GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CLEARING PERMIT

Granted under section 51E of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

PERMIT DETAILS
Area Permit Number: CPS 6987/1
File Number: DER2016/000455-1
Duration of Permit: From 8 July 2016 to 8 July 2018

PERMIT HOLDER
Craig Allan Simkin
Robyn Diane Simkin

LAND ON WHICH CLEARING IS TO BE DONE
Lot 4676 on Deposited Plan 232405, Ajana

AUTHORISED ACTIVITY
The Permit Holder shall not clear more than 6 hectares of native vegetation within the area cross-hatched yellow on attached Plan 6987/1.

CONDITIONS
Nil.

S. Weighell

Simon Weighell
A/SENIOR MANAGER
CLEARING REGULATION

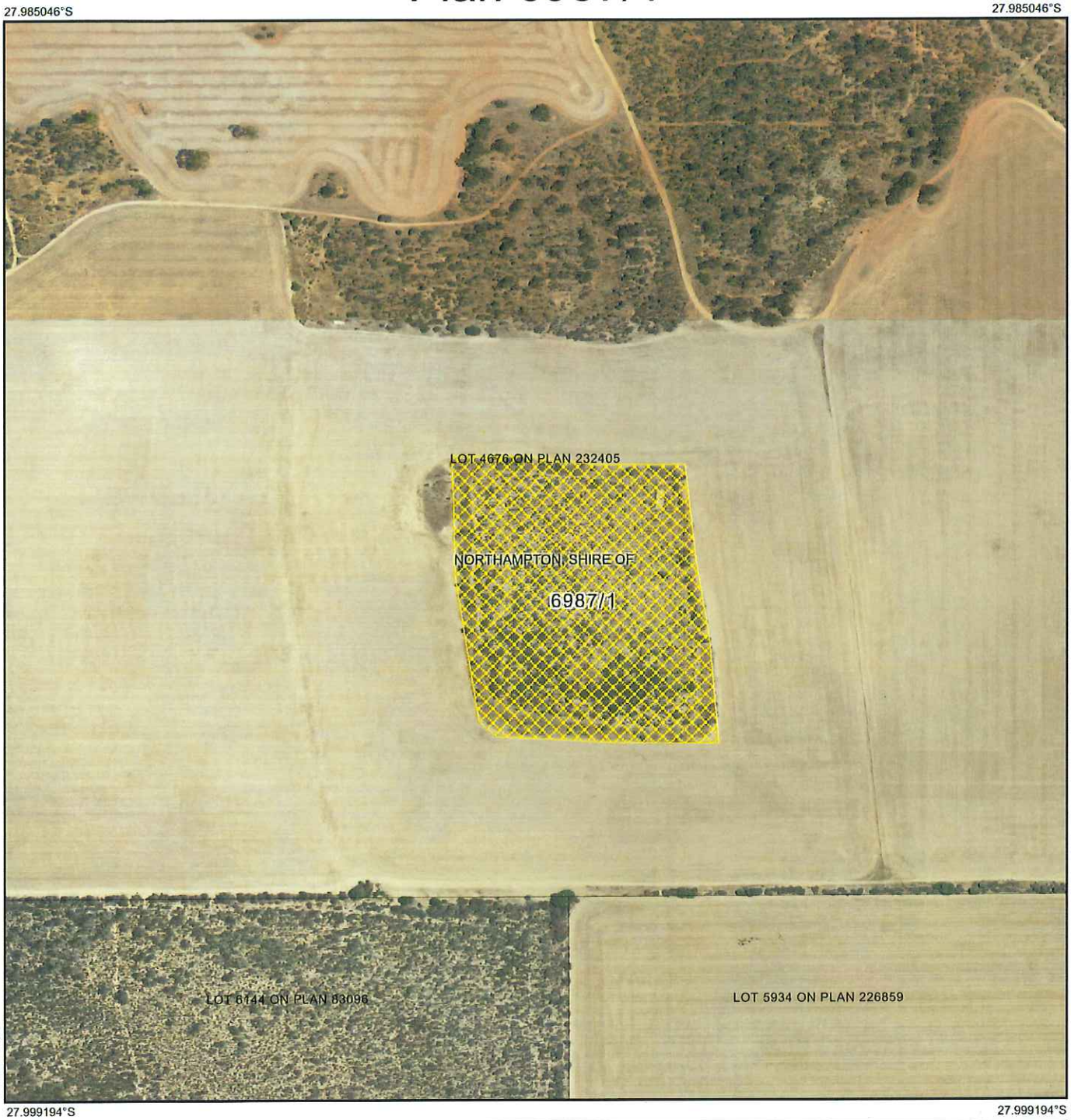
Officer delegated under Section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

8 June 2016

Plan 6987/1

27.985046°S 27.985046°S

114.624479°E 114.654606°E



114.624479°E 114.654606°E

27.999194°S 27.999194°S

Legend

- Imagery
- Clearing Instruments Activities
- Roads
- Local Government Authority

N

0 200m

1:5,000

(Approximate when reproduced at A4)

GDA 94 (Lat/Long)

Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994

S. Weighell ..... Date 8/6/16

Simon Weighell

Officer with delegated authority under Section 20 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Government of Western Australia
Department of Environment Regulation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6987/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name: Mrs Robyn Diane Simkin
Mr Craig Allan Simkin

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 4676 ON PLAN 232405, AJANA
Local Government Authority: NORTHAMPTON, SHIRE OF
DER Region: MIDWEST
DPaW District: GERALDTON
Localities: AJANA

1.4. Application

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

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Granted
Decision Date: 08 June 2016
Reasons for Decision: The clearing application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, and it has been concluded that the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles.

Through assessment it has been determined that the clearing is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts. State policies and other relevant policies have been taken into consideration in the decision to grant a clearing permit.

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Mapped Beard vegetation association 380 is described as shrublands; scrub-heath on sandplain (Shepherd et al. 2001).	Clearing of six hectares of native vegetation within Lot 4676 on Plan 232405, Ajana, for the purpose of machinery manoeuvring and feral pig management.	Degraded; Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994). To Good; Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery 1994).	The condition of the vegetation was determined via aerial imagery.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

(a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Comments

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The applicant proposes to clear six hectares of native vegetation within Lot 4676 on Plan 232405, Ajana, for the purpose of machinery manoeuvring and feral pig management. The application area is comprised of an isolated remnant of native vegetation within a cleared paddock. The vegetation within the application area has been historically cleared and appears to lack the condition and density of nearby remnant vegetation on the same property.

Three fauna species of conservation significance have been recorded within 15 kilometres of the application area (Parks and Wildlife 2007-), being gilled slender blue-tongue skink (*Cyclodomorphus branchialis*), malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), both listed as rare or likely to become extinct under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, and eastern great egret (*Ardea modesta*), listed as protected under an international agreement under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice. Given the size, condition and isolation of the application area, it is not likely to provide significant fauna habitat.

Twelve priority flora species have been recorded in the local area (10 kilometre radius) within the same mapped vegetation association and soil type as that found within the application area. Of these twelve species,

nine are listed as priority 3, two as priority 4 and one as Priority 2. Priority 3 species are known from several locations, and do not appear to be under imminent threat. Priority 4 species are considered to have been adequately surveyed, and are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. Given the application area was previously cleared, and the priority 3 and 4 flora species under consideration do not favour disturbed areas (Western Australian Herbarium 1998-), the application area is not likely to provide suitable habitat to these species.

The priority 2 flora species occurs in yellow or red sand with gravel (Western Australian Herbarium 1998-) with the only record within the local area being mapped in association with a creekline. Given the lack of watercourses and gravel within the application area (Parks and Wildlife 2016), this species is not likely to occur within the application area.

There are no threatened ecological communities (TECs) or priority ecological communities (PECs) mapped within the application area or the local area (10 kilometre radius). The vegetation under application is unlikely to be representative of a TEC or PEC.

The local area surrounding the application area retains approximately 25 per cent native vegetation. The mapped vegetation association retains approximately 63 per cent of its pre-European extent within the Geraldton Sandplains bioregion (Government of Western Australia 2014), which is greater than the 30 per cent national objectives target (Commonwealth of Australia 2001).

Given the condition of the vegetation and the presence of vegetation in better condition nearby, the application area is not likely to comprise a high level of biodiversity.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

References:
Commonwealth of Australia (2001)
Government of Western Australia (2014)
Parks and Wildlife (2007-)
Western Australian Herbarium (1998-)

GIS Databases:
- Hydrography, linear
- Hydrography, hierarchy
- Pre-European vegetation
- SAC bio datasets accessed June 2016
- Virtual mosaic

(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

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

Three fauna species of conservation significance have been recorded within 15 kilometres of the application area (Parks and Wildlife 2007-), being the gilled slender blue-tongue skink (*Cyclodomorphus branchialis*), malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), both listed as rare or likely to become extinct under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, and eastern great egret (*Ardea modesta*), listed as protected under an international agreement under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.

The eastern great egret is a migratory marine bird. Given the distance between the application area and the coast (approximately 41 kilometres), this species is not likely to utilise the application area.

There is minimal information on the habitat preferences of the gilled slender blue-tongue skink. Records of this species have been documented in a variety of habitat, from Acacia scrub to under laterite boulders.

The malleefowl occurs in shrublands and low woodlands that are dominated by mallee vegetation (DotE 2016). Malleefowl require a sandy substrate and abundance of leaf litter to build mounds for roosting purposes (DotE 2016). Malleefowl are opportunistic foragers and have been known to forage in croplands adjacent to their preferred habitat, however prefer to move through densely vegetated corridors of native vegetation (DotE 2016). Malleefowl have a home range which can vary from 0.5 to 4.6 square kilometres (DotE 2016). In comparison, the application area is 0.06 square kilometres in size.

The application area is comprised of an isolated remnant of native vegetation within a cleared paddock. The vegetation has been historically cleared and appears to lack the density of nearby remnant vegetation. Whilst the application area may provide suitable habitat for indigenous fauna, it is not likely to be significant.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this clearing principle.

Methodology

References:
DotE (2016)
Parks and Wildlife (2007-)

GIS Databases:
- Virtual mosaic

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

Comments

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

One rare flora species has been recorded in the local area (10 kilometre radius) on the same mapped soil and vegetation type as the application area. The closest record of this species is located approximately 1.3 kilometres from the application area.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife (Parks and Wildlife) has advised that the application area does not contain habitat suitable for this rare flora species, due to the soil type lacking gravel and the vegetation being different in structure to all known locations of this species (Parks and Wildlife 2016).

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

References:
Parks and Wildlife (2016)

GIS Databases:
- SAC bio datasets accessed June 2016

(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

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no TECs mapped within the application area or the local area (10 kilometre radius). The closest TEC is 'Shrublands of the Northampton area – Dominated by Melaleuca species over exposed kockatea shale', which is mapped approximately 32 kilometres from the application area.

Given the distance to the nearest mapped TEC, the vegetation under application is unlikely to be representative of a TEC.

Therefore the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

GIS Databases:
- SAC bio datasets accessed June 2016

(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

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The local area (10 kilometre radius) retains approximately 25 per cent native vegetation.

The area under application is located within the Geraldton Sandplains Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) bioregion. This IBRA bioregion has approximately 45 per cent of its pre-European vegetation extent remaining (Government of Western Australia 2014). The area under application is located within the Shire of Northampton, which retains approximately 74 per cent pre-European extent of native vegetation cover (Government of Western Australia 2014). The vegetation under application is mapped as Beard vegetation association 380, which retains approximately 63 per cent of its pre-European extent within the Geraldton Sandplains bioregion (Government of Western Australia 2014).

The national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia has a target to prevent clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30 per cent of that present pre-1750, below which species loss appears to accelerate exponentially at an ecosystem level (Commonwealth of Australia 2001).

The local area retains less native vegetation than the national objective and therefore the application area does occur within an extensively cleared landscape. Given the condition and isolated nature of the application area and the presence of a larger remnant of native vegetation in better condition nearby, the application area is not likely to be a significant remnant.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

	Pre-European (ha)	Current Extent (ha)	Remaining (%)	Extent in Parks and Wildlife Managed Lands (%)
IBRA Bioregion*				
Geraldton Sandplains	3 136 038	1 404 375	45	40
Shire*				
Shire of Northampton	1 258 429	930 229	74	25
Beard Vegetation Association in Bioregion*				
519	507 697	319 296	63	40

Methodology References:
Commonwealth of Australia (2001)
*Government of Western Australia (2014)

GIS Databases:
- IBRA Australia
- NLWRA, Current Extent of Native Vegetation
- Pre-European vegetation
- Soils, statewide
- Virtual mosaic

(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 **Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
There are no watercourses or wetlands mapped within the application area. A minor, non-perennial watercourse is the closest watercourse, occurring approximately 500 metres from the application area. Mindoo Creek, a significant stream, occurs approximately 1.1 kilometres from the application area.

Given the distance to the nearest watercourse, the vegetation within the application area is not likely to be growing in association with a watercourse. Therefore the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- Hydrography, linear
- Hydrography, hierarchy

(g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Comments **Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
The Geraldton Region Land Resources Survey maps the application area as map unit Binnu 225Bi_1, which is described as a landscape with numerous dune ridges, soils are deep yellow sands, poorer on dune ridges (Rogers and National Landcare Program (Australia) 1996).

Sandy soils are light and highly susceptible to wind erosion. The vegetation under application has been historically cleared and appears to lack the density of nearby remnant vegetation. Therefore the proposed clearing is unlikely to significantly unsettle the sandy soils under application and it is unlikely that the proposed clearing would lead to wind erosion causing appreciable land degradation.

Sandy soils are highly permeable, therefore water erosion resulting from the proposed clearing is unlikely, particularly given the absence of wetlands or watercourses mapped within the application area.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology References:
Rogers and National Landcare Program (Australia) (1996)

GIS Databases:
- DAFWA subsystems
- Hydrography, linear
- Hydrography, hierarchy
- Virtual mosaic

(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 **Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**
The nearest Parks and Wildlife managed conservation area to the application area is an unnamed Nature Reserve, which is located approximately 3.6 kilometres from the application area. This is the only Parks and Wildlife managed land within the local area (10 kilometre radius).

The application area is comprised of an isolated remnant of native vegetation within a cleared paddock.

Given the distance to the nearest conservation area, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology GIS Databases:
- Parks and Wildlife Tenure

(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

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no watercourses or wetlands mapped within the application area and therefore the proposed clearing is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface water.

The groundwater salinity within the application area is 1000-3000 milligrams per litre of total dissolved solids. This level of groundwater salinity is considered to be brackish and therefore significant changes or deterioration in groundwater quality is unlikely to occur as a result of the proposed clearing.

The application area does not occur within a *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* area or a Public Drinking Water Source Area.

The proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

GIS Databases:
- Country Areas Water Supply Act (Part IIA) – Clearing control catchments
- Hydrography, linear
- Hydrography, hierarchy
- Public drinking water source area
- Salinity, statewide
- Virtual mosaic

(j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Comments

Proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The Geraldton Region Land Resources Survey maps the application area as map unit Binnu 225Bi_1, which is described as a landscape with numerous dune ridges, soils are deep yellow sands, poorer on dune ridges (Rogers and National Landcare Program (Australia) 1996).

The annual rainfall mapped for the application area is 400 millimetres. There are no watercourses or wetlands mapped within the application area.

Given the porous nature of the sandy soils of the application area and the low annual rainfall, the proposed clearing is unlikely to cause or exacerbate flooding and is therefore not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

References:
Rogers and National Landcare Program (Australia) (1996)

GIS Databases:
- DAFWA subsystems
- Hydrography, linear
- Hydrography, hierarchy
- Rainfall, mean annual

Planning instruments and other relevant matters.

Comments

The applicant proposes to clear six hectares of native vegetation within Lot 4676 on Plan 232405, Ajana, for the purpose of machinery manoeuvring and feral pig management. The vegetation under application has been historically cleared.

An Agreement to Reserve (ATR) under section 30(b) of the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* is registered on the certificate of title for the property under application as well as the applicant's two adjoining properties. The ATR requires 39.87 hectares of vegetation within Lot 4676 on Plan 232405 and 33.42 hectares of vegetation within the two adjoining properties, to be retained in perpetuity and managed in such a way as to retain and promote the growth of native vegetation. The application area does not occur within the ATR.

The application area is zoned general agriculture under the town planning scheme.

There are no Aboriginal Sites of Significance mapped within the application area.

Methodology

GIS Databases:
- Aboriginal Sites Register System
- Town Planning Scheme Zones
- Virtual mosaic

4. References

Commonwealth of Australia (2001) National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005, Canberra.

Department of Parks and Wildlife (2016) Advice received in relation to Clearing Permit application CPS 6987/1. Received 3 June 2016. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Perth. DER REF: A1108896.

Department of the Environment (2016) *Leipoa ocellata* in Species Profile and Threats Database. Department of the Environment, Canberra. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.au/sprat.

Government of Western Australia (2014) 2014 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of June 2014. WA Department of Parks and Wildlife, Perth.

Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

Parks and Wildlife (2007-) NatureMap: Mapping Western Australia's Biodiversity. Department of Parks and Wildlife. URL: http://naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au/.

Rogers, L G, and National Landcare Program (Australia) (1996) *Geraldton region land resources survey*. Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia. Report 13.

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 Australian Herbarium (1998-) FloraBase - The Western Australian Flora. Department of Parks and Wildlife. http://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/.