



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 8634/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name: Shire of Murray
Application received date: 1 August 2019

1.3. Property details

Property: Lot 4164 on Diagram 63545, North Yunderup
North Yunderup Road road reserve (PINs 11751094, 11751095 and 11751096)

Local Government Authority: Shire of Murray
Localities: North Yunderup

1.4. Application

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

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 25 February 2020

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

The Delegated Officer noted the avoidance and minimisation measures taken by the applicant and the condition of the native vegetation within the application area, and determined that the proposed clearing is not likely to lead to an unacceptable risk to the environment.

Given the above, the Delegated Officer decided to grant the clearing permit subject to weed and dieback management conditions.

2. Site Information

Clearing Description

The application is for the clearing of 0.15 hectares of native vegetation within North Yunderup Road road reserve (PINs 11751094, 11751095 and 11751096) and Lot 4164 on Diagram 63545, North Yunderup, for the purpose of bridge replacement works (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Application area (outlined in blue)

Vegetation Description and Condition

The vegetation within the application area is mapped as the Bassendean Complex – Central and South (Hedde et al, 1980), described as ‘vegetation ranging from woodland of *Eucalyptus marginata* (Jarrah) - *Allocasuarina fraseriana* (Sheoak) - *Banksia* species to low woodland of *Melaleuca* species, and sedgeland on the moister sites’.

A site inspection of the application area conducted by Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) environmental officers noted that the vegetation proposed to be cleared predominantly comprised of individual *Eucalyptus rudis* (Flooded Gum) trees, small groves of *Melaleuca* species trees over understorey of *Pteridium esculentum* (bracken fern), *Suaeda australis*, *Juncus* species and weedy grassland (Figures 2 – 5). The site inspection determined that the vegetation condition of the application area is:

Degraded: Basic vegetation structure severely impacted by disturbance;

To

Good: Vegetation structure significantly altered with obvious signs of multiple disturbance. Retains basic vegetation structure or ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994).



Figure 2: Vegetation to be cleared, looking west.



Figure 3: Vegetation to be cleared, looking west.



Figure 4: Individual trees and bracken fern understorey to be cleared, looking north-west.



Figure 5: Individual trees and bracken fern understorey to be cleared, looking west.

Soil/Landform Type

The application area is mapped within the Vasse V6a Phase soil unit, described as 'gently undulating beach ridges, formed from reworked Pleistocene Bassendean sands. Deep bleached grey acidic siliceous sands iron-organic hardpan' (Schoknecht et al., 2004).

Comment

The local area considered in the assessment of this application is defined as a five kilometre radius measured from the perimeter of the application area.

3. Minimisation and mitigation measures

The Shire of Murray advised that the design of the bridge has been undertaken in a way that minimises impact to trees (Shire of Murray, 2019).

4. Assessment of application against clearing principles

A review of the available databases identified 21 conservation significant flora species within the local area. Of these, one Priority 2 species, two Priority 3 species and four Priority 4 species have been recorded on similar mapped soil types or habitat. None have been recorded within the application area. The site inspection undertaken by DWER determined that it is unlikely for the conservation significant flora species to occur, due to the vegetation type and condition of the application area. Noting this and the relatively small area proposed to be cleared, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on priority flora, or include, or be necessary for the continued existence of threatened flora.

According to available datasets, 11 Threatened fauna species, 25 fauna species protected under international agreement, one Priority 3, four Priority 4 fauna species and one other specially protected fauna have been recorded within the local area (Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, 2007-). It is noted that many of the threatened fauna species and those protected under international agreement are migratory shorebird species and are found in association with the Peel Inlet which is not represented in the application area.

Three threatened cockatoo species, *Calyptorhynchus banksii* subsp. *naso* (Forest Red-tailed black cockatoo), *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* (Baudin's cockatoo) and *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* (Carnaby's Cockatoo) have been recorded in the local area. Black cockatoos nest in hollows in live or dead trees of karri, marri, wandoo, tuart, salmon gum, jarrah, flooded gum, York gum, powder bark, bullich and blackbutt (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). The site inspection did not observe any trees with hollows or possible hollows potentially suitable for black cockatoos (DWER, 2020). There is one confirmed roosting site approximately 4.7 kilometres north-west of the application area. Black cockatoos generally roost in or near riparian environments or water sources, or within or on the edges of forests (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). The proposed clearing involves minimal removal of tall trees and there are larger extents of remnant vegetation within the local area. Noting this, the application area is not likely to be a significant breeding or roosting habitat for black cockatoos.

Black cockatoos have a preference for feeding habitat that includes jarrah and marri woodlands and forest heathland and woodland dominated by proteaceous plant species such as *Banksia* sp., *Hakea* sp. and *Grevillea* sp. (Commonwealth of Australia,

2012). There is a lack of suitable foraging habitat within the application area therefore it is not likely to comprise of significant habitat for these species.

The application area may provide habitat for ground-dwelling species such as *Isodon fusciventer* (Quenda) and *Hydromys chrysogaster* (Water-rat) due to the presence of dense understorey. However, given that the application is for clearing 0.15 hectares of native vegetation and similar habitat remains within adjacent areas, it is not likely that the proposed clearing will significantly impact on these species.

According to the available databases, sections of the application area intersect the 'Banksia Dominated Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain' Priority 3 ecological community (PEC) and federally listed threatened ecological community (TEC). However, the site inspection determined that the application area is not representative of the PEC due to the absence of key Banksia species and associated vegetation (DWER, 2020). The application area is not expected to impact on any TECs or PECs.

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 approximately 28 per cent (1,960 hectares) of remnant native vegetation. The application area is mapped within the Bassendean Complex – Central and South vegetation complex of which 26 per cent of the pre-European extent is remaining (Government of Western Australia, 2019). Noting the local extent of remnant vegetation and the current extent of the mapped vegetation complex is less than 30 per cent, the application area is considered to be within an extensively cleared landscape. However, considering the size of the proposed clearing, the vegetation not comprising high biological diversity, significant habitat for fauna, threatened or priority flora or threatened ecological communities, the vegetation proposed to be cleared is not considered to be significant as a remnant of native vegetation.

The application area occurs along a watercourse, Wilgie Creek, and the vegetation proposed to be cleared includes riparian vegetation. Noting this, the proposed clearing is considered to be at variance with clearing principle (f). Given the proposed works, the size of the application area and existing infrastructure, it is unlikely that the proposed clearing will cause any unacceptable environmental impacts to Wilgie Creek, with potential impacts, if any, being localised and short-term.

The nearest Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) conservation areas are un-named reserves located approximately 1.1 kilometres northeast and 2.2 kilometres southwest of the application area. The proposed clearing is unlikely to impact on the environmental values of the conservation areas due to the restricted clearing and distance.

Noting the extent of the proposed clearing, the proposed clearing is not likely to exacerbate or contribute to further land degradation, deteriorate the quality of groundwater or cause or exacerbate the potential for flooding beyond than that which is currently present.

The proposed clearing is at variance with clearing principle (f), and is not likely to be at variance with the remaining clearing principles.

Planning instruments and other relevant matters

The application area is not mapped within registered Aboriginal Heritage sites.

The clearing permit application was advertised on the DWER website on 29 August 2019 with a 14 day submission period. No public submissions have been received in relation to this application.

5. References

- Commonwealth of Australia (2001) National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005, Canberra.
- Commonwealth of Australia (2012) EPBC Act referral guidelines for three threatened black cockatoo species. Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities, Canberra.
- Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) (2007-) NatureMap: Mapping Western Australia's Biodiversity. Department of Parks and Wildlife. URL: <http://naturemap.dpaw.wa.gov.au/>. Accessed January 2020.
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) (2020) CPS 8634/1 Site inspection report. DWER ref: A1867868.
- Heddl, E. M., Loneragan, O. W., and Havel, J. J (1980) Atlas of Natural Resources. Western Australia Department of Conservation and Environment.
- Government of Western Australia (2019). 2018 South West Vegetation Complex Statistics. Current as of March 2019.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Schoknecht, N., Tille., P. and Purdie., B. (2004) Soil-landscape mapping in South-Western Australia – Overview of Methodology and outputs' Resource Management Technical Report No. 280. Department of Agriculture.
- Shire of Murray (2019) Clearing Permit Application. DWER ref: A1836639

GIS Databases:

- Aboriginal Sites of Significance
- Black Cockatoo Roost sites
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia
- Geomorphic Wetlands – Swan Coastal Plain
- Hydrography Linear - Hierarchy
- Threatened fauna
- TPFL data

- WA Herb data
- WA TEC PEC boundaries