Government of Western Australia
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.:	8047/1
Permit type:	Purpose Permit

1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name:	BHP Billiton Iron Ore Pty Ltd
Application received date:	19 April 2018

1.3. Property details

Property:	LOT 453 ON PLAN 165816, PORT HEDLAND LOT 5432 ON PLAN 184949, PORT HEDLAND
Local Government Authority:	PORT HEDLAND, TOWN OF
Localities:	PORT HEDLAND

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	Purpose category:
1.37		Mechanical Removal	Road construction or upgrades

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application:	Grant
Decision Date:	29 October 2018
Reasons for Decision:	The clearing permit application received on 6 March 2018 has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. It has been concluded that the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles. The Delegated Officer determined that the proposed clearing is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts.

2. Site Information

Clearing Description	The application is to clear 1.37 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 453 on Deposited Plan 165816 and Lot 5432 on Deposited Plan 184949, Port Hedland, for the purpose of construction and maintenance of access roads (figure 1).
Vegetation Description	The application area has been mapped as Beard vegetation association 43 which is described as “Low forest; mangroves (Kimberley) or thicket; mangroves (Pilbara)”.
Vegetation Condition	Completely Degraded; No longer intact, completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery, 1994). To Good; Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994).
Soil type	The application area has been mapped as the Littoral Land Subsystem: Bare coastal mudflats (unvegetated), samphire flats, sandy islands, coastal dunes and beaches, supporting samphire low shrublands, sparse acacia shrublands and mangrove forests. About 70 per cent of the system is tidal flat which supports no vegetation, coastal dunes are highly susceptible to wind erosion if plant cover is lost by fire or other disturbance; mangrove communities are significant habitats (DPIRD, 2017).

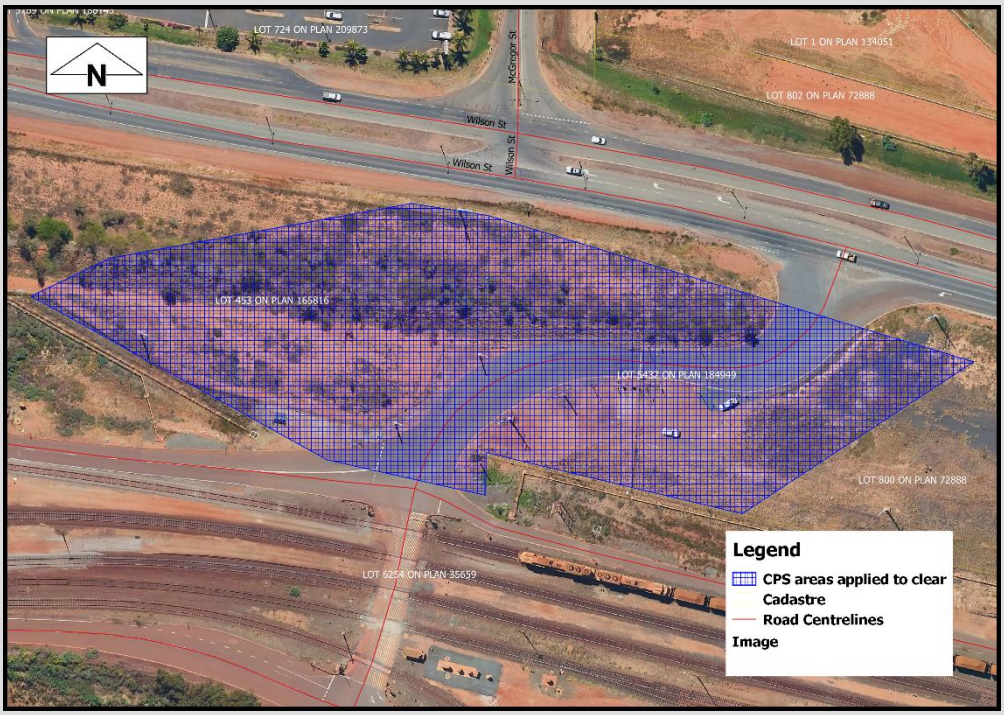

Figure 1: Application Area

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

The application is to clear 1.37 hectares of native vegetation within Lot 453 on Deposited Plan 165816 and Lot 5432 on Deposited Plan 184949, Port Hedland, for the purpose of construction and maintenance of access roads.

According to available databases 13 priority flora and six terrestrial fauna species, listed as specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, have been recorded within the local area (40 kilometre radius). Given the preferred habitat requirements of these flora and fauna species and noting the current landuse, structure and condition of the vegetation within the application area, it is unlikely that the application area will support these species.

No priority or threatened ecological communities have been recorded within the local area.

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 application area is located within the Pilbara Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia bioregion, which retains approximately 99 per cent of its pre-European vegetation extent. Beard vegetation associations 43 retains approximately 91 per cent of its pre-European vegetation extent within this bioregion (Government of Western Australia, 2018). Given these statistics, the application area is not likely to be a significant remnant in an area that has been extensively cleared.

No watercourses or wetlands have been mapped within the application area.

No conservation area have been recorded within the local area. Noting this, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on the environmental values of any conservation areas.

Given the relatively small area under application and its condition, the proposed clearing is not likely to cause appreciable land degradation, impact on surface or underground water quality, or cause or exacerbate flooding.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles.

Planning instruments and other relevant matters.

The Town of Port Hedland has provided the following comments in regards to the proposed clearing:

- The area contains part of an established ‘green screen’ developed to reduce the impacts of noise and dust from the site on nearby residence. It is essential that the green screen is re-established immediately following the completion of works to ensure these impacts are reduced.
- Clearing of the land will likely result in increased dust development from the subject area. The ground surface must be stabilised or dust control measures employed during works to prevent additional dust issues for the wider community.

(Town of Port Hedland, 2018)

No Aboriginal sites of significance have been mapped within the application area.

The clearing permit application was advertised on the DWER website on 21 June 2018 with a 21 day submission period. No public submissions have been received in relation to this application.

4. References

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

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) (2017) NRInfo Digital Mapping. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Government of Western Australia. URL: https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/ (accessed April 2018).

Government of Western Australia (2018) 2017 State-wide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of December 2017. WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

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

Town of Port Hedland (2018) Direct Interest Response for Clearing Permit Application CPS 8047/1 (DWER Ref: A1701847).