



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 4607/2
Permit type: Purpose

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Origin Energy Resources Limited**

1.3. Property details

Property: Production Licence L11
Local Government Area: Shire of Irwin
Colloquial name: Beharra Springs Gas Production Facility

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
14.15		Mechanical Clearing	Petroleum Production and Associated Infrastructure

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 1 December 2016

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description Beard vegetation associations have been mapped for the whole of Western Australia and are useful to look at vegetation in a regional context. One Beard vegetation association has been mapped within the application area (GIS Database):

378: Shrublands; scrub-heath with scattered *Banksia* spp., *Eucalyptus todtiana* and *Xylomelum angustifolium* on deep sandy flats in the Geraldton Sandplain Region (GIS Database).

Mattiske Consulting Pty Ltd undertook a Threatened and Priority flora search over clearing permit area CPS 4701/1 in July 2011 and identified one vegetation structural community:

H4: Heath dominated by a mix of species including *Banksia telmatiaea*, *Regelia ciliata* and *Melaleuca seriata* with occasional scrub or open scrub of *Hakea obliqua* subsp. *parviflora* on grey or brown sand on lower slopes, flats and drainage basins (Mattiske Consulting, 2011).

No flora or vegetation survey has been undertaken over the proposed amendment area.

Clearing Description

Beharra Springs Gas Production Facility Project. Origin Energy Resources Limited proposes to clear up to 14.15 hectares within a total boundary of approximately 14.15 hectares for the purposes of petroleum production and associated infrastructure. The project is located approximately 31 kilometres south-east of Dongara within the Shire of Irwin.

Vegetation Condition

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

To:

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

Comment

The vegetation condition was assessed by botanists from Mattiske Consulting (2011).

Clearing Permit CPS 4607/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum on 17 November 2011, authorising the clearing of 2.2 hectares within a permit boundary of approximately 2.2 hectares, for the purposes of petroleum production and associated infrastructure.

An application to amend CPS 4607/2 was received on 26 October 2016 to increase the amount of clearing from 2.2 hectares to 14.15 hectares and to increase the permit boundary to 14.15 hectares. The amendment also extends the duration of the permit by 10 years.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

Origin Energy Resources Limited has applied to increase the area permitted to clear from 2.2 hectares to 14.15 hectares, to increase the permit boundary from 2.2 hectares to 14.15 hectares and to extend the duration of the permit by 10 years.

There has been no flora or vegetation survey over the proposed amendment area. Mattiske Consulting (2011) undertook a threatened flora search of the original clearing permit application area in July 2011 and identified several Priority 2 flora species *Schoenus* sp. Eneabba. These plants were considered to represent a new population and the taking of all plants at this location is considered significant to the conservation of the species and were excluded from the application area. The amendment area lies within the Lesueur Sandplain subregion of the Geraldton Sandplains Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia bioregion. This subregion exhibits extremely high floristic endemism and is also regarded as having particularly high floristic diversity (CALM, 2002). The proponent advises that a flora survey will be undertaken prior to clearing of native vegetation (Origin Energy, 2016). Potential impacts to biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a flora management condition.

According to the available databases, there are no known Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities within the amendment area (GIS Database).

Aerial imagery of the amendment area suggests that the faunal habitats are similar to that within the previous permit boundary. The amendment area does not appear to contain significant faunal habitats such as permanent waterbodies, caves or gorge/gully habitats (GIS Database). Given the relatively small size of the application area and its lack of notable habitat features, it is unlikely to be considered significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.

Clearing activities have the potential to result in an increase in the incidence of weed species, which may negatively impact on the biodiversity of the local area. Potential impacts to biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of an existing weed management conditions.

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*. The assessment against the remaining clearing Principles remains unchanged, and further information can be found in the previous decision report CPS 4607/1.

Methodology

CALM (2002)
Mattiske Consulting (2011)

GIS Database:
- Hydrography, linear
- Imagery
- Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered
- Threatened and Priority Flora List

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

Comments

There are no native title claims over the application area (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2016). This claim has been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant groups. 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*.

According to available databases, there are no registered Aboriginal sites of significance within the application area (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 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 Parks and Wildlife, and the Department of Water, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

The clearing permit application was advertised on 7 November 2016 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received.

Methodology Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2016)

4. References

CALM (2002) A Biodiversity Audit of Western Australia's 53 Biogeographical Subregions. Geraldton Sandplain 3 (GS3 - Lesueur Sandplain Subregion). Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.
Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2016) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Government of Western Australia, <http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/>. (Accessed 15 November 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.

Mattiske Consulting (2011) Threatened and Priority Flora Search of the Beharra Springs Office Upgrade and Wolf Dondip 1 Survey Areas. Report prepared for Origin Energy Resources Limited, by Mattiske Consulting, Western Australia, August 2011.

Origin Energy (2016) Beharra Springs Gas Facility – Gas Production Plant and Associated Infrastructure - Clearing Permit Amendment Application (CPS 4607/1). Native Vegetation Clearing Permit Application Supporting Document. Origin Energy Resources Limited, Western Australia, October 2016.

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)
DEE	Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DoE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government (now DEE)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DEE)
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (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	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , 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 <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , 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 <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , 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 <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , 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 <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , 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.