



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 5563/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Quadrant Energy Australia Limited**

1.3. Property details

Property: Petroleum Production Licence TL/1
Petroleum Production Licence TL/2
Petroleum Production Licence TL/5
Petroleum Production Licence TL/6
Petroleum Production Licence TL/8
Petroleum Production Licence TL/9
Petroleum Production Licence TL/10
Petroleum Exploration Permit EP 307
Petroleum Exploration Permit EP 358
Petroleum Exploration Permit TP/7
Petroleum Exploration Permit TP/8

Local Government Area: Shire of Ashburton; City of Karratha
Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
6.5		Mechanical Removal	Petroleum Exploration, Petroleum Appraisal and Production Drilling and Associated Activities

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 02 August 2018

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description The application area is dominated by two major marine habitat types: macroalgae dominated limestone reef, and subtidal reef platform/sand mosaic (DEC, 2006). Other habitat types include high energy coral reefs, sheltered lagoons, sparse seagrass meadows, channels, intertidal areas, shallow limestone platforms, barrier and fringing coral reefs and rocky intertidal shorelines (DEC, 2006).

The marine vegetation occurring within the application areas is typically dominated by species of brown algae, particularly of the genera *Sargassum*, *Turbinaria* and *Pandina*, while green algae from the genera *Caulerpa* and *Cladophora* are also quite common (DEC, 2006).

Seven species of seagrass have been recorded within the application area: *Cymodocea angustata*, *Halophila ovalis*, *Halophila spinulosa*, *Halodule uninervis*, *Thalassia hemprichii*, *Thalassodendron ciliatum* and *Syringodium isoetifolium* (DEC, 2006).

Clearing Description Quadrant Energy Australia Limited (Quadrant) proposes to clear up to 6.5 hectares of marine vegetation within a boundary of approximately 65,057 hectares, for the purpose of petroleum exploration activities, petroleum appraisal and production drilling and associated activities. The project is located in offshore waters in the vicinity of Barrow Island and the Montebello Islands, approximately 22 kilometres off the Pilbara coast, at its nearest point.

Vegetation Condition Pristine: No obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994);
To
Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994).

Comment

The geomorphology, sediment quality and water quality within the application area and surrounding region are generally in an undisturbed condition, apart from some localised disturbance for pipelines and shipping channels (DEC, 2006).

Clearing permit CPS 5563/1 was granted to Apache Energy Ltd by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (now the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) on 11 July 2013, and was valid from 3 August 2013 to 3 August 2018. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 6.5 hectares of native vegetation within a clearing permit boundary of approximately 93,317 hectares.

On 19 June 2018, the Permit Holder applied to amend CPS 5563/1 to extend the permit expiry date from 3 August 2018 to 3 August 2028, remove Condition 4 from the permit, and change the name of the permit holder to Quadrant Energy Australia Limited due to a change of company name. The area of clearing authorised will remain unchanged.

3. Assessment of application against Clearing Principles

Comments

The Permit Holder has applied to extend the permit duration by ten years, remove Condition 4 from the permit, and update the name of the permit holder.

Condition 4 on the original permit (CPS 5563/1) restricted the type of clearing activities which could be undertaken within a Marine Sanctuary Area to "biological monitoring". Quadrant has advised that biological monitoring involving disturbance to marine vegetation is no longer required in this area. As a result, Condition 4 has been removed from the permit, and the area the condition related to (the red shaded area on Plan 5563/1) has been excised from the amended permit area. The permit outer boundaries have been further reduced to remove the area formerly covered by Retention Lease TR/1 which is no longer current, and to align with the revised boundaries of Production Licence TP/8.

The area approved to clear (6.5 hectares) remains unchanged. The amendments are unlikely to result in any significant change to the environmental impacts of the proposed clearing (GIS Database).

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*. Environmental information has been reviewed, and the assessment of the proposed clearing against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment contained in decision report CPS 5563/1.

Methodology

GIS Database:

- DPaW Tenure
- Imagery
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities boundaries
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened Fauna

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

Comments

There are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2018). 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.

There are no Native Title claims over the area under application (DPLH, 2018). However, the petroleum 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*.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, to determine whether any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

Methodology

DPLH (2018)

4. References

- DEC (2006) Management Plan for the Montebello/Barrow Islands Marine Conservation Reserves 2007-2017, Management Plan No. 55. Prepared by the Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia.
- DPLH (2018) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.
<http://maps.daa.wa.gov.au/AHIS/> (Accessed 25 July 2018).
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DBCA and DWER)
DEE	Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMIRS)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DoE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government (now DEE)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DEE)
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
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 (2017) 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 <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> . 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 <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> . 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.