



# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6643/1  
Permit type: Purpose Permit

### 1.2. Proponent details

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

### 1.3. Property details

Property: Pipeline Licence PL 18  
Production Licence PL 11  
Local Government Area: Shire of Irwin  
Colloquial name: Beharra Springs Right of Way Gas Pipeline Project

### 1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
7.577		Mechanical Removal	Right of Way Easement

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
Decision Date: 3 September 2015

## 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 vegetation association has been mapped within the application area (GIS Database):

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

Origin Energy Resources Ltd (2015) consolidated existing mapped flora and vegetation surveys within the local region and mapped three vegetation types within the application area:

- H1: Low Heath of mixed Proteaceous and Myrtaceous species on yellow-brown sand on midslopes;
- H2: Heath of *Banksia hookeriana* over Low Heath of mixed species on yellow sand upperslopes; and
- D1: Disturbed vegetation on firebreak.

#### Clearing Description

Beharra Springs Right of Way Gas Pipeline.  
Origin Energy Resources Ltd proposes to clear up to 7.577 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 7.577 hectares, for the purpose of a right of way easement. The project is located approximately 30 kilometres south-east of Dongara, in the Shire of Irwin.

#### Vegetation Condition

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

To:

Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery, 1994).

#### Comment

Clearing of native vegetation is required to maintain a cleared six metre wide right of way easement over existing gas pipelines associated with the Beharra Springs Gas Processing Facility for the purposes of inspection activities and maintaining a firebreak. Clearing of native vegetation will be mechanical and typically completed using a slasher although a grader may be used, when required.

## 3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

### Comments

The proposal to clear 7.577 hectares of native vegetation within an application area of 7.577 hectares for the purpose of a right of way easement is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts. The application area occurs within the Lesueur subregion of the Geraldton Sandplains Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia bioregion (GIS Database). Based on aerial imagery, the vegetation within the application area is in a 'good' to 'completely degraded' condition, with the degradation due to historical clearing for the construction of pipelines and access tracks (Keighery, 1994; GIS Database). The vegetation types identified within the

application area are well represented locally and regionally and the application area is not a significant remnant of native vegetation (Origin, 2015; GIS Database). No Threatened or Priority flora species, Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities were recorded within the application area (Origin, 2015; GIS Database).

There was no fauna survey conducted over the application area. Based on aerial imagery, the application area does not contain significant fauna habitat (GIS Database) and there are no records of fauna of conservation significance occurring within the area applied to clear (DPaW, 2015). The low impact nature and the small scale clearing proposed is unlikely to significantly impact the conservation significance of these faunal habitats or impact on any conservation significant fauna.

The application area is not located within any conservation area (GIS Database). There are no conservation areas within four kilometres of the application area (GIS Database).

Weeds have the potential to significantly change the dynamics of a natural ecosystem and lower the biodiversity of an area. Potential impacts to the biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a weed management condition.

The land system associated with the application area has a low risk of erosion (GIS Database) and the proposed clearing is not likely to cause a deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water or increase the incidence or intensity of flooding (GIS Database).

The application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s.51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, and the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (j).

**Methodology** DPaW (2015)  
Keighery (1994)  
Origin (2015)  
GIS Database:  
- DEC Tenure  
- Evaporation Isopleths  
- Groundwater Salinity  
- Hydrography, linear  
- IBRA WA (Regions - Sub Regions)  
- Pre-European Vegetation  
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas  
- Rangeland Land System Mapping  
- Rainfall, Mean Annual  
- Threatened and Priority Flora  
- Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered

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

##### **Comments**

There is one Native Title claim over the area under application (WC2004/2) (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2015; GIS Database). However, the mining 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*.

There are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (GIS Database). 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, 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 10 August 2015 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received.

**Methodology** Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2015)

#### **4. References**

- Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2015) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Government of Western Australia, viewed 31 August 2015 <<http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/>>.
- Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) (2015) NatureMap Department of Parks and Wildlife, viewed 31 August 2015 <<http://naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au>>.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Origin Energy Resources Limited (Origin) (2015) Beharra Springs Right of Way Gas Pipeline – Application for a clearing

## 5. Glossary

### Acronyms:

<b>BoM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
<b>DAA</b>	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia
<b>DAFWA</b>	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
<b>DEC</b>	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DPaW and DER)
<b>DER</b>	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
<b>DMP</b>	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
<b>DRF</b>	Declared Rare Flora
<b>DotE</b>	Department of the Environment, Australian Government
<b>DoW</b>	Department of Water, Western Australia
<b>DPaW</b>	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
<b>DSEWPaC</b>	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DotE)
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
<b>EP Act</b>	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
<b>EPBC Act</b>	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Federal Act)
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>ha</b>	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
<b>IBRA</b>	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
<b>PEC</b>	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
<b>RIWI Act</b>	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
<b>s.17</b>	Section 17 of the <i>Environment Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
<b>TEC</b>	Threatened Ecological Community

### Definitions:

{DPaW (2013) **Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia**};-

- T**      **Threatened species:**  
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna or the Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).  
  
Threatened Fauna and Flora are further recognised by DPaW according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List criteria. For example Carnaby's Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* is specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* as a threatened species with a ranking of Endangered.  
  
Rankings:  
CR: Critically Endangered - considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.  
EN: Endangered - considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.  
VU: Vulnerable - considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.
- X**      **Presumed Extinct species:**  
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).
- IA**      **Migratory birds protected under an international agreement:**  
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.  
Birds that are subject to an agreement between governments of Australia and Japan, China and The Republic of Korea relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction.
- S**      **Other specially protected fauna:**  
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- P1**      **Priority One - Poorly-known species:**  
Species that are known from one or a few collections or sight records (generally less than five), all on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, Shire, rail reserves and Main Roads WA road, gravel and soil reserves, and active mineral leases and under threat of habitat destruction or degradation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes.
- P2**      **Priority Two - Poorly-known species:**  
Species that are known from one or a few collections or sight records, some of which are on lands not under imminent threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature

reserves, State forest, unallocated Crown land, water reserves, etc. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes.

**P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species:**

Species that are known from collections or sight records from several localities not under imminent threat, or from few but widespread localities 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 localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them.

**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 do not qualify for Conservation Dependent, but that are close to qualifying for Vulnerable.
- (c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.

**P5 Priority Five - Conservation Dependent species:**

**Species that are not threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.**

**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.