

Attachment 1: Clearing assessment report, Gloucester Park

Hockey Pitch



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BACKGROUND

The Shire of Augusta Margaret and the Margaret River Hockey Club have received grant funding to construct a half size artificial turf hockey pitch with estimated capital cost of approximately \$1.3m in the Gloucester Park sporting precinct in the Margaret River townsite. This precinct is already home to a number of turf ovals catering to adult and junior football, soccer and rugby, along with athletics and tennis. Due to the nature of the playing surface, it is not possible to co-locate facilities with any of the existing clubs and sporting codes.

At present, hockey teams based in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River are obligated to train and play upon Olympic-standard synthetic turf in Busselton and Bunbury, in the absence of a more local suitable facility.

One of the Shire's strategic goals is to promote active, healthy and safe lifestyles, through the enablement of high standard recreational facilities and sporting grounds.

Under this strategic goal, one of the key projects identified is to work with the Margaret River Hockey Club to develop and implement a staged approach for multi-purpose facility located on Gloucester Park.

A concept drawing of the proposal is attached.

The proposal will result in a total of up to 24 native trees to be removed.

BIODIVERSITY VALUES

A desktop assessment, followed by multiple site inspections by Shire Environment and Landcare Officers, has been undertaken for the project area.

Flora and Vegetation

The project area comprises individual mature Marri, Jarrah and Peppermint trees with limited to no understorey, along with a variety of introduced landscape plantings.

Fauna and habitat

Based on a database search, site inspections and previous surveys in the broader precinct, the following threatened fauna have been found within or near the project site:

- *Pseudocheirus occidentalis* (Western Ringtail Possum);

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- *Isoodon obesulus subsp. Fusciventer* (Quenda);
- *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* (Baudin's Cockatoo);
- *Calyptorhynchus banksii subsp. Naso* (Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo);
- *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* (Carnaby's Cockatoo);
- *Phascogale tapoatafa ssp.* (Brush-tailed Phascogale); and

All vegetation proposed to be removed has been inspected by inspected by Shire staff experienced in local fauna species and habitats. No evidence of Western Ringtail Possums or Quenda, including animals, scats, dreys or diggings has been found in the vegetation to be removed, although both species are relatively common in vegetation elsewhere in the precinct.

Evidence of black cockatoo feeding was noted in the form of isolated chewed marri nuts, however no evidence of nesting or roosting is known in the precinct. One tree proposed to be removed contains a possible hollow that will be inspected prior to works occurring. No other trees proposed to be removed contain hollows possibly suitable for nesting.

Table 1 below identifies the trees to be removed, including diameter at breast height (DBH), species, notes on health and habitat value and photo reference.

Due to the sparse nature of vegetation and lack of evidence, it is considered very unlikely that any of threatened species permanently reside in the project area, but may occasionally forage or visit the area. Due to the minimal clearing and the retention of more suitable habitat elsewhere in the precinct it is not considered that the proposal will have a significant impact upon threatened fauna.

The Shire will continue to plant WA Peppermint trees as the predominant landscape tree throughout the precinct and can commit to planting at least 50 further trees in the next 24 months. This is in addition to the approximately 40 Peppermint that have been planted in the last 24 months. There is a preference to utilise Peppermint Trees rather than Eucalyptus sp due to their more compact nature and reduced likelihood of causing maintenance issues of invasive roots and excessive leaf and gumnut fall.

CONCLUSION AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

The hockey pitch is required to cater for the continued population growth in the Shire and to cater for hockey. There proposed location was determined to be the most appropriate as it requires the least amount of clearing, and the vegetation to be impacted is already isolated, degraded and offers little habitat value.

The clearing of 24 individual trees to facilitate the project is unlikely to be at variance with any of the 10 clearing principles.

The Shire commits to planting at least 50 trees in the 24 month period, predominantly WA Peppermint, although Marri and Jarrah will be considered if appropriate distance to ovals and playing surfaces can be achieved.

One tree contains a possible hollow suitable for black cockatoo species and the Shire commits to having this inspected prior to works to confirm.

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

The project area is degraded with no threatened or significant flora or fauna species to impact.

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

The site inspection identified no evidence of threatened fauna utilising the habitat. Given the small amount of clearing proposed, proposed mitigation strategies, and wider representation of foraging resources in the local area including adjacent Shire reserve and nearby national park, it is unlikely that the clearing will have an impact on any fauna species of conservation significance, or their habitat.

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 priority or rare flora within the project area.

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 threatened or ecological communities within the project area.

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 project area is not considered a significant remnant as it is semi-mature isolated trees. Elsewhere in the precinct and the broader Margaret River surrounds there are extensive stands of native vegetation including over the Wooditjup National Park which is approximately 2km from the project site.

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 area comprises gravelly loams and there are no watercourses or wetlands nearby. The proposal is not at variation to this clearing principle.

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

The proposed clearing will not cause appreciable land degradation as the area is already heavily modified and drainage and erosion is appropriately managed through formal drainage systems and landscaping.

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.

The area immediately surrounding the project footprint is a Recreation facility and there will be no impact to nearby conservation or recreation reserves.

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 as it is located in a developed area. The project will improve the quality of surface water as the roads in the precinct are currently gravel and export fine sediment and clay particles through winter rains. As part of this project, the road and parking areas will be sealed and erosion and sedimentation will be reduced.

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 due to the very small amount of clearing.

Table 1

Tree Number	Species	DBH cm	Notes	photo
1	Marri	50	Good condition marri, 1 possible hollow	tree 1
2	Jarrah	1 stem 30cm, 1 stem 40cm	dying, no evidence of hollows	tree 2
3	Marri	1 stem 30, 1 stem 50	no evidence of hollows	tree 3
4	Marri	1 stem 20, 1 stem 50	no evidence of hollows	tree 4
5	Jarrah	25	too small to provide nesting hollows	trees 5 6 7
6	Jarrah	20	too small to provide nesting hollows	trees 5 6 7
7	Marri	25	too small to provide nesting hollows	trees 5 6 7
8	Marri	50	only stump remains following storm damage	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
9	Marri	50	severe canker damage, no evidence of hollows	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
10	Marri	50	severe canker damage, no evidence of hollows	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
11	Marri	40	no evidence of hollows	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
12	Marri	5	too small to provide nesting hollows	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
13	Marri	5	too small to provide nesting hollows	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
14	Marri	20	too small to provide nesting hollows	tree 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15	Marri	20	too small to provide nesting hollows	trees 15 16
16	Peppermint	10	no dreys or suitable hollows for WRP	trees 15 16
17	Marri	100	comprised of 3 stems combined DBH 100	tree 17
18	Marri	2 stems 20, 1 stem 40	in poor health, no evidence of hollows	tree 18
19	Jarrah	3 stems all 40	no evidence of hollows	tree 19
20	Peppermint	5 stems all 5 - 10 cm	no dreys or suitable hollows for WRP	trees 20 21 22 23 24
21	Peppermint	5 stems all 10-20 cm	no dreys or suitable hollows for WRP	trees 20 21 22 23 24
22	Peppermint	1 stem 15cm	no dreys or suitable hollows for WRP	trees 20 21 22 23 24
23	Peppermint	2 stems 10cm	no dreys or suitable hollows for WRP	trees 20 21 22 23 24
24	Peppermint	2 stems 30-40 cm	no dreys or suitable hollows for WRP	trees 20 21 22 23 24

ATTACHMENT

Hockey Pitch Concept Plan