



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 2379/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Shark Bay Resources Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Lot 61 on Plan 220252
Special Lease 3116/9187
Shark Bay Solar Salt Industry Agreement Act 1983
Local Government Area: Shire Of Shark Bay
Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

| Clearing Area (ha) | No. Trees | Method of Clearing | For the purpose of: |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 5 | | Mechanical Removal | Miscellaneous clearing |

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 |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Vegetation within the application area has been mapped at a 1:250,000 scale as the following Beard vegetation association (Shepherd et al., 2001; GIS Database);</p> <p>- 112: Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; <i>Acacia ligulata</i> over <i>Triodia plurinervata</i>.</p> <p>Mattiske Consulting Pty Ltd undertook flora and vegetation survey of the <i>Shark Bay Solar Salt Industry Agreement Act 1983</i> Special Lease 3116/9187 and Mining Lease 260SA from 29 July to 2 August 1996. The flora and vegetation survey included the area under application. The vegetation within the lease area was defined and mapped at a scale of 1:25,000. A total of 17 vegetation associations were recorded during the survey of the lease area. Three vegetation associations were identified and described for the application area (Mattiske, 1996).</p> <p>Association 9: Low closed to open shrubland with occasional emergent <i>Acacia ligulata</i> over <i>Triodia plurinervata</i> and/or <i>Triodia bromoides</i> on red sand dunes, occasionally with limestone pebbles larger than 20 centimetres, on the lower to upper slopes above birridas.</p> <p>Association 11: Low closed shrubland of <i>Melaleuca sp.</i> Shark Bay and <i>Triodia plurinervata</i> with mixed shrubs, on mid slopes to upper slopes of sand dunes on Freycinet Reach with exposed limestone rocks outcropping.</p> <p>Association 12: Closed to open low heath dominated by <i>Melaleuca cardiophylla</i> with scattered emergent taller shrubs of <i>Acacia</i> species with large areas of mixed Asteraceae species, in creamy-yellow sand on upper slopes of dunes.</p> | <p>Shark Bay Resources Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 5 hectares of native vegetation for miscellaneous purposes. The purpose of the clearing is to maintain the town site in a safe and tidy condition. Shark Bay Resources has identified several specific projects which would require clearing of native vegetation and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of cleared areas around buildings and tracks; Clearing for the construction of additional buildings around the town sit; Clearing around buildings and under powerlines to reduce the risk of fire; and Clearing for the removal of substances which pose an immediate hazard to human health (i.e. asbestos). <p>The vegetation will be cleared by excavator or bulldozer. All vegetation and topsoil will be collected and stockpiled for the use in future rehabilitation or revegetation projects for other cleared or degraded areas on the lease area or adjacent mining lease area (Shark Bay Resources, 2008).</p> | <p>Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery 1994).</p> <p>to</p> <p>Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994).</p> | <p>The vegetation condition of the application area was assessed from photographs submitted with the application, Mattiske (1996) and from a site inspection on 1 May 2008.</p> |

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 application area is located within the Geraldton Sandplains Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) region which encompasses an area of 3,140,478 hectares (Shepherd et al., 2001; GIS Database). Approximately 42.24% of the pre-European vegetation remains within the Geraldton Sandplains IBRA region (GIS database; Shepherd et al. 2001). The vegetation of the Geraldton Sandplains IBRA region comprises mainly proteaceous scrub-heaths, rich in endemics on sandy earths. In terms of its flora and fauna, the area represents the interzone between the south-western bioregions of Western Australia and the Carnarvon bioregion (Desmond and Chant, 2001). The area under application is located on the Heirisson Prong within the Edle subregion and has been described by Desmond and Chant (2001) as a refuge for endangered mammals and reptiles. The subregion is also known to be a centre of high endemism for reptiles (Australian Heritage Database, 2008).

The application area is located within the Shark Bay Salt town lease and has been impacted on by town site, as well as mining activities over a long period of time (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). A site visit to the application area by the Assessing Officer indicated that the area is situated over the Shark Bay Salt town lease which lies adjacent to the Shark Bay Resources mine site. It was evident that the vegetation has been significantly impacted on by past and present town site and mining activities, and as a result the vegetation condition ranged from good to degraded. Several introduced species had been planted within and around the Shark Bay town site for aesthetic and grazing purposes, as well as to reduce wind velocities within the town.

Mattiske (1996) surveyed the Shark Bay Resources Town Lease and State Agreement Mining Lease areas and recorded a total of 185 vascular plants species from 124 genera and 54 families. The floristic diversity of the vegetation that has been identified across the town lease and adjacent mining lease area would be considered high. Three vegetation associations were identified within the application area. These were:

- Association 9: Low closed to open shrubland with occasional emergent *Acacia ligulata* over *Triodia plurinervata* and/or *Triodia bromoides* on red sand dunes, occasionally with limestone pebbles larger than 20 centimetres, on the lower to upper slopes above birridas;
- Association 11: Low closed shrubland of *Melaleuca sp. Shark Bay* and *Triodia plurinervata* with mixed shrubs, on mid slopes to upper slopes of sand dunes on Freycinet Reach with exposed limestone rocks outcropping; and
- Association 12: Closed to open low heath dominated by *Melaleuca cardiophylla* with scattered emergent taller shrubs of *Acacia* species with large areas of mixed Asteraceae species, in creamy-yellow sand on upper slopes of dunes.

Association 9 was common in the north of the lease area and also off the mining lease area, whilst association 12 is the common vegetation association in the Biosphere Reserve area to the north of the application area (Mattiske, 1996). Mattiske (1996) noted that association 11 was restricted in its distribution and included the area which had been developed for the Shark Bay town site. It was evident from the site visit that this area had undergone considerable disturbance human activity associated with the town site.

The previous disturbances that have occurred within the application area as a result of town site activities, as well as nearby mining activities are likely to have impacted on the biodiversity of the area, which would otherwise be quite high. Given the wider distribution of higher quality vegetation throughout and off the mining lease area (Mattiske, 1996), the vegetation within the application area is unlikely to be considered an area of outstanding biodiversity.

Based on the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology

Australian Heritage Database (2008)
Desmond and Chant (2001)
Mattiske (1996)
Shark Bay Resources (2008)
Shepherd et al. (2001)
GIS Database:
- Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia

(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 application area is located within the Shark Bay Resources Salt town lease which is situated adjacent to the Shark Bay Resources mine site at Useless Loop (Shark Bay Resources, 2008; GIS Database). The town lease is situated within the Shark Bay World Heritage Site and Shark Bay Area Register of National Estate. The area has been noted for its importance as it provides significant marine and terrestrial fauna habitat for native fauna species, particularly habitats associated with steep salinity gradients in the bay and undisturbed refugial areas on isolated islands and peninsulas (Australian Heritage Database, 2008). The area under

application is located on the Heirisson Prong within the Edel subregion and has been described by Desmond and Chant (2001) as a refuge for endangered mammals and reptiles. The subregion is also known to be a centre of high endemism for reptiles (Australian Heritage Database, 2008).

A site inspection of the application area was undertaken by the Assessing Officer on 1 May 2008. It was evident that the application area is situated over the Shark Bay Salt town lease and includes an area that lies adjacent to the Shark Bay Resources mine site. The vegetation condition ranged from good to degraded, and the vegetation cover within the application area ranged from dense to sparse in some sections. The town lease at Shark Bay has a long history of habitation (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). It was evident that the vegetation within the application area has been disturbed by past and present town site, as well as mining activities, which are likely to have impacted on the habitat value for the area. It was observed that the diversity of landforms within the application area is low in terms of ranges, ridges, outcrops or caves suitable to provide habitat for fauna.

The vegetation within the application area has been described by Matiske (1996) as vegetation associations 9, 11 and 12. Association 9 was common in the north of the lease area and also off the mining lease area, whilst association 12 is the common vegetation association in the Biosphere Reserve area to the north of the application area (Matiske, 1996). Matiske (1996) noted that association 11 was restricted in its distribution and included the area which had been developed for the Shark Bay town site activities. It was evident from the site visit that this area had undergone considerable disturbance from human activity and as a result the habitat value of the area is likely to have been adversely impacted on. As the vegetation and landforms within the application area are common throughout the lease area and adjoining areas, it would be considered likely that most fauna would be able to relocate into these surrounding areas if present within the application area upon the commencement of clearing.

Given that the application area has been disturbed by past and present town site and mining activities and that larger areas of higher quality vegetation exist throughout and adjacent to the Shark Bay Resources town lease and mining lease area, it is unlikely that the vegetation within the application area would be considered as significant habitat for fauna.

Based on the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Australian Heritage Database (2008)
Desmond and Chant (2001)
Matiske (1996)
Shark Bay Resources (2008)
GIS Database:
- Shark Bay North 1.4m Orthomosaic - DLI 02

(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

According to available datasets there are no known records of Declared Rare Flora (DRF) or Priority flora species within the application area (GIS database). The nearest recorded population of DRF is located approximately 72 kilometres south-east of the application area (GIS Database).

Matiske Consulting Pty Ltd carried out a flora and vegetation survey of Shark Bay Resources Mining Lease area (Matiske, 1996). The flora and vegetation survey included a search of the Department of Conservation and Land Management's (now the Department of Environment and Conservation) Threatened (Declared Rare) Flora databases for DRF and Priority flora species, a field survey to define and map the vegetation communities within the survey area and a search for the existence of conservation significant species (Matiske, 1996).

Matiske (1996) identified the vegetation within the application area as associations 9, 11 and 12. Association 9 has been described as low closed to open shrubland with occasional emergent *Acacia ligulata* over *Triodia plurinervata* and/or *Triodia bromoides* on red sand dunes, occasionally with limestone pebbles larger than 20 centimetres, on the lower to upper slopes above birridas. Matiske (1996) noted that Association 9 comprised of the DRF species *Triodia bromoides*. The Assessing Officer reviewed Florabase on 1 April 2008 and notes that *Triodia bromoides* has been reclassified as a Priority 4 species (Western Australia Herbarium, 2008). Given the vegetation type of the application area, *Triodia bromoides* is likely to be present within the application area. Matiske (1996) stated that *Triodia bromoides* is common in many areas of the south-eastern and southern parts of the Shark Bay Resources Mining Lease area and that Association 9 was common on and off the lease area. If present within the application area, the proposed clearing may impact on a small number of individuals of *Triodia bromoides*. Given that *Triodia bromoides* is common in many areas of the south-eastern and southern parts Shark Bay Resources mining lease area, the vegetation proposed to be cleared is not likely to represent significant habitat for this species.

No DRF or Priority flora species were identified within associations 11 and 12 (Matiske, 1996).

Other Priority species that were identified by Matiske (1996) on the Shark Bay Resources lease area include

Abutilon sp. Hamelin (Priority 2), *Melaleuca huegelii* subsp. *pristicensis* (Priority 2), *Olearia occidentissima* (Priority 2), *Rhodanthe oppositifolia* subsp. *ornata* (Priority 2) and *Stenanthemum divaricatum* (Priority 3). All of these Priority 2 or Priority 3 species were identified within different vegetation associations to that of the application area (Mattiske, 1996). As a result, it would be considered unlikely that these species would occur within the application area.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Mattiske (1996)
Western Australian Herbarium (2008)
GIS Database:
- Declared Rare and Priority Flora List

(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**
There are no known Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC's) within the application area (GIS database; Shark Bay Resources, 2008). The nearest known TEC is located approximately 77 kilometres east, north-east of the application area (GIS database). Given the distance between the proposal and the nearest known TEC, the proposed clearing is unlikely to impact on the conservation of that TEC.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Shark Bay Resources (2008)
GIS Database:
- Threatened Ecological Communities

(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 clearing application area is located within the Geraldton Sandplains Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) region in which approximately 42.2% of the pre-European vegetation remains (GIS database; Shepherd et al. 2001). See table below.

The vegetation of the clearing application area has been mapped as Beard vegetation association 112: Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; *Acacia ligulata* over *Triodia plurinervata* (GIS Database). According to Shepherd et al., (2001) approximately 98.3% of Beard vegetation association 112 remains within the State. See table below.

There is no information available to indicate the extent of Beard vegetation association 112 remaining within the Geraldton Sandplains IBRA region.

According to the Bioregional Conservation Status of Ecological Vegetation Classes the conservation status for the Geraldton Sandplains Bioregion is "Depleted". With approximately 42.2% of the pre-European vegetation remaining, the conservation status of the Geraldton Sandplains IBRA region is unlikely to be considered at risk of becoming listed as "Vulnerable" (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002).

According to the Bioregional Conservation Status of Ecological Vegetation Classes the conservation status for Beard vegetation association 112 is of "Least Concern" (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002).

| | Pre-European area (ha)* | Current extent (ha)* | Remaining %* | Conservation Status** | Pre-european % in IUCN Class I-IV Reserves |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| IBRA Bioregion – Geraldton Sandplains | 3,136,277 | 1,324,440 | ~42.2 | Depleted | 15.3 |
| Beard veg assoc. – State | | | | | |
| 112 | 26,457 | 26,007 | ~98.3 | Least Concern | 1.1 |
| Beard veg assoc. – Bioregion | | | | | |
| No information available | | | | | |

* Shepherd et al. (2001)

** Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)
Shepherd et al., (2001)
GIS Database:
- Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia
- Pre-European Vegetation

(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**
According to available databases, there are no watercourses or drainage lines within the application area (GIS Database). A site visit to the application area by the Assessing Officer indicated that the vegetation within the application area is not growing in association with a wetland or watercourse (GIS Database; Shark Bay Resources, 2008)

No groundwater dependent ecosystems are known to occur in or near the application area (GIS Databases).

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Shark Bay Resources (2008)
GIS Database:
- Geodata, Lakes - GA 28/06/02
- Hydrography, Linear - DoE 1/2/04
- Shark Bay North 1.4m Orthomosaic - DLI 02
- Potential Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems - DoE 2004
- Rivers

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

Comments **Proposal may be at variance to this Principle**
According to the Department of Agriculture in Technical Bulletin No 73 "An inventory and condition survey of rangelands in the Carnarvon Basin, Western Australia" the application area is located within the Edel Land System.

The Edel Land System consists of four land units (Payne et al., 1987). These are;

Unit 1: Longitudinal dunes: Longitudinal dunes and dune-like sandy crests over limestone ridges with soils consisting of reddish brown calcareous sands.

Unit 2: Stony rises and plains: Restricted limestone plains and rises which are densely strewn with pebbles, cobbles or boulders. Soils are variable but include very shallow sand, loamy or clayey sand and red, reddish-brown or yellow-brown sand.

Unit 3: Undulating sandy plains: Swales and undulating plains, sparsely to moderately strewn with limestone gravels. Soils consist of yellow-red or red-brown sands or loamy sands; and

Unit 4: Saline sands: Low-lying saline plains, lightly to moderately strewn with limestone cobbles or pebbles. Soils consist of very shallow grey loamy sands with calcareous inclusions (Payne et al., 1987).

It was evident during a site visit that the application area is most likely located within Edel landform Unit 1 - Longitudinal dunes and Unit 3 - Undulating sandy plains. These landform units have mild susceptibility to wind erosion if the vegetative cover is removed (Payne et al., 1987). Due to its coastal location, the application area is likely to be exposed to prevailing onshore westerly winds, as well as offshore easterly winds that blow across Denham Sound. There is likely to be a moderate risk of wind erosion occurring within the application area if the vegetative cover is cleared.

Shark Bay Resources (2008) have advised that the proposed clearing within the application area will be minor (Shark Bay Resources anticipate to clear approximately one hectare per year if required) and for maintenance purposes (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). Shark Bay Resources has identified several specific projects which would involve clearing of native vegetation. These include:

- Maintenance of cleared areas around buildings and tracks.
- Clearing for the construction of additional buildings around the town site.
- Clearing around buildings and under powerlines to reduce the risk of fire, and

- Clearing for the removal of substances which pose an immediate hazard to human health (i.e. asbestos).

Most of the proposed clearing activities are likely to occur within the Shark Bay Salt town lease (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). The Shark Bay town lease has a long history of habitation and as a result has been subject to a considerable degree of disturbance. A considerable portion of the application area is covered by existing town infrastructure and it was evident that several non-native species (to the Shark Bay area) had been planted within and around the Shark Bay town site for aesthetic purposes as well as to reduce wind velocities within the town. Several of the projects that are scheduled within the application area may involve clearing for permanent infrastructure facilities (i.e. buildings) which would mitigate the risk of wind erosion occurring in the long term. The small scale of the proposed clearing activities is likely to further minimise the risk of wind erosion occurring.

The application area is located at Useloop Loop which experiences mean annual rainfall of 200 millimetres and mean annual evaporation of approximately 2,600 millimetres (Shark Bay Resources, 2008; GIS Database). Due to the sandy nature of the soils within the application area, it would be expected that any runoff from normal season rainfall events would infiltrate into the soil which would thereby minimise the risk of water erosion or water logging occurring. On a site visit to the application, no water erosion was observed despite recent heavy rainfall.

Groundwater salinities within the application area have been measured in the range of 3,000-7,000 milligrams/Litre Total Dissolved Solids (GIS Database). At the closest point, the area under application is situated approximately 50-100 metres east of several salt crystallisation ponds which would be considered as hyper-saline. Topographic information indicates that the vast proportion of the application area is located at a vertical elevation of approximately 5-10 metres above the crystallisation ponds (GIS Database). Given the distance and elevation of the application area from the salt crystallisation ponds, the proposed clearing is unlikely to increase land salinisation on or off site.

Based on the above, the proposal may be at variance to this Principle. The Assessing Officer recommends that should the permit be granted, that a condition be imposed on the permit for the purpose of retaining topsoil and vegetation for the rehabilitation of cleared areas.

Methodology Payne et al., (1987)
Shark Bay Resources (2008)
GIS Database:
- Evaporation Isopleths
- Groundwater Salinity, Statewide
- Topographic Contours, Statewide

(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**
The nearest Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) managed land is Friday Island Nature Reserve which is located approximately 3 kilometres north-west of the application area (GIS Database). Friday Island is listed as an 'A' Class nature reserve and is an important guano deposit and rookery for Cormorants. Given its isolation and distance from the application area, it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will have an impact on Friday Island Nature Reserve or the Cormorants that reside on the island.

The application area is located within the Shark Bay Area Register of National Estate (RNE), Shark Bay World Heritage Site and the marine area surrounding the application area is part of the Shark Bay Marine Park (Australian Heritage Database, 2008; GIS Database). The Shark Bay Marine Park boundary is located approximately 1.5 kilometres west of the application area at the closest point (GIS Database). The Shark Bay Area RNE, Shark Bay World Heritage Site and Shark Bay Marine Park have immense conservation value as they provide significant habitat for a high number of marine aquatic and terrestrial fauna species (Australian Heritage Database, 2008). The application area is located over the Shark Bay Salt town lease which is situated adjacent to the operational Shark Bay Resources mine site. The town lease has a long history of habitation and as a result the vegetation has been subject to a considerable degree of disturbance over many years (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). Given the disturbance that has occurred, it is likely that the conservation value of the area has been reduced. Taking into consideration the relatively small scale of the proposed clearing activities that are planned over the next five years, it is unlikely that the conservation value of the Shark Bay Area RNE, Shark Bay World Heritage Site or Shark Bay Marine Park would be adversely impacted by the proposed clearing.

The Heirisson Prong Biosphere Project situated approximately 6.5 kilometres north-west of the application area is of conservation significance as the project aims to re-establish rare and endangered mammals on a mainland peninsula at Shark Bay, Western Australia (Wildlife Research and Management Pty Ltd, 2005). The area north of the predator proof fence is managed by the Useless Loop Community Biosphere Project Group Inc (ULCBPG) under a management agreement signed in 1990 between the ULCBPG and SBSJV (Richards et al. 2000). Due to the distance separating the Heirisson Prong Biosphere Project and the application area, it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will have a detrimental impact to the conservation values of the area.

Based on the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Australian Heritage Database (2008)
Richards et al., (2000)
Shark Bay Resources (2008)
Wildlife Research and Management Pty Ltd (2005)
GIS Database:
- CALM Managed Lands and Waters

(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

A site inspection by the Assessing Officer indicated that there are no permanent wetlands or watercourses within the application area (GIS Database). The application area is situated over the Shark Bay Salt town lease which is adjacent to the Shark Bay Resources operational mine site (Shark Bay Resources, 2008; GIS Database). Several salt crystallisation ponds are situated immediately south and west of the application area (GIS Database). The quality of surface water within the salt crystallisation ponds is likely to be considered hyper-saline. The application area is characterised by low rainfall, high evaporation and sandy porous soils (Short, 2000; GIS Database). Given the small scale of the proposed clearing activities and the porosity of the soils within the application area, the proposal is unlikely to cause water erosion or subsequent sedimentation and turbidity in nearby water bodies.

The application area is not located within a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA) (GIS Database). The nearest PDWSA is the Carnarvon Water Reserve which is located approximately 145 kilometres north, north-east from the application area (GIS Database). Given the distance separating the application area and the nearest water supply area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to impact on the quality of the Carnarvon Water Reserve.

Based on the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Shark Bay Resources (2008)
Short (2000)
GIS Database:
- Hydrography, linear_1
- Rainfall, Mean Annual
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSAs)

(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 application area is characterised by low rainfall, high evaporation and sandy porous soils (Short, 2000; GIS Database). As a result, it would be expected that there would be little surface flows during normal season rains. A site inspection was undertaken on 1 May 2008 by the Assessing Officer and it was evident that there are no permanent or ephemeral water bodies located within the application area (GIS Database).

Shark Bay Resources has applied to clear up to 5 hectares within the Shark Bay Salt town lease for general maintenance of the town site (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). The applicant has advised that the proposed clearing will be undertaken incrementally over a five year permit period (Shark Bay Resources, 2008). Due to the small scale of the proposed clearing activities and the sandy nature of the soils, it would be expected that the majority of the volume from normal season rainfall would infiltrate the soil. The proposed clearing is unlikely to exacerbate or increase the incidence of flooding in the area.

Based on the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Shark Bay Resources (2008)
Short (2000)
GIS Database:
- Hydrography, linear_1
- Geodata, Lakes
- Rainfall, Mean Annual
- Evaporation Isoleths

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

Comments

There is one Native Title claim over the area under application; WC98_017. This claim has been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant group. However, the mining tenement 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 is one registered Site of Aboriginal Significance (Site ID: 6609) within the area under application (GIS Database). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Sites of Aboriginal Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the DEC and the DoW to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licence or approvals are required for the proposed works.

Methodology

4. Assessor's comments

Comment

The proposal has been assessed against the Clearing Principles and may be at variance to Principle (g) and is not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (h), (i) and (j).

It is recommended that should a permit be granted, conditions be endorsed on the permit with regards collection of topsoil and vegetation, recording areas cleared and reporting against the permit conditions.

5. References

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- Richards J.D., Short J. and Cane B. (2000). A short history of community involvement in the Heirisson Prong Endangered Mammal Research Project 1989 to 1999, and beyond. Report to the Useless loop Community Biosphere Project Group Inc, published by CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology, Perth Western Australia.
- Shark Bay Resources (2008). Additional information Accompanying Clearing Permit Application 2377/1, Prepared for the Department of Industry and Resources, Prepared by Shark Bay Resources, January 2008.
- 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.
- Short J. (2000). Heirisson Prong Community Biosphere Reserve Shark Bay, Western Australia. Management Plan 2000-2005. Unpublished Management Plan prepared by Dr Jeff Short formerly of CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology on behalf of the Useless Loop Biosphere Project Group Inc.
- Western Australian Herbarium (2008). Florabase - The Western Australia Flora, A search for *Plectrahne bromoides*, Department of Environment and conservation, <http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au.html>, accessed 17 April 2008.
- Wildlife Research and Management Pty Ltd (2005). Heirisson Prong Threatened Species Project, <<http://www.wildliferesearchmanagement.com.au/overview.htm>>, last updated 8 November 2005, accessed 28 May 2008.

6. Glossary

Acronyms:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| BoM | Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government. |
| CALM | Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia. |
| DAFWA | Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia. |
| DA | Department of Agriculture, Western Australia. |

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|-----------------|---|
| DEC | Department of Environment and Conservation |
| DEH | Department of Environment and Heritage (federal based in Canberra) previously Environment Australia |
| DEP | Department of Environment Protection (now DoE), Western Australia. |
| DIA | Department of Indigenous Affairs |
| DLI | Department of Land Information, Western Australia. |
| DoE | Department of Environment, Western Australia. |
| DoIR | Department of Industry and Resources, Western Australia. |
| DOLA | Department of Land Administration, Western Australia. |
| DoW | Department of Water |
| EP Act | Environment Protection Act 1986, Western Australia. |
| EPBC Act | Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Federal Act) |
| GIS | Geographical Information System. |
| IBRA | Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia. |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union |
| RIWI | Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914, Western Australia. |
| s.17 | Section 17 of the Environment Protection Act 1986, Western Australia. |
| TECs | Threatened Ecological Communities. |

Definitions:

{Atkins, K (2005). *Declared rare and priority flora list for Western Australia, 22 February 2005*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia} :-

- P1** **Priority One - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations which are under threat, either due to small population size, or being on lands under immediate threat, e.g. road verges, urban areas, farmland, active mineral leases, etc., or the plants are under threat, e.g. from disease, grazing by feral animals, etc. May include taxa with threatened populations on protected lands. Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
- P2** **Priority Two - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
- P3** **Priority Three - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from several populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in need of further survey.
- P4** **Priority Four – Rare taxa:** taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed and which, whilst being rare (in Australia), are not currently threatened by any identifiable factors. These taxa require monitoring every 5–10 years.
- R** **Declared Rare Flora – Extant taxa (= Threatened Flora = Endangered + Vulnerable):** taxa which have been adequately searched for, and are deemed to be in the wild either rare, in danger of extinction, or otherwise in need of special protection, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.
- X** **Declared Rare Flora - Presumed Extinct taxa:** taxa which have not been collected, or otherwise verified, over the past 50 years despite thorough searching, or of which all known wild populations have been destroyed more recently, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.

{Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2005} [Wildlife Conservation Act 1950] :-

- Schedule 1** **Schedule 1 – Fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct:** being fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 2** **Schedule 2 – Fauna that is presumed to be extinct:** being fauna that is presumed to be extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 3** **Schedule 3 – Birds protected under an international agreement:** being birds that are subject to an agreement between the governments of Australia and Japan relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 4** **Schedule 4 – Other specially protected fauna:** being fauna that is declared to be fauna that is in need of special protection, otherwise than for the reasons mentioned in Schedules 1, 2 or 3.

{CALM (2005). *Priority Codes for Fauna*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia} :-

- P1** **Priority One: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on threatened lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, active mineral leases. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P2** **Priority Two: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, vacant Crown land, water reserves, etc. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation

status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.

- P3** **Priority Three: Taxa with several, poorly known populations, some on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from several localities, some of which are on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P4** **Priority Four: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and which are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These taxa are usually represented on conservation lands.
- P5** **Priority Five: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are not considered threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.

Categories of threatened species (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

- EX** **Extinct:** A native species for which there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died.
- EX(W)** **Extinct in the wild:** A native species which:
(a) is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; or
(b) has not been recorded in its known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite exhaustive surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form.
- CR** **Critically Endangered:** A native species which is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- EN** **Endangered:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered; and
(b) is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- VU** **Vulnerable:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered or endangered; and
(b) is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- CD** **Conservation Dependent:** A native species which is the focus of a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered within a period of 5 years.