



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7024/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Chevron Australia Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Production Licence L12
Local Government Area: Shire of Ashburton
Colloquial name: Thevenard Island

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
1.186		Mechanical Removal	Petroleum Production and associated activities

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 1 March 2018

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description A flora and vegetation survey of the application area and surrounding area conducted by Astron (2013) identified two vegetation associations within the application area:

1 - Shrubland of *Acacia coriacea* over open to low shrubland over grassland / open grassland and open herbs found on the inland ridge system; and

1h - Hummock grassland of *Triodia epactia* (Pilbara form) with very scattered *Acacia coriacea*.

Clearing Description Thevenard-1 Well.
Chevron Australia Pty Ltd (Chevron) proposes to clear up to 1.186 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 1.186 hectares, for the purpose of a petroleum well site and access track. The project is located on Thevenard Island approximately 21 kilometres north-northwest of Onslow, within the Shire of Ashburton.

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

To

Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery, 1994).

Comment Clearing permit CPS 7024/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (now the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) on 19 May 2016 and was valid from 11 June 2016 to 11 June 2018. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 1.1012 hectares of native vegetation within a permit boundary of approximately 1.1012 hectares, for the purposes of petroleum production and associated activities.

The Permit Holder has applied to amend CPS 7024/1 to increase the amount of clearing authorised to 1.186 hectares and increase the permit boundary to approximately 1.186 hectares, to allow for widening and minor realignment of the access road. They have also applied to extend the permit duration by three years and change Condition 7 on the permit.

3. Assessment of application against Clearing Principles

Comments

The Permit Holder has applied to amend the permit to increase the amount of authorised clearing by 0.0848 hectares and increase the permit boundary by approximately 0.0848 hectares, allowing for a minor realignment and widening of the access road. The changes to the access road are required to allow large vehicles to access the wellsite (Chevron, 2017). Analysis of aerial imagery indicates that the vegetation associations and landform types occurring within the amendment area are similar to those occurring within the original permit boundary (GIS Database).

The Permit Holder has applied to extend the permit duration by three years, to allow additional time for completion of the plug and abandonment of the Thevenard-1 well, and subsequent rehabilitation and monitoring activities. The additional environmental impacts from the small amount of additional clearing and the extended permit duration are expected to be negligible.

The Permit Holder has also applied to amend the rehabilitation condition on the permit (Condition 7) to remove the requirement for respreading the topsoil due to substantial weed contamination (buffel grass) within the topsoil removed from the permit area. Respreading topsoil restores the native plant seed bank and can significantly aid rehabilitation. However, weeds have the potential to out-compete native vegetation and reduce biodiversity, and hence the respreading of topsoil which is highly infested by weed seeds may be detrimental to the successful rehabilitation of the site. Therefore, the proposed amendment of the rehabilitation condition is considered acceptable in this instance. Continued implementation of the existing weed management condition may minimise the risk of further spread of weeds into the area. The clearing permit area is located within the Thevenard Island Nature Reserve, which is managed for conservation purposes by the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Chevron will liaise with DBCA to determine specific revegetation requirements within the reserve.

Environmental information has been reviewed, and the assessment of the proposed clearing against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment contained in decision report CPS 7024/1.

Methodology

Astron (2013)
Chevron (2017)

GIS Database:
- DPaW Tenure
- Imagery

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

Comments

There are no native title claims over the area under application (DPLH, 2018). However, the petroleum 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 (DPLH, 2018). 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 Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, 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 amendment application was advertised on 15 January 2018 by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to this application.

Methodology

DPLH (2018)

4. References

- Astron (2013) Biodiversity Values Assessment Thevenard Island Operations Terrestrial Environment. Prepared by Astron Environmental Services for Chevron Australia Pty Ltd, November 2013.
- Chevron (2017) Thevenard-1 Clearing Permit (CPS 7024/1) Amendment Application. Chevron Australia Pty Ltd, December 2017.
- DPLH (2018) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.
<http://maps.daa.wa.gov.au/AHIS/> (Accessed 12 February 2018).
- Keighery, B J (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DBCA and DWER)
DEE	Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMIRS)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DoE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government (now DEE)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DEE)
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Federal Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
PEC	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
RIWI Act	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DPaW (2017) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia):-

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

- EX Presumed extinct species**
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.