Attachment 1: Desktop assessment and site inspection, Percy Street Cowaramup

File reference: RDS/0127

Background

It is proposed to undertake road enhancement works at Percy Street in Cowaramup. This will involve extending the sealed section of Percy Street by approximately 30 metres in order to provide a link between sealed and unsealed sections of the road, therefore improving overall connectivity in the local road network improving access and egress, particularly in case of emergency.

The proposed road works will involve the clearing of a total of 0.028 ha of native vegetation.

A desktop assessment, followed by multiple site inspections by environment and landcare officers have been undertaken of the road reserve.

The vegetation in this area is in a corridor of vegetation within a residential area, and is in degraded to completely degraded condition. The understorey is dominated by annual and perennial weeds, with very little remaining native understorey. Three marri trees between 20cm and 50cm DBH are proposed for removal, and four smaller jarrah trees (10cm to 20cm DBH) are proposed for removal. The crowns of the trees were inspected, and the branches were not of adequate size to contain hollows likely to be used by black cockatoo species. A number of introduced Acacia species were present in the clearing area.

There are no threatened species or ecological communities within or in proximity to the proposed clearing area.

Measures will be taken to avoid the removal of native trees wherever possible. The road works at Percy Street have been designed to avoid a large marri tree on the eastern side of the road. Adjacent trees will be pruned as an alternative to being removed in order to maintain a high level of road safety.

Comments on the proposed clearing against the clearing principles

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

It is not anticipated that the proposed clearing will have an impact on vegetation that is of a high level of biodiversity. The vegetation ranges from degraded to completely degraded condition, with annual and perennial weeds dominating the site, where they have largely outcompeted native understorey. A number of introduced Acacia species were present in the clearing area.

The road reserve falls in the Cowaramup (C2) and Cowaramup (Cw2) vegetation complexes, with 27.96% and 16.24% of the pre European extents remaining respectively. There are no known occurrences of threatened flora, fauna or threatened ecological communities within or in proximity to the clearing area.

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The vegetation in the road reserves exists in a highly disturbed landscape, surrounded by and land. Given the very small area of disturbance, it is unlikely that there will be impacts to any significant biodiversity values.

Principle (b) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia

There are no known occurrences of threatened fauna within the project areas.

Roadside trees have the potential to provide habitat for native fauna, however given the degraded nature of the vegetation, it is unlikely that the road reserve provides significant habitat for native fauna. The crowns of the marri and jarrah trees were inspected, and there were no branches of adequate size to support hollows large enough for use by threatened species, such as black cockatoos. There is no evidence of Western Ringtail Possums utilising the vegetation with no dreys or scats visible.

Clearing of vegetation will be minimised where possible, and the road works have been designed to avoid a larger marri tree to the east.

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

There are no known occurrences of rare flora within the road reserve, or within the local vicinity of the road reserve.

Principle (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

There are no known priority or threatened ecological communities within the road reserve, or within the local vicinity of the road reserve.

Principle (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.

The native vegetation in the road reserve is unlikely to be significant as a remnant of native vegetation. The vegetation that is remaining is in degraded condition, with an abundance of weeds. The road reserve falls in the Cowaramup (C2) and Cowaramup (Cw2) vegetation complexes, with 27.96% and 16.24% of the pre European extents remaining respectively.

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

The project areas are not associated a watercourse or wetland.

Principle (g) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation

The proposed clearing is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation. Drainage associated with the road enhancement works will be designed to ensure there is no erosion or runoff of sediment into the environment.

Principle (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

There are no conservation reserves in close proximity to the proposed road enhancement projects.

Principle (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

The proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water. The road works and associated drainage will be designed to ensure there is no erosion or runoff of sediment into the environment. Underground water is unlikely to be intercepted.

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

The proposed clearing is not likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence of flooding. The road widening and associated drainage will be designed to ensure that there is no flooding of water within the road reserves or surrounding environment.

Conclusion and management recommendations

The proposed clearing of native vegetation to extend the sealed section of Percy Street in Cowaramup is not considered to be at variance with the 10 clearing principles. The Shire of Augusta Margaret River will implement the following measures to ensure that impacts are minimised wherever possible.

- Clearing of native vegetation will be minimised wherever possible. Retrenchment pruning of large branches will be undertaken as an alternative to tree removal where branches pose a safety hazard. The road works have been designed to avoid a large marri tree on the northern side of the road.
- Drainage will be designed and managed to ensure that there is no erosion and runoff as a result of the road enhancement works.
- Dieback and weed control measures will be implemented during operations.

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Attachment 2 – List of photos and descriptions

Photo # (in shapefile)	Description
Percy photo 1	Marri tree 1 – photo of crown, showing branches are not of adequate size to support nesting hollows for black cockatoo species
Percy photo 2	Marri tree 2 – photo of stem ~40-50cm DBH
Percy photo 3	Marri tree 2 – photo of stem ~20-30cm DBH. Evidence of marri canker fungus
Percy photo 4	Marri tree 2 – photo of crown, poor condition
Percy photo 5	Jarrah tree 1 – multi stem
Percy photo 6	Jarrah tree 1 – photo of crown
Percy photo 7	Marri tree 3 – photo of stem ~30cm DBH
Percy photo 8	Marri tree 3 – photo of crown, showing branches are not of adequate size to support nesting hollows for black cockatoo species
Percy photo 9	Jarrah tree 2, showing introduced Acacia species in the background
Percy photo 10	Jarrah tree 2
Percy photo 11	Photo facing west showing smaller trees and understorey in clearing area, including Jarrah trees 3 and 4.
Percy photo 12	Photo facing east showing grass tree and understorey
Percy photo 13	Photo taken from end of sealed section of Percy Street facing north towards the clearing area
Percy photo 14	Photo taken from end of sealed section of Percy Street facing north towards the clearing area