670, cadastar not updated

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
40		Mechanical Removal	Building or Structure

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 589: Mosaic: Short bunch grassland - savannah / grass plain (Pilbara) / Hummock grasslands, grass steppe; soft spinifex.	Lot 301: Acacia dominated shrublands occurring on stony loam plains and low rocky rises in the northern, north-eastern and southern sections; and closed annual tussock grasslands occurring primarily on the stony loam plains and floodplains of the central and western sections (SKM 2007). Approximately 85% of the vegetation in poor to very poor condition (according to Trudgeny's Condition Scale) (SKM 2007). Weeds occur throughout the area under application, particularly Buffel Grass (SKM 2007). An ephemeral watercourse occurs approximately 200 metres west of the area under application.	Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994)	The description of vegetation under application was obtained from a survey report provided as supporting information by the proponent, prepared by SKM on 26 February 2007.

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**
Approximately 85% of the vegetation under application is in poor to very poor condition (according to Trudgeny's Condition Scale) (SKM 2007). The vegetation association under application has approximately 100% of its original extent remaining (DAWA 2001).
The proponent has indicated an intention to undertake regular monitoring of vegetation communities in good to very good condition outside of the area under application to ensure that weed infestation does not cause condition decline in these areas (SKM 2007).
It is unlikely that this proposal will impact on the representativeness of this vegetation association, therefore it is unlikely that this proposal is at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007

(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 vegetation under application consists of two main fauna habitat types: sandplains consisting of tussock grasslands and spinifex on loamy sands; and sandplains consisting of Acacia shrublands over tussock grasslands and spinifex; both of which are well-represented within the region (SKM 2007). No records of Threatened or Priority fauna are known to occur within 10 kilometres of the area under application (GIS Database).
 Threatened and Priority fauna for which suitable habitats occur within the vegetation under application include the Lakeland Downs mouse (*Leggadina lakedownensis*, P4) and Skink (*Notoscincus butleri*, P4) (SKM 2007). Non-threatened but locally significant fauna may use the habitats under application, however these are unlikely to be specifically dependent on the vegetation under application (SKM 2007) and therefore it is unlikely that this proposal is at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
 DAWA 2001
 GIS Database
 - Threatened Fauna (DEC November 2006)

(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**
 The closest recorded occurrence of Declared Rare or Priority flora (GIS database) is located approximately 8 kilometres from the area under application, being *Terminalia suparitifolia* (P3) which grows in sand among basalt rocks. The soils of Lot 301 are described as orange-brown loam with smaller areas of orange loam, typically with moderate quantities of quartz pebbles and cobbles, with alluvial material consisting of sand and gravel in the drainage line near the western boundary (SKM 2007), thus it is unlikely that *Terminalia suparitifolia* (P3) occurs within the area under application.
 No Declared Rare or Priority flora species were identified within the vegetation under application as a result of a survey commissioned by the proponent, additionally the vegetation has been substantially degraded thereby limiting its potential conservation value (SKM 2007) and therefore it is unlikely that this proposal is at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
 FloraBase website
 GIS Database
 - Declared Rare and Priority Flora (DEC November 2006)

(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 at variance to this Principle**
 There are no recorded occurrences of Threatened Ecological Communities within 10 kilometres of the area under application (GIS Database). No TECs have been identified within the vegetation under application (SKM 2007), therefore this proposal is not at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
 GIS Database
 - TEC (DEC January 2007)

(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 at variance to this Principle**
 Beard vegetation association 589 has approximately 100% of its pre-European extent remaining within the Pilbara IBRA region (DAWA 2001). Given the extensiveness of the vegetation association, and that the vegetation under application is considered to be in poor to very poor condition (SKM 2007), this proposal is not at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
 DAWA 2001
 CAR

(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 is no wetland-dependent vegetation within the area under application. An ephemeral drainage line exists approximately 200 metres west of the area under application, however this will not be disturbed as a result of this proposal (SKM 2007). Given that there are no defined watercourses or wetland-dependent vegetation within the area under application at this present time, this proposal is unlikely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
GIS Database
- Topographic Contours Statewide (DOLA September 2002)
- Dampier 2m Orthomosaic (DOLA 2000)

(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

In a report commissioned by the proponent (SKM 2007), development of the area under application "may result in limited wind and water erosion, predominantly during the construction phase of the project ...". Stony soil and loamy soil is described as having low to variable potential for soil degradation in terms of structure decline, acidification and erosion (Schoknecht 2002). The area under application is mapped as having no known Acid Sulphate Soil risk. Given the predominantly flat landscape and that the nature of the soil present within the area under application has a low to variable potential for land degradation, this proposal is unlikely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
Schoknecht 2002
GIS Dataset
- Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map - Pilbara Coastline (DEC)

(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

There are no conservation areas occurring within 10 kilometres of the under application. Given that the closest DEC-managed reserve (and Environmentally Sensitive Area) is located approximately 18 kilometres from the area under application, this proposal is unlikely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
GIS Dataset
- Ramsar wetlands (CALM February 2003)
- System 1-5 and 7-12 Areas (DOE June 1995)
- CALM Managed Lands and Waters (CALM July 2005)
- Clearing Regulations - Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DOE May 2005)
- Covenant sites (DEC 2007)
- Land for Wildlife sites (DEC 2007)

(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

At a regional level, groundwater occurs at depths between 4-10 metres in unconfined aquifers, relying on recharge from rainfall events (SKM 2007). Groundwater may be impacted through future irrigation activities. Given that the vegetation within the area under application is in predominantly poor condition, and given that the vegetation comprises of shrubs and grasses (rather than deep-rooted trees), it is unlikely that the removal of this vegetation will cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water, therefore this proposal is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
GIS Dataset
- Topographic Contours Statewide (DOLA September 2002)

(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

The landform of the area under application is essentially flat (1:100). The low rainfall (approximately 300mm/annum) and high evaporation rate (approximately 3400mm/annum) is unlikely to cause large amounts

of run-off except during high rainfall and cyclonic events. Given the above, it is unlikely that this proposal will cause or increase the incidence or intensity of flooding, therefore this proposal is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology SKM 2007
 GIS Dataset
 - Evapotranspiration Area Actual (BOM September 2001)
 - Mean Annual Rainfall Isohyets (BOM September 2001)
 - Topographic Contours Statewide (DOLA September 2002)

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

Comments

The proposed clearing resulting in exposed surfaces may increase water flow, however the implementation of appropriate management and engineering solutions will minimise impacts on the drainage line to the west of the area under application (SKM 2007).

In a report commissioned by the proponent (SKM 2007), development of the area under application "may result in limited wind and water erosion, predominantly during the construction phase of the project; however, measures will be in place to manage these potential impacts."

The area under application overlaps with four (not yet registered) areas of Aboriginal significance. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all approvals have been received from relevant stakeholders prior to undertaking clearing.

Methodology SKM 2007
 GIS Dataset
 - Aboriginal Sites of Significance (DIA)

4. Assessor's comments

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Comment
Building or Structure	Mechanical Removal	40	Construction of accommodation camp. This proposal has been found to be not at variance to principles d) and e), and is not likely to be at variance to the remaining principles.

5. References

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.

Schoknecht, N. (June 2002) Soil Groups of Western Australia - A simple guide to the main soils of Western Australia (Edition 3). Technical Report No. 246. Department of Agriculture Western Australia.

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.

Sinclair Knight Merz (26 February 2007) Gap Ridge Accommodation Village - Area Permit Application Supporting Information. Prepared for Woodside Energy Ltd, Western Australia (TRIM ref: DOC17826)

6. Glossary

Term	Meaning
BCS	Biodiversity Coordination Section of DEC
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (now BCS)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection (now DEC)
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 DEC)

