



CLEARING PERMIT

Granted under section 51E of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

Purpose Permit number:	CPS 7524/1
Permit Holder:	Shire of Cuballing
Duration of Permit:	16 December 2017 – 16 December 2022

The Permit Holder is authorised to clear native vegetation subject to the following conditions of this Permit.

PART I – CLEARING AUTHORISED

1. Purpose for which clearing may be done

Clearing for the purpose of road upgrades and road safety.

2. Land on which clearing is to be done

Wandering-Narrogin Road reserve (PINs 11560580, 11560577, 11560575, 11560572 and 11560570), Contine

3. Area of Clearing

The Permit Holder must not clear more than 0.86 hectares of native vegetation within the area shaded yellow on attached Plan 7524/1a.

4. Application

This Permit allows the Permit Holder to authorise persons, including employees, contractors and agents of the Permit Holder, to clear native vegetation for the purposes of this Permit subject to compliance with the conditions of this Permit and approval from the Permit Holder.

5. Type of clearing authorised

This Permit authorises the Permit Holder to clear native vegetation for the activities described in condition 1 of this Permit to the extent that the Permit Holder has the power to carry out works involving clearing for those activities under the *Local Government Act 1995* or any other written law.

PART II – MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

6. Dieback and weed control

When undertaking any clearing or other activity authorised under this Permit, the Permit Holder must take the following steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of *weeds* and *dieback*:

- clean earth-moving machinery of soil and vegetation prior to entering and leaving the area to be cleared;
- ensure that no *dieback* or *weed*-affected soil, *mulch*, *fill* or other material is brought into the area to be cleared; and
- restrict the movement of machines and other vehicles to the limits of the areas to be cleared.

7. Offset – Lot 434 on Deposited Plan 84296 (being Crown Reserve 2556)

- (a) By 16 June 2018, the Permit Holder shall provide to the CEO a copy of the executed change in purpose of the area cross-hatched red on attached Plan 7524/1b within Lot 434 on Deposited Plan 84296 (being Crown Reserve 2556) from ‘Gravel’ to ‘Conservation’.
- (b) In the event that the change in purpose of Lot 434 on Deposited Plan 84296 (being Crown Reserve 2556) is not achieved in accordance with condition 7(a):
- (i) submit a new offset proposal for the CEO’s approval by 16 September 2018; and
 - (ii) in preparing an offset proposal in accordance with condition 7(b)(i), the Permit Holder must comply with the principles in the Government of Western Australia’s *WA Environmental Offsets Policy* (September 2011) and have regard to the *WA Environmental Offsets Guidelines* (August 2014).

DEFINITIONS

The following meanings are given to terms used in this Permit:


dieback means the effect of *Phytophthora* species on native vegetation;

fill means material used to increase the ground level, or fill a hollow;

mulch means the use of organic matter, wood chips or rocks to slow the movement of water across the soil surface and to reduce evaporation;

weed/s means any plant -

- (a) that is a declared pest under section 22 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*; or
- (b) published in a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions species-led ecological impact and invasiveness ranking summary, regardless of ranking; or
- (c) not indigenous to the area concerned.

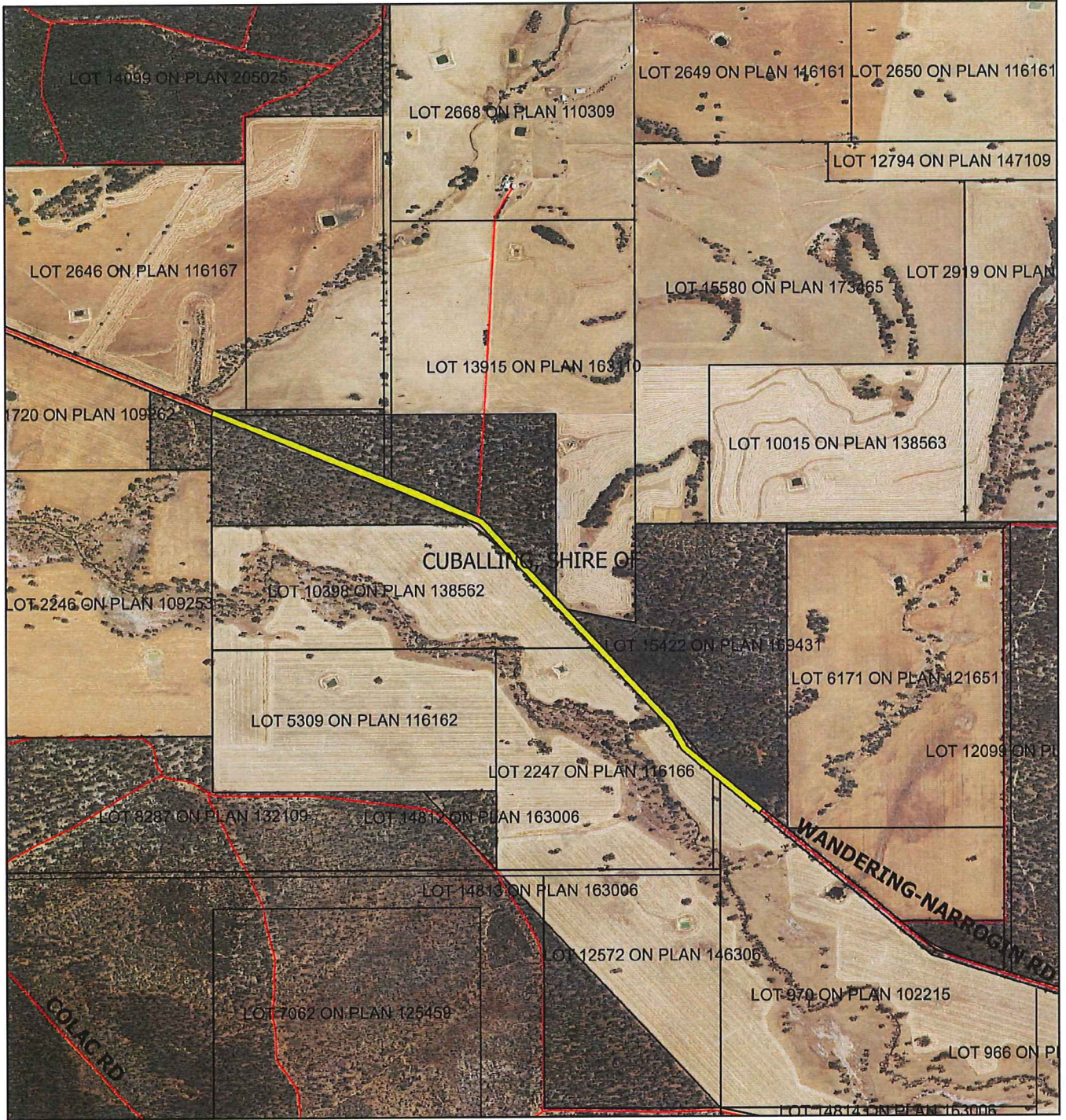


Emma Bramwell
A/ MANAGER
CLEARING REGULATION

*Officer delegated under Section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*

15 November 2017

Plan 7524/1a



Legend

-  Clearing Instruments Proposal
 -  LGA
 -  Cadastre
 -  Roads
- Virtual Mosaic (LGATE-V001)



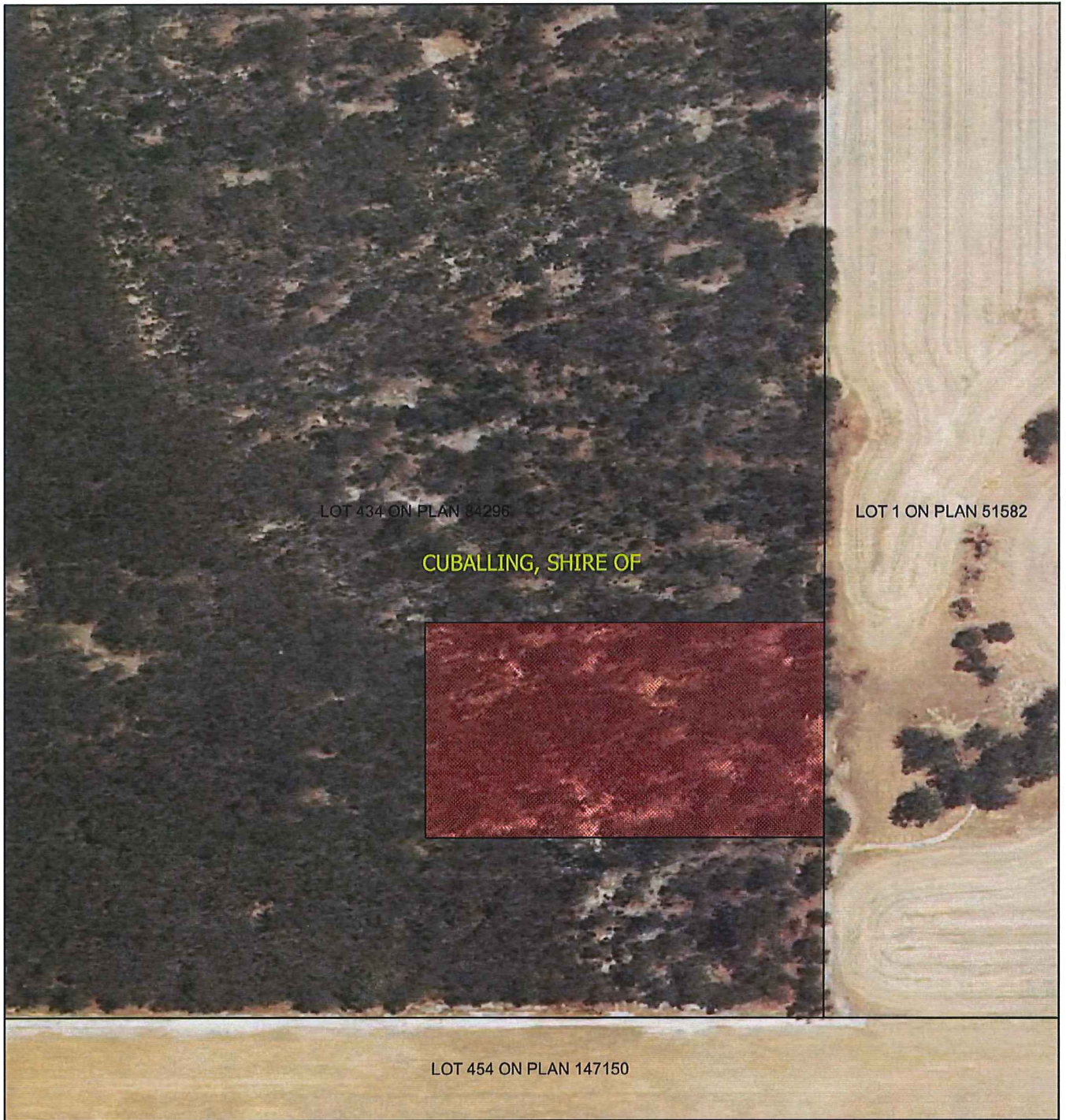
MGA 94
Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994
1:12,548

E Bramwell Date *15/11/17*
E BRAMWELL

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



Plan 7524/1b



Legend

 Clearing Instruments Conditions

 LGA

 Cadastre

Virtual Mosaic (LGATE-V001)



MGA 94
Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994

1:1,400

E. Branwell
E BRANWELL Date 15/11/17

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



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7524/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name: Shire of Cuballing

1.3. Property details

Property: ROAD RESERVE - 11560570, CONTINE
ROAD RESERVE - 11560572, CONTINE
ROAD RESERVE - 11560575, CONTINE
ROAD RESERVE - 11560577, CONTINE
ROAD RESERVE - 11560580, CONTINE

Colloquial name: Wandering-Narrogin Road
Local Government Authority: SHIRE OF CUBALLING
DER Region: Greater Swan
DPaW District: GREAT SOUTHERN
Localities: CONTINE

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
0.86		Mechanical Removal	Road construction or upgrades

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 15 November 2017

Reasons for Decision: The clearing permit application was received on 16 March 2017 and has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with section 51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. It has been concluded that the proposed clearing is at variance to clearing principle (e), may be at variance to clearing principles (b), (f) and (h), and is not likely to be at variance to the remaining clearing principles.

The Delegated Officer determined that the application area is a significant remnant within an extensively cleared area as it contributes to landscape connectivity and fauna dispersal between bushland remnants in the local area, and that the proposed clearing will impact on a mapped vegetation association that retains approximately 11 per cent of its pre-European extent within the Avon Wheatbelt bioregion, and may impact on vegetation growing in association with mapped watercourses. The Delegated Officer had regard for the purpose of the proposed clearing in the decision to grant a clearing permit subject to offsets. The clearing permit also contains a condition requiring the permit holder to implement weed and dieback management measures to assist in managing potential impacts to adjacent vegetation.

2. Site Information

Vegetation Description	The application area is mapped as: Beard vegetation association 1023, described as Medium woodland; York gum (<i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i>), wandoo (<i>Eucalyptus wandoo</i>) and salmon gum (<i>Eucalyptus salmonophloia</i>) (Shepherd et al., 2001).
Clearing Description	The application is for the clearing of 0.86 hectares of native vegetation within Wandering-Narrogin Road reserve (PINs 11560580, 11560577, 11560575, 11560572 and 11560570), Contine, for the purpose of road upgrades and road safety.
Vegetation Condition	Very Good: vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994). To Degraded: structure severely disturbed; regeneration to Good condition requires intensive management (Keighery, 1994).
Comment	The condition and description of the vegetation within the application area was determined by a site inspection undertaken by officers of the former Department of Environment Regulation (DER site inspection) on 17 May 2017 (DER, 2017).

3. Avoidance and minimisation measures

The applicant advised that in developing this project the following avoidance and minimisation measures were applied:

- minimising the spread of weeds and dieback by limiting the amount and range of machine turn around points along the project area, limiting the amount of wet soil transfers along and outside of the immediate project area, and mulching vegetative material and utilise within the project area;
- marking any significant trees that may be saved (prior to clearing);
- retaining any suitable hollow/habitat logs for transferring to the rehabilitation site; and
- if possible the mulching of all remaining vegetation and leave biomass on the backslopes as a mulch.

4. Assessment of application against clearing principles

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

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

The application is for the proposed clearing of 0.86 hectares of native vegetation within Wandering-Narrogin Road reserve (PINs 11560580, 11560577, 11560575, 11560572 and 11560570), Contine, for the purpose of road upgrades and road safety. The applicant proposes to clear up to two metres to the top of the backslope along both sides of the road, to facilitate widening of the sealed surface and improved drainage.

The local area considered in the assessment of this application is a 10 kilometre radius surrounding the application area. The local area retains approximately 31 per cent (11,187.2 hectares) vegetative cover.

The DER site inspection determined that the vegetation within the application area ranged from very good to degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition, with the majority in a good condition (DER, 2017). The vegetation in the northern portion of the road reserve was predominantly in a degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition with some patches in good (Keighery, 1994) condition (DER, 2017). The vegetation in the southern portion of the road reserve was predominantly in a very good to good (Keighery, 1994) condition, with a portion in a degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition (DER, 2017). Approximately 0.44 hectares of the application area contains vegetation in a very good to good (Keighery, 1994) condition, and approximately 0.42 hectares of the application area contains vegetation in a degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition. The vegetation within the application area consists of a mix of wandoo and *Allocasuarina* species canopy with occasional *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah) over *Lambertia ilicifolia* and *Xanthorrhoea preissii* (DER, 2017).

As discussed under Principle (b), four conservation significant fauna species have been recorded in the local area (DBCA, 2007-). The application area may contain significant habitat for Carnaby's cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus latirostris*) and red-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale calura*).

According to available databases, one rare and fourteen priority (P) flora species have been recorded within the local area (DBCA, 2007-). The former Department of Parks and Wildlife (Parks and Wildlife) advised that the application area may provide suitable habitat for two P2 species, *Leucopogon darlingensis* subsp. *rectus* and *Andersonia bifida*, recorded 1.5 kilometres and 9.2 kilometres from the application area respectively (Parks and Wildlife, 2017).

Leucopogon darlingensis subsp. *rectus* occurs within open woodland on lateritic uplands. Noting the vegetation and soil types within the application area, there is the potential for this species to occur within the application area (Parks and Wildlife, 2017). Parks and Wildlife advised that this species is regarded as locally common across its range and most populations are conserved in Nature Reserves or State Forest (Parks and Wildlife, 2017). Given the species presence in the local area and the linearity of the application area, it is unlikely the proposed clearing would have a significant impact on the conservation of this species (Parks and Wildlife, 2017). Further, the remnant vegetation located adjacent to the application area could potentially reduce any proportional impacts if populations of this species were present, as they may extend into adjacent vegetation (Parks and Wildlife, 2017).

Andersonia bifida is a compact shrub that flowers between September to December or January and is known to occur on sandy clay loam, sandy loam and granite outcrops (Parks and Wildlife, 2017). According to available databases, this species has been recorded in similar habitat to that of the application area occurring near *Eucalyptus wandoo* and with *Allocasuarina* species. Therefore there is the potential for this species to occur within the application area, and given this species is only known from two locations any new populations would be significant (Parks and Wildlife, 2017). Parks and Wildlife noted the linear shape of the application area and that the proposed clearing is limited to two metres either side of the existing road, and advised that if this species was present within the application area the proposed clearing is unlikely to have a significant impact on the conservation of this species (Parks and Wildlife, 2017).

Noting the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on the conservation status of any Priority flora taxa that have been recorded within the local area. Rare flora are discussed further under Principle (c).

As discussed under Principle (d), an occurrence of the Commonwealth-listed 'Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt' (Wheatbelt Woodlands) threatened ecological community (TEC) overlaps the majority of the application area.

As discussed further in Principle (e), the current vegetation extents for the bioregion, Shire of Cuballing and mapped Beard vegetation association within the bioregion, which are all below the below the 30 per cent threshold. Given this, the application area is considered to be located within an extensively cleared area.

As discussed under Principle (h), the Lol Gray State Forest is located adjacent to the application area and a large patch of remnant vegetation borders the northern side of the road reserve, given this nearby vegetation is likely to contain similar or better environmental values as the application area.

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

References:

DBCA (2007-)
DER (2017)
DBCA (2017)
Keighery (1994)
Parks and Wildlife (2017)

GIS Databases:

SAC Bio Datasets (Accessed July 2017)

(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.

Proposed clearing may be at variance to this Principle

According to available databases, four fauna species of conservation significance have been recorded within (10 kilometre radius), including the Carnaby's cockatoo, numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), rainbow bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) and red-tailed phascogale (DBCA, 2007-). Parks and Wildlife advised that the application area may also provide suitable habitat for the chuditch (*Dasyurus geoffroi*) and the woylie (*Bettongia penicillata* subsp. *ogilbyi*) which have been recorded within 20 kilometres of the application area (Parks and Wildlife, 2017).

Carnaby's cockatoo listed as endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Black cockatoos breed in large hollow-bearing trees, generally within woodlands or forests or in isolated trees (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). These species nest in hollows in live or dead trees of wandoo, York gum, salmon gum, *Eucalyptus accedens* (powder bark), *Corymbia calophylla* (marri), *Eucalyptus marginata* (jarrah), *Eucalyptus rudis* (flooded gum), *Eucalyptus megacarpa* (bullich), *Eucalyptus gomphocephala* (tuart), *Eucalyptus diversicolor* (karri) and *Eucalyptus* sp. (blackbutt) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Approximately eight large mature trees containing hollows were observed within the application area, most of which occurred on the southern side of the road reserve (DER, 2017).

The red-tailed phascogale prefers habitats are *Allocasuarina* woodlands with hollow-bearing eucalypts.

The DER site inspection identified the presence of vegetation suitable as foraging habitat for Carnaby's cockatoo, and several mature *Eucalyptus* trees containing hollows that could be utilised for nesting and feeding habitat by Carnaby's cockatoo and red-tailed phascogale (DER, 2017).

The application area may provide suitable habitat for the numbat and woylie. Parks and Wildlife advised that these species are not likely to occur along the edge of the road reserve where clearing is proposed, or if present are likely to occur in low numbers (Parks and Wildlife, 2017). Noting this, the application area is not likely to provide significant habitat for this species.

The rainbow bee-eater is known to occur in numerous habitats including open forests and woodlands, shrublands, in cleared or semi-cleared habitats such as areas of human habitation and farmland. It prefers open, cleared or lightly-timbered areas that are often, but not always in close proximity to permanent water (Department of the Environment and Energy, 2017). Noting the type of vegetation within the application area, and the presence of open woodlands and cleared land within the local area, it is considered that the application area may contain suitable habitat for this species. However, given the mobile nature of this species and that vegetation in similar or better condition occurs within the adjacent extensive Lol Gray State Forest, the application area is not likely to provide significant habitat for this species.

The chuditch requires adequate den resources (hollow logs, burrows or rock crevices), adequate prey resources and areas of large intact habitat to survive (Department of Environment and Conservation, 2012). Given the application area borders large areas of remnant vegetation, the chuditch may opportunistically utilise the application area for nesting or foraging habitat. However, noting that the proposed clearing will be limited to up to two metres on either side of the road reserve and that no large hollow logs, burrows or rock crevices were observed during a site inspection of the application area, the application area is not likely to provide significant habitat for this species.

Given the above, the proposed clearing may be at variance to this Principle.

References:

Commonwealth of Australia (2012)
DBCA (2007-)
DER (2017)
Parks and Wildlife (2017)
Department of the Environment and Energy (2017)

GIS Databases:

SAC Bio Datasets (Accessed July 2017)

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

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

According to available databases, one rare flora species has been recorded within the local area (10 kilometre radius) (DBCA, 2007-). The closest record of this species is approximately 5.8 kilometres from the application area. The preferred habitat of this species is in lateritic gravel and brown loam, amongst massive laterite on breakaways, in open low wandoo woodland over common woollybush (*Adenanthos cygnorum*) and golden dryandra (*Dryandra nobilis*) (Brown et al., 1998). Noting the habitat requirements of this species and the soil types within the application area, the application area is unlikely to contain suitable habitat for this species.

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

References:

DBCA (2007-)

DER (2017)

Brown et al (1998)

GIS Databases:

SAC Bio Datasets (Accessed July 2017)

(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.

Proposed clearing not likely to be at variance to this Principle

According to available databases, the majority of the application area is located within a mapped occurrence of the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC. This TEC is listed as critically endangered under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This TEC occurs within an extensively cleared and modified landscape, and now exists as mostly very small and highly fragmented patches (DBCA, 2017).

The '*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) Approved Conservation Advice (including listing advice) for the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt*' for this TEC states that these woodlands are dominated by a complex mosaic of eucalypt species with a tree or mallet form over an understorey that is highly variable in structure and composition (Threatened Species Scientific Community, 2015).

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) advised that portions of the application area may meet the criteria to be the TEC, where the roadside remnants are greater than five metres wide, where there are at least five trees per 0.5 hectares and where Jarrah does not occur as a dominant or codominant species (DBCA, 2017). It is not possible to determine which portions of the application area are the TEC without a specific assessment of the patches against the descriptions held in the Approved Conservation Advice (DBCA, 2017). However, noting the condition of the vegetation within the application area, the extent of the proposed clearing and the linear shape of the application area, it is likely that only a portion of this is likely to be representative of this TEC and that the impact of the proposed clearing on the TEC in isolation is likely to be minimal (DBCA, 2017). DBCA advised that the significance of the proposed clearing on this TEC is probably reduced as it is a very small area in relation to the amount of native vegetation that would be representative of the TEC within the application area (DBCA, 2017).

It is noted that adjacent vegetation in similar or better condition than the vegetation within the application area is likely to comprise the TEC.

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

References:

Threatened Species Scientific Committee (2015)

Keighery (1994)

DBCA (2017)

GIS Databases:

SAC Bio Datasets (Accessed July 2017)

(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.

Proposed clearing is at variance to this Principle

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).

In assessing the risk of further loss and subsequent cumulative effects, consideration has been given to the extent of native vegetation remaining and what is currently managed as conservation estate:

- as indicated in Table 1, the current vegetation extents for the bioregion, Shire of Cuballing and mapped Beard vegetation association within the bioregion are all below the below the 30 per cent threshold;

- as indicated in Table 1, less than two per cent of the pre-European extent of the mapped Beard vegetation association within the bioregion is contained in conservation estate; and
- the local area (10 kilometre radius surrounding the application area) retains approximately 31 per cent (11,187.2 hectares) vegetative cover, and the proposed clearing will reduce this to approximately 30.9 per cent.

Noting the above, the application area is considered to be within an extensively cleared area.

As discussed under Principles (a) and (b), the application area contains native vegetation in a good (Keighery, 1994) condition which may comprise significant habitat for indigenous fauna. On this basis, the application area is considered to be significant as a remnant in an extensively cleared area.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is at variance to this Principle.

Table 1: Vegetation representation statistics

	Pre-European (ha)	Current Extent (ha)	Remaining (%)	Current Extent in DBCA Managed Lands	
				(ha)	(%)
IBRA Bioregion*					
Avon Wheatbelt	9,517,110	1,763,071	18.5	173,880	9.8
Local government*					
Shire of Cuballing	119,533	26,512	22.2	9,461	35.7
Beard vegetation association in Bioregion*					
1023	1,522,676	165,822	10.9	17,236	10.4

References:

Commonwealth of Australia (2001)

*Government of Western Australia (2016)

Keighery (1994)

GIS Databases:

NLWRA, Current Extent of Native Vegetation

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Proposed clearing may be at variance to this Principle

According to available databases, the application area is intersected by three minor non-perennial watercourses which are tributaries of the major watercourse Fourteen Mile Brook. The proposed clearing may impact on vegetation growing in association with these watercourses.

Noting the extent of the proposed clearing, the linear shape of the application area and the condition of the vegetation within the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to significantly impact on riparian vegetation.

Given the above, the proposed clearing may be at variance to this Principle.

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.

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

The soils within the application area have been mapped by the former Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) as the following:

- Biberkine Subsystem described as valley floors and footslopes with gently undulating rises and low hills. Alluvium and colluvium over granite etc; yellow brown sandy duplexes, wet and semi-wet soils and brown deep loamy duplexes; wandoo-flooded gum with jam-sheoak-teatree; and
- Noombling Subsystem (Dryandra) described as long gentle and undulating hillslopes and divides. Colluvium / weathered granite, gneiss and some dolerite; yellow/brown and grey deep sandy duplexes, brown deep loamy duplexes, sandy gravels and shallow duplexes; marri-wandoo/jam-sheoak (Schoknecht et al., 2004).

The DER site inspection observed brown sandy loamy soils within the application area (DER, 2017). This soil type is not considered to have a high risk of wind or water erosion.

Noting the extent of the proposed clearing, the linear shape of the application area and its location within the existing maintenance zone of a road, and the porous nature of the soils within the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to result in appreciable land degradation.

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

References:
DER (2017)
Schoknecht et al. (2004)

GIS Databases:
Soils, Statewide
Groundwater salinity
Land Degradation datasets

(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.

Proposed clearing may be at variance to this Principle

According to available databases, the closest conservation area is the Lol Gray State Forest, which borders the northern and southern side of Wandering-Narrogin Road reserve at the western end of the application area. A remnant patch of native vegetation borders the northern side of the road reserve at the eastern end of the application area.

The proposed clearing may impact on the environmental values of this conservation area and the adjacent patch of remnant native vegetation through increased edge effects, and the introduction and spread of weeds and dieback. Weed and dieback management practices will assist in managing these impacts.

Given the above, the proposed clearing may be at variance to this Principle.

GIS Databases:
Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, 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.

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

As discussed under Principle (f), the application area is intersected by three mapped minor non-perennial water courses.

The proposed clearing may cause increased runoff and sedimentation into these watercourses. However, noting the extent of the proposed clearing, the linear shape of the application area, and the porous nature of the soils within the application area, and that existing culverts are likely to be in place to manage water flow, any impacts to surface water quality as a result of the proposed clearing are likely to be short term and minimal.

Groundwater salinity mapped within the application area is between 7,000-14,000 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids (saline). Noting the extent of the proposed clearing and the linear shape of the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on the quality of underground water.

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

GIS Databases:
Hydrography, linear
Groundwater salinity

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

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

Noting the absence of watercourses or wetlands within the application area, the extent of the proposed clearing and the linear shape of the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to cause or exacerbate flooding.

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

GIS Databases:
Hydrography linear
Topographic contours

Planning instruments and other relevant matters.

The applicant proposes to clear 0.86 hectares of native vegetation within the Wandering-Narrogin Road reserve for the purpose of road upgrades and road safety in multiple stages over a five year period. The applicant proposes to clear up to two metres to the top of the backslope along both sides of the road, to facilitate widening of the sealed surface and improved drainage.

The cumulative impacts to the extensively cleared Beard vegetation association mapped within the application area have been considered during the assessment of this application.

Noting that the application area is adjacent to conservation areas, Parks and Wildlife advised that clearing footprint should be minimised where possible and all waste material should be removed from the site and not deposited of into adjacent remnant vegetation (Parks and Wildlife, 2017).

The application was advertised online on 10 March 2017 for a 14-day submission period. One submission has been received from the public regarding the application, which recommended the implementation of environmentally sustainable methods for road design and upgrades in order to avoid/minimise the impacts of clearing roadside vegetation. The submission has been addressed in the above assessment.

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

References:

Parks and Wildlife (2017)

GIS Databases:

Aboriginal Sites of Significance

5. Applicant's submission

On 23 August 2017, a Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) Delegated Officer wrote to the applicant, outlining the environmental impacts identified during the assessment of the application, and inviting the applicant to provide advice on how the impacts would be avoided or minimised, and how any unavoidable impacts would be offset (DWER ref. A1510735).

In response to the Delegated Officer's letter, the applicant provided advice of measures undertaken to avoid and minimise impacts, and an offset proposal (DWER ref. A1521930). The avoidance and minimisation measures are discussed in Section 3 of this report, and the offset proposal is discussed in Section 6 of this report.

On 17 October 2017, DWER officers met with the applicant on-site to discuss the proposed clearing and the proposed offset. During the meeting, the applicant advised that the proposed clearing would impact a number of mature trees growing within the maintenance zone and up to the top of the backslope on both sides of the existing road. In relation to the offset proposal, DWER officers advised that some form of conservation tenure (such as a conservation covenant or change of vested purpose) would be required over the proposed revegetation.

Following the on-site meeting, the applicant submitted a revised offset proposal (DWER ref. A1544948).

On 23 October 2017, a DWER Delegated Officer wrote to the applicant, requesting (among other things) confirmation of the extent of the proposed offset site that would be attributed as an offset for this application, and a copy of written support from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) for the proposed change in purpose (DWER ref. A1545573).

In response to the Delegated Officer's letter, the applicant provided a copy of correspondence from DPLH advising in-principle support for the proposed change in purpose of Crown Reserve 2556 to 'Conservation' subject to the necessary statutory referrals to relevant agencies (DWER ref. A1550485). The applicant also confirmed the combined extent of a broader offset proposal for this and two other applications (CPS 7523/1 and CPS 7678/1), indicating that 1.59 hectares of the proposed offset site would be attributed as an offset for this application (DWER ref. A1555477).

6. Suitability of proposed offset

The assessment against the clearing principles has identified that the proposed clearing is at variance to clearing principle (e). After consideration of the applicant's proposed avoidance and mitigation measures, it is considered that the significant residual impact of the proposed clearing is the loss of 0.86 hectares of an extensively cleared vegetation association.

To counterbalance the significant residual impact associated with this application, the applicant submitted an offset proposal to revegetate approximately 1.584 hectares of exhausted gravel resource areas within 'Parsons Pit' Crown Reserve 19021 (being Lot 3575 on Plan 111952), of which approximately two thirds would be attributed as an offset for the significant residual impact associated with this application. Crown Reserve 19021 is currently vested for the purpose of 'Gravel', and contains active gravel extraction operations

Following a meeting with DWER officers on 17 October 2017, the applicant submitted a revised offset proposal to change the purpose of Crown Reserve 2556 (being Lot 434 on Plan 84296), currently vested for the purpose of 'Gravel', to the purpose of 'Conservation'. Crown Reserve 2556 is approximately 40 hectares in area, and is mapped as Beard vegetation association 1023, consistent with the extensively cleared vegetation association the subject of this application, and as the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.

In assessing whether the proposed offset is adequately proportionate to the significance of the environmental values being impacted, DWER undertook a calculation using the Commonwealth *Offsets Assessment Guide*. The calculation indicated that an area of approximately 1.59 hectares is required to counterbalance the loss of 0.86 hectares of an extensively cleared vegetation association. The applicant agreed with DWER's offset calculation

Given the above, it is considered that a 1.59 hectare portion of Crown Reserve 2556 with the proposed purpose of 'Conservation' is adequate to counterbalance the significant residual impact of the proposed clearing consistent with the *Western Australian Environmental Offsets Policy* (September 2011).

7. References

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