Department of Environment
Government of Western Australia

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 694/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **City of Wanneroo**

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 8163 ON PLAN 28734
Local Government Area: City Of Wanneroo
Colloquial name: Tapping Way - Gumblossom centre

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
0.15		Mechanical Removal	Landscaping

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 Association 1948: Low woodland; banksia on limestone (Shepherd et al 2001. Hopkins et al 2001) Heddle Vegetation Complex: Cottesloe Complex Central/South Mosaic of woodland of E. gomphocephala and open forest of E. gomphocephala - E. marginata - E. calophylla; closed heath on the Limestone outcrops. (Heddle et al 1980)	The area under application comprises 0.15ha within an isolated 1ha tract of a total area of 5.5ha of native vegetation located within the 13ha Gumblossom reserve. The clearing is required to expand the existing community centre carpark and upgrade the current stormwater facilities. The vegetation under application is described as including Open Banksia attenuata over species rich heath in poor and fair-good condition (TRIM IN 2215)	Very Good: Vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery 1994)	The description of the vegetation under application was provided by the applicant after a Flora and Vegetation Survey and Bushland Condition Assessment was undertaken for the applicant by Ecologia Environmental Consultants (2002) (TRIM IN 2215) and a site visit (27.10.05)

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 comprises 0.15ha within an isolated 1ha tract of a total area of 5.5ha of native vegetation located in Gumblossom reserve (Ecologia 2002). The 1ha area of native vegetation is isolated from the 5.5ha parcel of bushland by tennis courts to the west, a bowling club to the north, the community centre carpark to the south and urban development to the east. The central core area of the 1ha tract contains excellent quality Banksia attenuata worthy of adequate protection (Ecologia 2002). This is not included within the area under application.

Weeds are generally prolific throughout the native vegetation of the reserve (Ecologica 2002) especially in regions that fringe developed areas (Site visit 27/10/05). Given that the small area (0.15ha) under application is a part of these fringing areas and has been subject to some disturbance and weed invasion it does not consist of a high level of biodiversity. Therefore, the clearing as proposed is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology (Ecologica 2002)
(Site visit 27/10/05)

(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 constitutes 0.15ha of native vegetation of an isolated 1ha tract within a larger 5.5ha

area of native vegetation within the 13ha Gumblossom reserve. Gumblossom reserve is surrounded by zoned urban development.
Given the small size of the proposed clearing, the close proximity to the road infrastructure entering Gumblossom reserve and the degraded condition of the area under application the impact on the habitat for fauna would not be cause for concern.

Methodology Information provided by the proponent IN 2215

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

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

No declared rare flora (DRF) have been identified or mapped in the area under application. No DRF were identified during flora surveys (Ecologia 2002).

Eucalyptus argutifolia, a DRF, has been identified 1.2 km south of the area proposed to be cleared, but was not found within the area under application. Therefore, the clearing as proposed is not likely to impact on this species.

Methodology
Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 13/08/03.
Clearing Regulations Environmentally Sensitive Areas DOE 8/03/05
Public Submission number EI 2167
(Ecologia 2002)

(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 Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) present in the area under application. The nearest TEC is located 2km north. Several TECs exist in the nearby Neerabup National park located 2.8km to the north east. These TECs exist in the same vegetation associations as that found in the area under application. However, given the small size of the proposed clearing area and the isolation of the nearby TECs caused by surrounding urban dwellings, it is not likely that clearing as proposed would impact on these TECs.

Methodology
Threatened Ecological Communities CALM 15/7/03
(Shepherd et al 2001)
(Heddle et al 1980)
Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01
Threatened Plant Communities - DEP 06/95. (Swan Coastal Plain)

(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 likely to be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation contained within the area under application consists of Heddle vegetation complex Cottesloe Complex Central /South (Heddle et al 1980) and Beard vegetation association 1948 (Shepherd et al 2001, Hopkins et al 2001). The Heddle vegetation complex has approximately 18,474ha (41%) of its pre-European extent remaining (Heddle et al 1980) and the Beard vegetation association has 17,315ha of this vegetation type (21.4%) remaining (Shepherd et al 2001, Hopkins et al 2001).
The State Government is committed to the National Objectives Targets for Biodiversity Conservation which outlines a target that prevents clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30% of that present pre-European settlement (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002, EPA 2000). The Beard association vegetation representation within the area under application is below this 30% minimum (Heddle et al 1980, Shepherd et al 2001, Hopkins et al 2001).
The area subject to the proposal is covered by flora studies conducted by Beard and Heddle. Beard's study is significantly broader than Heddle's which is primarily confined to the Swan Coastal Plain. In this instance, for the same area of native vegetation, they provide a disparity in pre-European vegetation representation (25.6% for Beard and 72.0% for Heddle). If the more comprehensive Heddle Vegetation Complexes were used to the exclusion of Beard's Vegetation Associations in this instance, the proposal would not be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology
(Heddle et al 1980)
(Shepherd et al 2001)
(Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002, EPA 2000)

(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 wetlands or watercourses in the area under application. The closest wetland to the area under application is approximately 4km to the east. It is therefore not likely that the clearing as proposed is at variance with this principle.

Methodology Geomorphic wetlands (Classification) - Swan Coastal Plain - DOE 15/09/04

(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

There is no known risk of acid sulphate soils within the area under application. The groundwater is considered fresh at between 500-1000 mg/L. The elevation of the proposed area is approximately 30m above sea level and is relatively flat. An upgrade of stormwater facilities cited, as a reason for the clearing will help to reduce any erosion. Consequently it is unlikely that the proposal will be at variance with this principle.

Methodology Acid Sulphate Soil risk map, SCP DOE 01/02/04.
Groundwater Salinity, Statewide - 22/02/00
Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02

(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 Neerabup National Park, and a Bush Forever site are located 2.5 km to the east. Another Bush Forever site is located 1 km to the west. Given that the area under application is small (0.15 ha) and that the area between the proposed clearing and the above areas of conservation are separated by urban dwellings it is considered that the clearing as proposed is not likely to be at variance with this principle.

Methodology CALM Managed Lands and Waters - CALM 01/08/04
Bushforever MSP 07/01

(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 area under investigation is outside of the public drinking water source area. The clearing is partly required for stormwater drainage upgrades from the road reserve and the community centre. The upgrades are likely to deal with any issues associated with run-off. The groundwater is considered fresh (500-100mg/L). Given the area under application is relatively small and that plans have been developed that will address run-off, groundwater recharge will be minimal. It is therefore considered unlikely that the clearing as proposed will impact on the quality of surface or underground water.

Methodology Information provided by the proponent IN 2215
Groundwater Salinity, Statewide - 22/02/00

(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

The area under assessment is flat with an elevation of 30m above sea level. Given that the area under application is relatively small and that the storm water drainage system is to be upgraded it is unlikely that the clearing as proposed will cause or exacerbate the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Methodology Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02
Information provided by the proponent IN 2215

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

Comments

A public submission indicated that the proposed clearing should be refused on the following grounds 1. Area is the last significant remnant of open Banksia attenuata woodland over species rich heathland in local area. 2. Area is part of significant habitat for the Graceful Sunmoth (Synemon gratiosa) (Endangered species). 3. Area is part of a vegetation community with a high level of biological diversity.

In relation to the above, a site visit confirmed that the areas under application contain the more degraded vegetation located within the Gumblossom Reserve, with weed species dominating the understorey. The presence of the Sunmoth is yet to be veriied. Approximately 5.5ha of bushland is to remain within this Reserve which is considered to be in better condition than the area under application.

The submission also requests that in the event that a permit is granted for the prescribed area that the following conditions apply:

1). Avoid clearing or damage to the stand of vegetation north east of the proposed drainage sump

2). Limit earthworks and disturbance to the actual carpark extension, no allowance for batters around the carpark bitumen

3). Build temporary fencing prior to commencing any earthworks

4). Translocation of grasstrees allowed after this site has been checked for dieback as suggested by an external consultant.

In response to this submission, the City of Wanneroo has agreed to construct a fence, as part of a permit condition, to protect the vegetation deemed to be of higher biodiversity value from damage relating to the proposed clearing and associated developments. The City of Wanneroo has confirmed their commitment that a number of grasstrees will be translocated as part of the proposed works.

Methodology Public Submission EI 2167

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Landscaping	Mechanical Removal	0.15	**Grant**	The application has been addressed against the clearing principles. It was found to be unlikely to be at variance with any of the principles. The asessing officer recommends that permission to clear should be granted subject to the following conditions. 1. The Permit Holder shall construct a fence within the area cross-hatched red on attached Paln 694/1. Construction of the fence shall be completed by June 2006. 2. The Permit Holder shall selectively remove or kill all plant species that are not native vegetation within the area cross hatched red on attached Plan 694/1 during the months of March to November.

5. References

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.

Ecologia Environmental Consultants (2002) Gumblossom Reserve, Flora and Vegetation Survey, and Bushland Condition Assessment. Report prepared for the City of Wanneroo Trim Ref: EI 3597

EPA (2000) Environmental protection of native vegetation in Western Australia. Clearing of native vegetation, with particular reference to the agricultural area. Position Statement No. 2. December 2000. Environmental Protection Authority.

Heddle, E. M., Loneragan, O. W., and Havel, J. J. (1980) Vegetation Complexes of the Darling System, Western Australia. In Department of Conservation and Environment, Atlas of Natural Resources, Darling System, Western Australia.

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.

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)