



# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6643/2  
 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 L 1  
 Production Licence L11  
 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:
25		Mechanical Removal	Right of Way Easement

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
 Decision Date: 28 July 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 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 25 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 31.35 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, access roads and production wells 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.

Clearing permit CPS 6643/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) on 3 September 2015 and authorised the clearing of 7.577 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of 7.577 hectares. Origin Energy Resources Ltd has applied to increase the clearing authorised to 25 hectares and increase the permit boundary to approximately 31.35 hectares.

On 29 October 2015 officers from DMP visited the area to inspect an area of the right of way that had been cleared outside of the CPS 6643/1 permit boundary. This area has been included as part of the amendment application as it will need to be maintained on a regular basis.

### 3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

#### Comments

Origin Energy Resources Ltd has applied to increase the clearing authorised by an additional 17.423 hectares and increase the clearing permit boundary by approximately 23.8 hectares.

The purpose of this permit is for the maintenance of access roads, pipeline right of way and well sites. The additional areas are located over previously cleared areas.

There are no records of any Threatened flora, Priority flora, Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities within the additional areas (DPaW, 2016; GIS Database). However, there are records of two species of Threatened flora and 25 species of Priority flora within five kilometres of the permit area (DPaW, 2016). Whilst it is likely that the permit area contains habitat for conservation significant flora species, the proposed clearing for the maintenance of existing cleared areas is unlikely to impact on these species.

Given the previous clearing activities, the permit area is not likely to contain any significant habitat for native fauna species.

There are no watercourses within the additional area and the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on surface or groundwater quality (GIS Database). The maintenance of these existing cleared areas is not likely to cause any appreciable land degradation in the area.

The additional area is not within any conservation areas and is not part of a remnant forming an ecological linkage to conservation estate (GIS Database).

The proposed amendment is unlikely to result in any significant change to the environmental impacts of the proposed clearing. The assessment against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment contained in decision report CPS 6643/1.

**Methodology** DPaW (2016)

GIS Database:

- DPaW Tenure
- Groundwater Salinity, Statewide
- Hydrography, linear
- IBRA WA (Regions - Sub Regions)
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas
- Rangeland Land System Mapping
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities 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, 2016). 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*.

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, 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 6 June 2016 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. There was one submission received stating no objections to the proposed amendment.

**Methodology** Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2016)

### 4. References

- Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2016) Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System. Department of Aboriginal Affairs. <http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/> (Accessed on 7 July 2016).
- DPaW (2016) NatureMap Department of Parks and Wildlife. <http://naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au>. (Accessed 7 July 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.

Origin Energy Resources Limited (Origin) (2015) Beharra Springs Right of Way Gas Pipeline – Application for a clearing permit. Internal report, June 2015.

## 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>TEC</b>	Threatened Ecological Community

### Definitions:

{DPaW (2015) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia}:-

<b>T</b>	<b>Threatened species:</b> 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).  <b>Threatened fauna</b> is that subset of ‘Specially Protected Fauna’ declared to be ‘likely to become extinct’ pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.  <b>Threatened flora</b> 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.
<b>CR</b>	<b>Critically endangered species</b> 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.
<b>EN</b>	<b>Endangered species</b> 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.
<b>VU</b>	<b>Vulnerable species</b> 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.
<b>EX</b>	<b>Presumed extinct species</b> 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.