



## CLEARING PERMIT

*Granted under section 51E of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*

<b>Purpose Permit number:</b>	CPS 8812/1
<b>Permit Holder:</b>	Explaurum Operations Pty Limited
<b>Duration of Permit:</b>	18 June 2020 to 18 June 2025

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 upgrading the intersection of Naremben-Merredin Road and Great Eastern Highway intersection.

**2. Land on which clearing is to be done**

Road Reserve - 11717191  
Lot 301 on Deposited Plan 59845

**3. Area of Clearing**

The Permit Holder must not clear more than 0.91 hectares of native vegetation within the area cross-hatched yellow on attached Plan 8812/1.

**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.

### PART II – MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS

**5. Avoid, minimise and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing**

In determining the amount of native vegetation to be cleared authorised under this Permit, the Permit Holder must have regard to the following principles, set out in order of preference:

- avoid the clearing of native vegetation;
- minimise the amount of native vegetation to be cleared; and
- reduce the impact of clearing on any environmental value.

**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.

### **PART III – RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING**

#### **7. Record keeping**

The Permit Holder must maintain the following records in relation to the clearing of native vegetation authorised under this Permit:

- (a) the location where the clearing occurred, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 1994 (GDA94), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings or decimal degrees;
- (b) the date(s) that the area was cleared;
- (c) the size of the area cleared (in hectares);
- (d) actions taken to avoid, minimise and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing in accordance with condition 5 of this Permit;
- (e) actions taken to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of *dieback* and *weeds* in accordance with condition 6 of this Permit; and

#### **8. Reporting**

The Permit Holder must produce the records required under condition 7 of this Permit when required by the *CEO*.

### **DEFINITIONS**

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

*CEO* means the Chief Executive Officer of the Department responsible for the administration of the clearing provisions under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*;

*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.



Richard Newman  
DIRECTOR  
NATIVE VEGETATION PROTECTION




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

19 May 2020

# Plan 8812/1



## Legend

-  CPS areas approved to clear
-  Road Centrelines
-  Cadastre - LGATE 218



 19 May 2020  
 Richard Newman, Director Native Vegetation Protection  
 Officer delegated under section 20 of the  
 Environmental Protection Act 1986





# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 8812/1  
Permit type: Purpose Permit

### 1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name: Explaurum Operations Pty Limited  
Application received date: 18 February 2020

### 1.3. Property details

Property: Road Reserve - 11717191  
Lot 301 on Deposited Plan 59845  
Local Government Authority: Shire of Merredin  
Localities: Merredin

### 1.4. Application

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

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
Decision Date: 19 May 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 may be at variance with principle (e) and is not likely to be at variance with the remaining principles.

Through assessment it has been determined that the application area is within an extensively cleared area. However, the Delegated Officer determined that given the extent and condition of the vegetation within the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to have a significant impact on remnant vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Given the above, the Delegated Officer considered that the proposed clearing is not likely to lead to an unacceptable risk to the environment and decided to grant a clearing permit subject to weed and dieback management conditions.

## 2. Site Information

**Clearing Description:** The application is to clear 0.91 hectares of native vegetation within Great Eastern Highway Road reserve (PIN 11717191) and Lot 301 on Deposited 59845, Merredin, for the purpose of upgrading the intersection of Narembeen-Merredin Road and Great Easter Highway intersection to facilitate road trains (Figure 1).

**Vegetation Description:** The vegetation within the application area is mapped as the Beard vegetation association 36 Muntadgin; Wattle, casuarina and teatree acacia-allocauarina-melaleuca alliance (Shepherd et al. 2001).

GHD (2016) found vegetation within the application area to consist of:

- Rehabilitated areas (0.85 ha) - vegetation rehabilitated in the past of varying ages, including some species native to the project area (*Eucalyptus loxophleba* and *Hakea preissii*), as well as non-native species; and
- Infrastructure and Highly Disturbed areas (0.06 ha) - Areas where clearing or other activities have fundamentally altered the composition of native vegetation and are not in a self-sustaining condition. These areas are completely cleared.

No Threatened or Priority flora, locally endemic flora, new or unusual species, relictual species, species representative of range extensions, or surface/groundwater dependent ecosystems were identified within the application area (GHD 2016).

**Vegetation Condition:** Condition of vegetation within the Permit Area was classified by Botanica Consulting (2020) as 'Degraded' (Keighery 1994). Vegetation within the Permit Area has been previously cleared and comprised of regrowth vegetation.

**Soil type:**

Two soil types have been mapped within the application area:

- Western portion (0.84 ha) of application area:
  - Tandegin, Booraan Subsystem: Hillslopes predominantly containing hardsetting, grey to brownish sandy loam over clay soils. (Mapping unit: 258Ta).
- Eastern portion of application area (0.07 ha):
  - Kellerberrin, Merredin Subsystem: Broad, flat valleys of the eastern wheatbelt containing heavy, red and grey soils. (Mapping unit: 258Kb)

**Comments:**

The local area referred to in the assessment of this application is defined as a 10 kilometre radius measured from the perimeter of the application area.

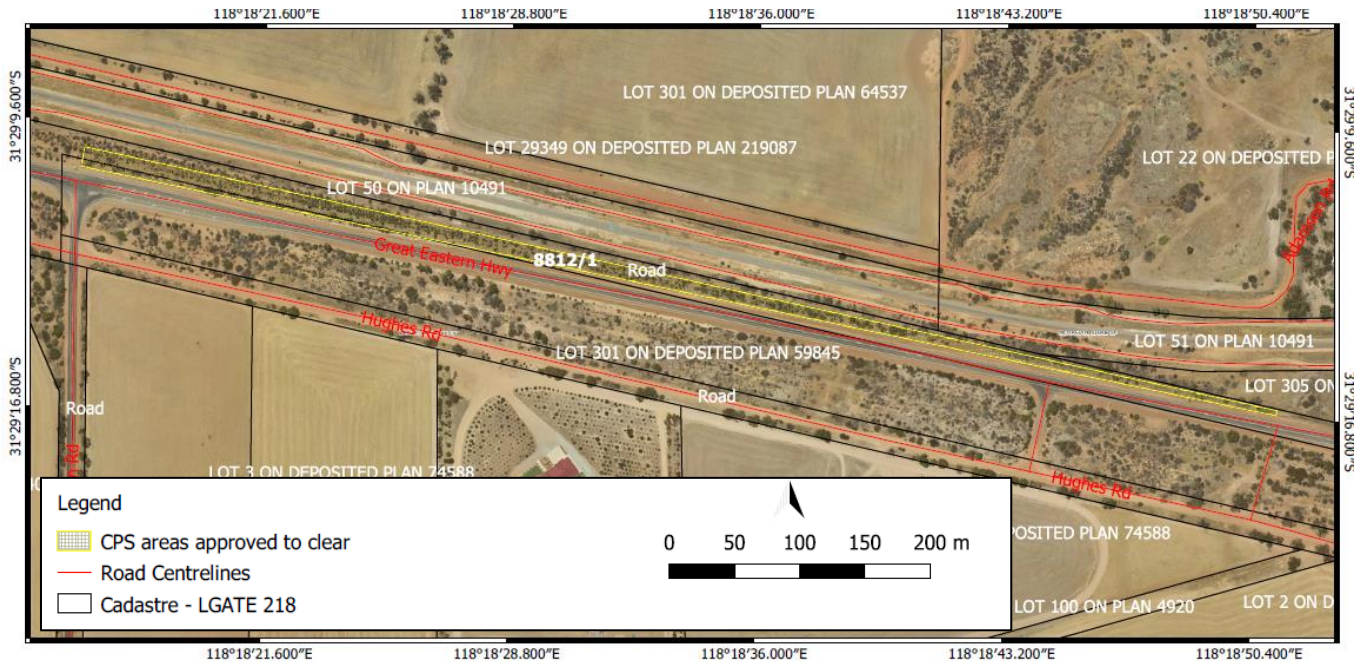


Figure 1: Area approved to clear

**3. Minimisation and mitigation measures**

The applicant has advised the proposed clearing has been planned within rehabilitated vegetation to avoid clearing mature native vegetation, Threatened/ Priority Ecological Communities and habitats that may support significant flora and fauna. The applicant also advised that the acceleration lane was shortened from the original length of 1500 metres (m) to a reduced length of 960m, saving 540m of additional clearing of roadside vegetation, as the applicant was able to demonstrate to Main Roads that there was limited benefit in extending the road beyond 960m.

**4. Assessment of application against clearing principles**

Seven priority flora species and no threatened flora species have been recorded in the local area (10km), all within the same soil types as the application area. However, given that vegetation within the permit area has been previously cleared and contains rehabilitated vegetation in degraded condition, and no priority flora were identified in the vegetation survey conducted by GHD (2016), it is not considered likely that any threatened or priority flora are present within the application area. No threatened or priority ecological communities or ecological linkages are mapped within the local area.

Five threatened, two priority and one other specially protected fauna species have been recorded in the local area (10km). A targeted Carnaby's black cockatoo habitat survey conducted by GHD (2016) during black cockatoo breeding season did not identify any Carnaby's Black Cockatoos or any suitable foraging, breeding or roosting habitat. GHD (2016) also recorded no Malleefowl sightings, breeding activity or suitable Malleefowl habitat within the application area. Noting the degraded condition (Keighery 1994) and extent of the vegetation proposed to be cleared, the habitat within the application area is not considered to be significant for any of the other threatened or priority fauna species recorded within the local area. It is noted that roadside vegetation provides corridors for wildlife, however the wide strip of vegetation immediately south of Great Eastern Highway is considered to be sufficient to act as a wildlife corridor, and a small amount of vegetation immediately north of the application area is planned to be retained.

The national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia has a target to prevent clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30 percent of that present pre-1750, below which species loss appears to accelerate exponentially at an ecosystem level (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). The Avon Wheatbelt region currently has approximately

19 percent of the pre-1750 extent remaining, with the 36 Beard vegetation complex having approximately 24 percent vegetation remaining within the Avon Wheatbelt bioregion (Government of Western Australia 2019). Within the local area, approximately 15 percent of the area that was vegetated pre-1750 remains. As such, it has been determined that the application area is within an extensively cleared area. However, the given the extent and Degraded condition (Keighery 1994) of the vegetation within the application area, the proposed clearing is not considered likely to have a significant impact on significant remnant vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

No waterbodies or wetlands are mapped within the application area, and vegetation within the application area is not consistent with riparian vegetation. The closest mapped conservation area is Tank Hill Nature Reserve, 7.3km east of the application area, and as such the proposed clearing is not likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any conservation areas.

The majority of the application area is within a soil type (Tandegin) identified as having a low risk of soil erosion, salinity, subsurface acidification, flood risk, water logging and phosphorus export. A small portion (0.07 ha) of the application area is mapped within a soil type (Kellerberrin) with a moderate risk of salinity and high risk of water logging and phosphorus export. Overall, given the extent and linear nature of the clearing and the sparse nature of the vegetation present, it is considered that the proposed clearing is unlikely to result in land degradation in the form of soil erosion, subsurface acidification, flood risk, water logging and phosphorus export. It is noted that groundwater salinity in the area is considered highly saline (greater than 35,000 mg/L TDS) and that the application area is 100-250m north of an area mapped to be likely to have shallow watertables with the potential to result in surface saltland (CSIRO and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development 2020). However, given the extent of the clearing and that vegetation within the application area is rehabilitation and appears to be relatively sparse small trees and shrubs, clearing of this vegetation is unlikely to result in significant changes to the groundwater table and therefore not considered to result in land degradation in the form of salinity. Based on the size of the application area and low flood risk of the mapped soil types, the proposed clearing is not likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Based on the above assessment, the proposed clearing may be at variance to principle (e) and is not likely to be at variance to the remaining clearing principles.

### **Planning instruments and other relevant matters.**

The Shire of Merredin (2020) advised that a very low level of remnant vegetation is present within the Shire, which is an issue of strong concern for the Shire, and that since 2012, the Shire has been involved in and supportive of several projects for revegetation and the protection of remnant vegetation. The Shire advised it has no objection to the proposal to clear, but would consider it appropriate for a suitable offset to be determined through the normal Departmental processes.

The delegated officer has determined that given the extent and condition of the vegetation within the application area an offset is not required.

The application area is within an area with no zoning listed in the Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No. 06 (Department of Planning 2019).

The application area is located within the Avon River System Proclaimed Surface Water Area, and not located within a Proclaimed Groundwater Area, Public Drinking Water Source Area or an area subject to clearing controls under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*.

No Aboriginal sites of significance have been mapped within the application area, with the closest registered site 11 km northeast from the application area.

The clearing permit application was advertised on the DWER website on 27 March 2020 with a 21 day submission period. No submissions were received.

## **5. References**

- Botanica Consulting (2020) Environmental Assessment Merredin - Great Eastern Highway Road Widening Clearing Permit Application
- Commonwealth of Australia (2001) National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005, Canberra.
- CSIRO and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (2020) Interactive groundwater and salinity map for the south-west agricultural region. Retrieved from <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/resource-assessment/interactive-groundwater-and-salinity-map-south-west-agricultural-region>
- Department of Planning (2019) Shire of Merredin Local Planning Scheme No. 06. Department of Planning, Western Australia.
- GHD (2016), Main Roads Western Australia Great Eastern Highway - Merredin to Southern Cross SLK 258.5 - 365.5 Biological Assessment.
- Government of Western Australia (2019) 2018 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of March 2019. WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Perth
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, 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 Merredin (2020) Supporting Information for clearing permit application CPS 8812/1. Shire of Merredin. Received by DWER in May 2020 (DWER Ref: A1893041).

Publicly available GIS Databases used (data.wa.gov.au):

- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Remnant Vegetation (DPIRD-005)
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia – Western Australia (DBCA-045)
- Wheatbelt Wetlands (DBCA-021)
- Hydrography - Inland Waters – Waterlines (DWER-031)
- Soil and Landscape Mapping – Best Available
- Soil and Landscape Quality – Wind Erosion Risk (DPIRD-016)
- Soil and Landscape Quality – Water Erosion Risk (DPIRD-013)
- Soil and Landscape Quality – Salinity Risk (DPIRD-009)
- Flood Risk (DPIRD-007)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- Contours (DPIRD-073)
- DBCA – Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)
- Bush Forever Areas 2000 (DPLH-019)
- Local Planning Scheme – Zones and Reserves (DPLH-071)
- Aboriginal Heritage Places (DPLH-001)
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034) - Datasets - data ...
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- CAWSA Part 2A Clearing Control Catchments (DWER-004)

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Threatened Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened Fauna
- TECs and PECs
- TECs and PECs (buffered)
- Black Cockatoo roost sites
- Statewide Vegetation Complex Statistics