



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7646/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: DDG Tubridgi Pty Limited

1.3. Property details

Property: Production Licence L9
Local Government Area: Shire of Ashburton
Colloquial name: Tubridgi Airstrip Project

1.4. Application

| Clearing Area (ha) | No. Trees | Method of Clearing | For the purpose of: |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 11 | | Mechanical Removal | Airstrip and Access Tracks |

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 17 August 2017

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Vegetation Description | <p>The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation associations (GIS Database):</p> <p>589: Mosaic: Short bunch grassland – savanna. grass plain (Pilbara) / Hummock grasslands, grass steppe; soft spinifex; and</p> <p>676: Succulent steppe; samphire.</p> <p>A flora and vegetation survey has not been conducted over the application area.</p> |
| Clearing Description | <p>Tubridgi Airstrip Project.</p> <p>DDG Tubridgi Pty Limited proposes to clear up to 11 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 48.3 hectares, for the purpose of an airstrip and access tracks. The project is located approximately 9 kilometres south-west of Onslow within the Shire of Ashburton.</p> |
| Vegetation Condition | <p>Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994);</p> <p>to</p> <p>Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery, 1994).</p> |
| Comment | <p>The vegetation condition was derived from a report by Preston Consulting (2017) and aerial imagery.</p> |

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

The proposed clearing of 11 hectares is for the redevelopment of the Tubridgi airstrip. The clearing will involve the removal of vegetation from the runway area and the mowing of vegetation for a runway strip surrounding the runway itself (Preston Consulting, 2017).

No flora surveys have been conducted over the application area, however there has been a number of flora surveys undertaken in the local area (Preston Consulting, 2017). A flora and vegetation survey was undertaken by Mattiske (2016) approximately one kilometre from the application area. The vegetation within the application area is most likely to closely resemble the vegetation unit described in that survey as 'Tecticornia spp. low sparse chenopod shrubland with *Sporobolus mitchellii*, *Eriachne helmsii* low isolated tussock grasses' (Mattiske, 2016; Preston Consulting, 2017).

There are no records of any Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities within the application area, and

based on the vegetation present, none are likely to be present (Preston Consulting, 2017; GIS Database). According to available databases there are no records of Threatened or Priority flora species within the application area (GIS database). There is no habitat present within the application area suitable for the species of Threatened flora known from the Pilbara bioregion (Western Australian Herbarium, 2017). Several species of Priority flora are known from the local area and have been recorded from flora surveys in the Onslow area (Preston Consulting, 2017; GIS Database). Based on the habitat present, several species may be present within the application area. However, the habitat is widespread in the local area and the proposed clearing for redeveloping an airstrip is not likely to have a significant impact on Priority flora species.

The application area does not contain any unique or restricted fauna habitats (Preston Consulting, 2017). Several species of conservation significance may utilise the application area however, the habitat is not likely to represent significant habitat for fauna species. The clearing of 11 hectares for redeveloping an airstrip is not likely to have a significant impact on native fauna species.

The application area has been mapped as occurring on the Onslow land system (GIS Database). Within this land system, clay plains with tussock grasses are sensitive to overgrazing and are susceptible to erosion (Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004). The proposed clearing of 11 hectares for the reestablishment of a previous airstrip and access tracks is not likely to cause appreciable land degradation in the local area.

The application area is located within a broad clay plain which is likely to flood following significant rainfall events. The proposed clearing of 11 hectares is not likely to have a significant impact on the quality or quantity of surface or groundwater within the local area. The proposed clearing is also unlikely to lead to an increase in intensity or incidence of flooding.

The application area has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s.51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, and the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (g), (h), (i) and (j) and is not at variance to Principles (e) and (f).

Methodology Matiske (2016)
Preston Consulting (2017)
Van Vreeswyk et al. (2004)
Western Australian Herbarium (2017)

GIS Database:
- Hydrography, Linear
- Imagery
- Landsystem Rangelands
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Soils, Statewide
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities boundaries
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities buffered
- Threatened Fauna

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

Comments

There is one native title claim over the area under application (DPLH, 2017). 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, 2017). 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 10 July 2017 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 (2017)

4. References

- DPLH (2017) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. <http://maps.daa.wa.gov.au/AHIS/> (Accessed 14 August 2017).
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Mattiske (2016) Level 1 Flora and Vegetation Survey of the Tubridgi Gas Wells Survey Area. Prepared for DBP by Mattiske Consulting Pty Ltd, May 2016.
- Preston Consulting (2017) Native Vegetation Clearing Permit Application – Tubridgi Project Airstrip. Prepared for DDG Tubridgi Pty Limited, by Preston Consulting Pty Ltd, 7 June 2017.
- Van Vreeswyk, A.M.E.; Payne, A.L.; Leighton, K.A.; Hennig, P. (2004) An inventory and condition survey of the Pilbara Region, Western Australia, Technical Bulletin No. 92 Department of Agriculture Western Australia, South Perth.
- Western Australian Herbarium (2017) FloraBase - The Western Australian Flora. Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions. <http://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/> (Accessed 26 July 2017).

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 *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, 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 *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, 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 *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, 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 *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, 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.