



## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 209/1  
Permit type: Area Permit

### 1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Mullaloo Holdings Pty Ltd

### 1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 113 ON PLAN 205789 ( BUNDANOON 6522)  
Local Government Area: Shire Of Mingenew  
Colloquial name: Lot 113 yandanooka Estate

### 1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
19		Mechanical Removal	Cropping

## 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 379: Shrublands; scrub-heath on lateritic sandplain in the central Geraldton Sandplain Region (Hopkins et al. 2001, Shepherd et al. 2001).	The area under assessment (19 ha) is located approximately 12 km south of the Mingenew townsite on Lot 113 Yandanooka Estate. It is situated in the Irwin river catchment on a gently undulating sand plain over deep, yellow siliceous clayey sands and sandy earths. The area is completely surrounded by wheat crop, and is approximately 450m south east of a similar 125 ha area of native vegetation which has been fenced off by the proponent for the purpose of conservation. The clearing is proposed to reduce the amount of double working and over-spraying associated with the extra headlands that the remnant vegetation creates. During the inspection, several species of native flora were identified including - Acacia blakelyi, Acacia sp, Acanthocarpus preissii, Allocasuarina huegeliana, Anigozanthos humilis subsp. humilis, Anthotroche pannosa, Banksia attenuata, Banksia prionotes, Calothamnus homalophyllus, Calytrix sp., Dampiera spicigera, Darwinia speciosa, Ecdeiocolea monostachya, Grevillea biformis, Grevillea candelabroides, Grevillea eriostachya, Hakea preisii,	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery 1994)	Observed during site visit: the area under assessment contained a wide variety of native flora species and was relatively undisturbed. Weed activity was observed at the disturbed edges and throughout the whole area to a lesser extent. During the site visit wallaby tracks and droppings, as well as native lizards and birds were observed.

Hakea prostrata, Hakea recurva, Hibbertia conspicua, Isotoma hypocrateriformis, Leschenaultia linarioides, Lepidosperma tenue, Leptospermum erubescens, Mesomelaena sp., Olearia dampieri, Patersonia drummondii, Verticordia grandis, Verticordia densiflora var. densiflora, Waitzia acuminata var. acuminata, Xanthorrhoea drummondii and Xylomelum angustifolium.

### 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**

CALM advised that a brief site inspection carried out on the 21 October 2004 by CALM concluded that the area appeared to be relatively high in floral diversity and was comparatively undisturbed and intact in its structure and composition, with weeds only present along the edges of the remnant. The field inspection confirmed the remnant comprises of the scrub-heath on lateritic sandplain vegetation community. The remnant occurs within the Geraldton Sandplains IBRA region that is considered to be a hotspot of botanic diversity of international significance. DAWA advised that the vegetation of this area was semi cleared around 15 years ago and that considerable weed invasion was noted around the perimeter and the presence of rabbits was also noted. Given the relatively small area under application, the presence of weeds and rabbit populations and the exposure of the site to agricultural chemicals, it is unlikely that the area under application represents an area of outstanding biodiversity in the bioregion. This proposal is therefore unlikely to be at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology**      CALM, 2005  
DAWA, 2004.  
GIS Databases: Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia-EA 18/10/00.  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004.

#### (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**

CALM advised that a brief site inspection carried out on the 21 October 2004 by CALM observed several reptiles and birds present in the remnant and it is highly likely the area contains suitably intact habitat for many local fauna taxa due to the relatively undisturbed nature of the vegetation. The maintenance of intact remnants in the cleared agricultural landscape is important to the continued existence of many native fauna populations, which have become isolated as a result of broad-scale clearing. The vegetation under assessment contains 19ha of relatively intact vegetation that would appear to be of some value as habitat to local fauna species. There is a high probability that the remnant acts as an ecological stepping stone for animals migrating between other intact habitats in the local area. The clearing of this vegetation could potentially interfere with the continued movement of these fauna populations, and contribute to their fragmentation. Given the small island nature of the area under application and its constant exposure to agricultural chemicals, it is unlikely to represent significant habitat for local fauna species. In addition, the proponent has entered into a conservation covenant with CALM protecting 91 hectares of vegetation adjacent to the site. This much larger fenced off area would represent a more suitable habitat for local fauna species. This proposal is therefore unlikely to be at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology**      CALM, 2005.  
CALM's Threatened and Priority Fauna Database [The comprehensiveness of the database is dependent on the amount of survey carried out in the area and does not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing (CALM, 2005)].  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004.

#### (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**

CALM advised that a brief site inspection was carried out on the 21 October 2004 by CALM but no species of rare or priority flora were identified. However, this inspection was not detailed and would not be regarded as an adequate flora survey. Based on the proximity of DRF and Priority taxa on the same broad vegetation and soil type and the relatively intact condition of the land under assessment there appears to be a high probability of flora of conservation significance being present and in particular the DRF taxa *Daviesia speciosa*. Considering the degree of clearing that has historically occurred in the region and the isolated nature of the remnant to other

intact native vegetation, the land under assessment is considered to be a good representation of the original vegetation community that occurred in the area and thus worthy of conservation. CALM recommends that a flora survey be undertaken as a matter of priority to determine the biological value of the vegetation and the presence of DRF and Priority Flora. Given the small island nature, competition with feral plant and animal species and its constant exposure to agricultural chemicals the area under application is unlikely to be suitable habitat for specially protected flora species. In addition, the proponent has entered into a conservation covenant with CALM protecting 91 hectares of vegetation adjacent to the site. This much larger fenced off area would represent a more suitable habitat for significant flora species. This proposal is therefore unlikely to be at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology** CALM, 2005.  
GIS Databases: Declared Rare and Priority Flora list - CALM 01/07/05.  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004.  
Florabase, 2005.  
CALM's Threatened and Priority Flora Database [The comprehensiveness of the database is dependent on the amount of survey carried out in the area and does not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing (CALM, 2005)].

**(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**

CALM advised that a brief site inspection was carried out on the 21 October 2004 by CALM, however it did not include staff with specialist TEC knowledge. No known occurrences of TECs are recorded in the local area. This proposal is therefore not at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology** CALM, 2005.  
CALM's Threatened Ecological Community Database [The comprehensiveness of the database is dependent on the amount of survey carried out in the area and does not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing (CALM, 2005)].  
GIS Databases: Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 12/04/05.

**(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**

CALM have advised that based on the amount of historical clearing in the region, and hence the small amount of native vegetation remaining in the Shire, the 19ha of remnant vegetation under assessment represents a significant remnant in the local area. The clearing of this remnant would amount to a substantial loss of biodiversity and would also be inconsistent with a number of State and Commonwealth principles and objectives of terrestrial biodiversity conservation.

The vegetation under application is part of Beard vegetation association 379 and lies in the Mingenew Shire in the Geraldton Sandplains Bioregion. Current figures estimate that there is 20.2% of association 379 remaining in Western Australia and 20.3% is in secure tenure. The Geraldton Sandplains has a vegetation extent of 26.8% and the Shire of Mingenew has 6.6% of its pre-European extent remaining (Shepherd et al. 2001). Although the representation of pre-European vegetation is below the State's target objectives for biodiversity conservation, Beard vegetation association is relatively well represented in secure tenure. In addition, the proponent has entered into a conservation covenant with CALM protecting 91 hectares of vegetation adjacent to the site. This proposal is therefore unlikely to be at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology** GIS Databases: Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia - EA 18/10/00, Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01, Local Government Authorities - DLI 08/07/04.  
Shepherd et al, 2001.  
Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002  
CALM, 2005.

**(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 at variance to this Principle**

The area under assessment is located in the Irwin River catchment. No watercourses or wetlands exist within the area under application. The proposed clearing is therefore, not at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology** GIS Databases: Hydrography, linear - DoE 01/02/04, Hydrographic Catchments (Basins and Catchments) - DoE 03/04/03.  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004.  
DoE - Midwest/Gascoyne Hydro advice 2004.

**(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**

DAWA advised that the proposed clearing is intended to reduce the amount of double working and over spraying associated with the extra headlands that the remnant vegetation creates. During assessment, considerable weed invasion was noted around the perimeter of the remnant vegetation. The assessment report identifies a high wind erosion risk on the loose, sandy soil surface. Appropriate management strategies are already in place (such as minimum tillage sowing techniques) to address this hazard. Therefore, the potential for wind erosion to occur would be minimal. DAWA concluded that the proposed clearing of 19 hectares for grazing and pasture within Lot 113 is not likely to cause appreciable on or off site land degradation.

**Methodology** DAWA, 2004.

GIS Databases: Salinity Risk LM 25-DOLA 00, Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map SCP DOE 04/11/04, Soils Statewide-DA 11/99.  
Department of Agriculture (2004 Map Unit Database).  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004

**(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 at variance to this Principle**

CALM advised that a brief site inspection was carried out on the 21 October 2004 by CALM. No direct impacts on conservation reserves would be expected from the proposed clearing. This proposal is therefore not at variance to this Principle.

**Methodology** CALM, 2004.

GIS Databases - CALM Regional Parks - CALM 12/04/02, CALM Managed Lands and Waters - CALM 01/07/05, Proposed National Parks FMP-CALM 19/03/03, Register of National Estate - EA 28/01/03  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004.

**(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**

DAWA advised that the site is internally draining with no obvious surface drainage from the area. The area under application falls within the Irwin River catchment and does not include any Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA) Protection Zones or Source Areas. In addition, the area to be cleared is relatively small and not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water (Midwest Gascoyne Hydro Unit, 2005).

**Methodology** DAWA, 2004.

GIS Databases - Current WIN data sets, PDWSA Protection Zones - DOE 07/01/04, Public Drinking Water Sources (PDWSAs) - DOE 29/11/04, Hydrographic Catchments - Catchments - DOE 03/04/03.  
Midwest Gascoyne Hydro Unit, 2005.

**(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 at variance to this Principle**

The area under application lies in the Irwin River catchment with deep, sandy, internally draining soil. Any rainfall (experiences low rainfall of approximately 400mm) would drain quickly and would not lead to an incremental increase in peak flood height or duration.

**Methodology** DAWA, 2004.

GIS Databases - Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01, Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia - EA 18/10/00, Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01, Local Government Authorities - DLI 08/07/04.  
Site visit, DoE Officer, 2004.

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

**Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

The Shire of Mingenew advised that the application to clear 19 hectares from Yandanooka Location 113 has been approved subject to conditions that have already been met by the proponent.

The Conservation Council of WA urged that comprehensive and appropriately timed flora and fauna surveys of the site be conducted before a decision on this application is made. Such surveys should consider issues including EPA's Position Statement No. 2, the biodiversity of the site, whether the site contains DRF or TECs. All of these issues are considered as part of the clearing permit assessment process.

This application was presented at a DoE regional team meeting to seek advice on any Environmental Protection  
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or water licensing issues. In this case, there were no additional licences or permits required.

Sophie Muller (CALM covenanting section) advised that Mr Ward (proponent) had hand delivered the signed covenant documentation on the 9 January 2006. These documents have been signed by the Executive Director (CALM) and have been lodged with DOLA. Ms Muller advised that notification to this effect would be forwarded in writing.

#### Methodology

### 4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Grazing & Pasture	Mechanical Removal	19	Grant	The assessable criteria have been addressed and no objections were raised. The Shire of Mingenew has given approval with conditions and the proponent has already met all of these conditions. The Conservation Council of WA urged that flora and fauna surveys be conducted that considered the EPA's Position Statement No. 2, biodiversity, DRF and TECs. All of these issues are assessed as part of a clearing permit application assessment. There are no conflicts of interest in relation to Environmental Protection or Water licences. CALM have advised that the Executive Director of CALM has signed off on the proponent's covenant of 91 hectares of vegetation adjacent to the site. This conservation covenant has been lodged with DOLA. The assessing officer therefore recommends that this permit for 19ha be granted.

### 5. References

- CALM Land clearing proposal advice. Advice to A/Director General, Department of Environment (DoE). Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia. DoE TRIM ref CEO 48/05.
- DAWA Land degradation assessment report. Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation, Department of Agriculture Western Australia. DoE TRIM ref CEO1676/04.
- 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.
- Keighery, BJ (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, 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.

### 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)