Department of Environment
Government of Western Australia

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 653/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku**

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 9 ON PLAN 91722
Local Government Area: Shire Of Ngaanyatjarraku
Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
5.2		Mechanical Removal	Road construction or maintenance
6		Mechanical Removal	Road construction or maintenance

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 associations 18: Low woodland: mulga (Acacia aneura); and 39:Shrublands; mulga scrub. (Shepherd et al 2001, Hopkins et al 2001)	Photo imagery of the area (Western Australia ETM 25m 543 - AGO 04) indicates that the area under application consists of sparse vegetation.	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery 1994)	A clearing permit (CPS 519/1) with similar vegetation associations was issued by the Department for an area 15 km south of the area under application. The vegetation survey for this permit has been used as an indication of the vegetation description and condition as the area has little change in form and there are no intervening structures that may isolate one area from another. CALM (2003) also describes the flora and fauna species as wide ranging over the surrounding subregions suggesting little difference in environmental values over large areas inclusive of the granted permit and this application. The vegetation survey for CPS 519/1 reported that the area was mainly scattered mulga (Acacia aneura) with a scattered mid-storey of Eremophila and Senna. The understorey consists mostly of grasses, except where there is pooling of runnoff where Ptilotus and Eremophila species are prevalent (Western Botanical 2005 TRIM ref. KGI266).

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 area under application is located within the Central Ranges IBRA region which has been described as rich and diverse in both its flora and fauna. However most species are wide ranging and usually occur in at least one, and often several, adjoining subregions (CALM 2003).

Given that the flora and fauna are wide ranging (CALM 2003), and the proposed clearing consists of relatively small, isolated patches, it is unlikely that the areas under application represent higher biodiversity that that in the surrounding landscapes. Further the areas applied to be cleared are adjacent to an existing road and are likely to have been subject to some disturbance. Therefore, the clearing as proposed is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology CALM (2003)

(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 area under application is surrounded by an extensive, well represented habitat that will offset habitat loss arising from the proposed clearing. The proposed clearing itself consists of relatively small, isolated segments along or near to the edges of the Warburton-Jameson Road, which would nominally be a disturbed area. The clearing as proposed is therefore not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS database: -
Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01
Western Australia ETM 25m 543 - AGO 04

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.

Comments **Proposal is not at variance to this Principle**
There are no known occurrences of Declared Rare Flora within the area under application or in the local area (50km radius).

Methodology Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 01/07/05

(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 occurrences of Threatened Ecological Communities within the area under application or in the local area (50km radius).

Methodology Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 12/4/05

(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 at variance to this Principle**
The Beard vegetation association 18 has an extent of approximately 99.9% of the Pre-European extent remaining (>24,000,000 ha) of which approximatley 2.5% is within CALM Reserves (Shepherd et al 2001, Hopkins et al 2001).

The Beard vegetation association 39 has an extent of approximately 100% of the Pre-European extent remaining (>5,000,000 ha) of which approximatley 3.6 % is within CALM Reserves (Shepherd et al 2001. Hopkins et al 2001).

Methodology Shepherd et al. 2001
Hopkins et al. 2001

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
There are no waterbodies within or in close proximity to the area under application. Therefore the vegetation under application is not associated with a watercourse or wetland and the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS database: -
- Hydrography, Linear - DOE 01/02/04
- Geodata, Lakes - GA 28/06/02

(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

The area under application is part of a landscape of ranges and hills on granitic rock. The chief soils are shallow sands which would be prone to erosion if exposed. Given that the relatively small, isolated areas proposed to be cleared are for the use of gravel pits and road maintenance, it is unlikely that large areas of soil would be bare and possibly subject to erosion. Therefore the clearing as proposed is unlikely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

GIS database: -
Soils, Statewide - DA 11/99

(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 proposed area of clearing is within an area listed on the Register of National Estate as the Ranges of the Western Dessert. The Ranges are registered for natural values and are recognised as having 'Indigenous values of National Estate significance'. The Australian Heritage Database describes the area as being 'sandy and rocky with diverse vegetation'. Notwithstanding, the areas to be cleared are relatively small and isolated and are necessary for road construction and maintenance.

The nearest CALM-managed lands, Gibson Desert Nature Reserve, is located approximately 110km north-west of the proposed clearing. The proposed clearing will not affect this reserve given the small size of the clearing and the distance of the clearing from the reserve.

Methodology

GIS databases: -
System 1 to 5 and 7 to 12 Areas - DEP 06/95
CALM Managed Lands and Waters - CALM 1/07/05

(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

The proposed clearing is small and in scattered segments. This is unlikely to affect any groundwater and the area has no known groundwater dependant communities. There is no permanent surface water in region due to low average annual rainfall (300mm, average annual mean) and high average annual evaporation (3000mm, average annual mean) rates.

Methodology

GIS databases: -
Western Australia ETM 25m 543 - AGO 04
Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01
Evaporation Isopleths - BOM 09/98

(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

Given the low rainfall (300mm, average annual mean) and high annual evaporation (3000mm, average annual mean), flooding may be an infrequent event. Although the section of the road to be repaired has a history of being damaged by storms, the removal of small amounts of vegetation for its repair is unlikely to exacerbate the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Methodology

GIS databases: -
Rainfall, Mean Annual - BOM 30/09/01
Evaporation Isopleths - BOM 09/98

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

Comments

The area under assessment is within land determined by native title to be held by the Ngaanyatjarra Peoples. However, the local government authority, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, has the responsibility of providing services and facilities under the powers of the Local Government Act 1995.

Further, this project is part of the the Ngaanyatjarra Lands Telecommunications Project which is funded by the Commonwealth Government (Department of Communications , Information Technology and the Arts) and the WA State Government through the Department of Industry and Resources. The funding followed an application to the Commonwealth Communications Coordinated Infrastructure Fund, partially in response to the findings of the "Gordon Inquiry". The project objective is to provide broadband infrastructure in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands to enable the delivery of urgently need Government Services in the Lands for health, education, policing, justice,

community development, etc., in accordance with the finding of 'Gordon Inquiry'.

There are two Aboriginal Sites of Significance within 2km of the area under application, however the area itself was assessed by the Ngaanyatjarra Council and it was determined appropriate for clearing to proceed.

Methodology Supporting documentation from the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku TRIM Ref No ED567

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Road construction o	Mechanical Removal	5.2	**Grant**	The application has been assessed and the proposed clearing is not or not likely to be at variance to the Clearing Principles. The assessing officer advises that the permit be granted.
maintenance				
Road construction o	Mechanical Removal	6	**Grant**	As above
maintenance				

5. References

CALM (2003) A biodiversity audit of Western Australia's 53 biogeographical Subregions in 2002, WA

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.

Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.

Keighery, 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.

Western Botanical (2005) Assessments of flora and vegetation at proposed drill sites West Musgrave Project area WMC Resources Ltd. DoE TRIM ref. KGI266.

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)