



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details and outcomes

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	9282/2
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	Fortescue Ltd
Application received:	9 January 2026
Application area:	38.5 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Powerline and associated infrastructure
Method of clearing:	Mechanical removal
Tenure:	Miscellaneous Licence 45/457 Miscellaneous Licence 45/470
Location (LGA areas):	Shire of East Pilbara and Town of Port Hedland
Colloquial name:	Pilbara Transmission Project

1.2. Description of clearing activities

Fortescue Ltd proposes to clear up to 38.5 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 771.36 hectares, for the purpose of a powerline and associated infrastructure. The application area includes two disjointed areas approximately 132 kilometres apart and covers over 56 kilometres in length. The northern section of the project is located approximately 7 kilometres south of Port Hedland, while the southern section is located approximately 160 kilometres south. The southern section is also located approximately 144 kilometres northeast of Tom Price. It is located within the Shire of East Pilbara and Town of Port Hedland.

Clearing permit CPS 9282/1 was granted by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (now the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration) on 8 July 2021 and was valid from 31 July 2021 to 30 July 2026. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 38.5 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 771.36 hectares, for the purpose of a powerline and associated infrastructure.

On 9 January 2026, the permit holder applied to amend CPS 9282/1 to extend the permit duration by five years, to 30 July 2031. The area of clearing authorised and the permit boundary remained unchanged.

The amendment will allow for the completion of construction of power infrastructure and associated activities (Fortescue Ltd, 2026a; 2026b).

Based on the most recent annual clearing report (reporting period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, received 30 July 2025), a total of 22.47 hectares of native vegetation have been cleared under the permit (Fortescue, 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025).

1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Grant
Decision date:	30 July 2026
Decision area:	38.5 hectares of native vegetation

1.4. Reasons for decision

This clearing permit application was submitted, accepted, assessed, and determined in accordance with sections 51KA(1) and 51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE) advertised the application for a public comment for a period of 7 days, and no submissions were received.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (Appendix A), relevant datasets (Appendix D), supporting information provided by the applicant including the results of flora and vegetation and fauna desktop assessments consolidating multiple surveys, the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act (Appendix B), proposed avoidance and minimisation measures (Section 3.1), relevant planning instruments and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment (Section 3.3). The Delegated Officer also took into consideration the extent and shape of the clearing is along a linear corridor, within and adjacent to existing disturbance from rail line infrastructure.

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing may result in:

- the potential introduction and spread of weeds into adjacent vegetation, which could impact on the quality of the adjacent vegetation and its habitat values;
- the loss of native vegetation that is suitable habitat for conservation significance fauna;
- potential land degradation in the form of water erosion; and
- loss of native vegetation growing in association with watercourses.

After consideration of the available information, as well as the applicant's minimisation and mitigation measures (Section 3.1), the Delegated Officer determined the proposed clearing can be minimised and managed to be unlikely to lead to an unacceptable risk to environmental values.

The Delegated Officer decided to grant a clearing permit subject to conditions to:

- avoid, minimise to reduce the impacts and extent of clearing;
- take hygiene steps to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds;
- commence construction no later than three months after undertaking clearing to reduce the risk of erosion;
- inspect Miscellaneous Licence 45/470 for greater bilby and brush-tailed mulgara prior to clearing, and relocate any individuals found; and
- avoid clearing riparian vegetation where practicable and maintain or reinstate existing surface flows.

The assessment has not changed since the assessment for CPS 9282/1. The Delegated Officer determined that the proposed extension to the permit duration is not likely to lead to an unacceptable risk to environmental values.

1.5. Site map

A site map of proposed clearing is provided in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Map of the application area. The yellow area indicates the area within which conditional authorised clearing can occur under the granted clearing permit.

2. Legislative context

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the EP Act and the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 (Clearing Regulations).

In addition to the matters considered in accordance with section 51O of the EP Act (Section 1.4), the Delegated Officer has also had regard to the objects and principles under section 4A of the EP Act, particularly:

- the precautionary principle
- the principle of intergenerational equity
- the principle of the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity

Other legislation of relevance for this assessment include:

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)
- *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Mining Act 1978* (WA)
- *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RIWI Act)

Relevant agreements (treaties) considered during the assessment include:

- Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
- China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
- Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation (DER, 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, 2021)

3. Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

FMG (2021) provided the following avoidance and mitigation measures:

- the proposed clearing has been designed to avoid and minimise clearing significant environmental values such as:
 - priority flora
 - isolated/restricted and higher value fauna habitats such as watercourses, drainage lines, creeklines, and granite outcrops
 - natural surface water flows
- utilise cleared areas where possible given the proposed clearing is adjacent to the existing rail line
- Fortescue manages clearing of native vegetation through an internal Land Use Certification (LUC), which identifies the area to be disturbed and considers multiple factors, such as environmental (significant values and approvals), heritage, tenure, pastoral leases and water, prior to disturbance being permitted
 - each LUC application is reviewed for each factor by technical leads before approval is granted
 - conditions are placed on each LUC regarding the identified factors to ensure clearing is undertaken in accordance with legal obligations and with regards to environmental or heritage values, such as requiring ground inspections for conservation significant flora or fauna
 - reviewing the proposed project design against survey data to avoid/minimise clearing significant environmental values ensures the design can be altered to further avoid or minimise impacts
 - clearing cannot take place without an approved land use certificate
- weed hygiene requirements are implemented for plant and equipment in identified weed risk areas and/or in areas where weed populations have been identified and high-risk activities are proposed to be undertaken in accordance with the internal Weed Management Plan 100-PL-EN-1017
 - management actions from the plan include identifying and mapping high risk areas, inducting staff and contractors, weed hygiene in high risk areas and implementation of weed control and monitoring programs
- record conservation significant fauna and habitat identified during a targeted fauna survey in the Corporate GIS and PIMS in accordance with the Environmental Datasets – Data Governance Guidelines 100-GU-EN-0020
- priority flora are identified on the ground by appropriate signage, fencing and/or flagging prior to clearing
- staff and contractors are provided with appropriate training to ensure they are aware of the location of significant flora and vegetation, and conservation significant fauna and associated habitat and their responsibility to ensure they are protected

- vehicle speeds restricted according to internal Traffic Management Plan 100-PR-SA-0049, to minimise dust and fauna strikes
 - to further minimise the potential for fauna injuries or deaths on access roads, right of way for fauna and the prohibition of off tenure driving will be implemented

The Delegated Officer was satisfied that the applicant has made a reasonable effort to avoid and minimise potential impacts of the proposed clearing on environmental values.

3.2. Assessment of impacts on environmental values

A review of current environmental information (Appendix A) reveals that the assessment against the clearing principles has not changed significantly from the clearing permit decision report CPS 9282/1. The majority of clearing under this permit has already been undertaken (Fortescue, 2025). The proposed amendment to extend the duration of the clearing permit is not likely to lead to any unacceptable risks to environmental values.

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The clearing permit amendment application was advertised on 13 March 2026 by the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to this application.

There are two native title claims (WCD2018/015 – Kariyarra; WCD2019/002 – Palyku Part A) over the areas under application (DPLH, 2026). These claims have been determined by the Federal Court on behalf of the claimant groups. The mining tenure has been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore, the granting of a clearing permit is not a future act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There are nine registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2026). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

The clearing permit is related to the broader Pilbara Transmission Project which was referred to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) on 26 November 2018. On 28 February 2019 the EPA determined that the proposal did not require assessment under Part IV of the EP Act and could be dealt with under Part V Division 2 of the EP Act (clearing of native vegetation provisions) (EPA, 2019).

Other relevant authorisations required for the proposed land use include:

- A Mining Development and Closure Proposal approved under the *Mining Act 1978*

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

End

Appendix A. Site characteristics

A.1. Site characteristics

Characteristic	Details
Local context	The areas proposed to be cleared are located within the Pilbara bioregion, with the northern area located in both the Chichester and Roebourne subregions, and the southern area located within the Chichester subregion (GIS Database). The predominant land use in the region is Aboriginal lands and Reserves, Unallocated Crown Land, Crown Reserves, grazing of native pastures, conservation and mining activity (CALM, 2002).
Ecological linkage	The application area is not considered a significant ecological linkage. The vegetation immediately surrounding the application area and the majority of the region remains uncleared (GIS Database).
Conservation areas	The application areas are not located within any conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest legislated conservation areas are (GIS Database): - Fortescue Marsh Nature Reserve, 35.4 kilometres south of the southern portion of the application area - Mungaroona Range Nature Reserve, located 36.4 kilometres west of the southern portion of the application area
Vegetation description	The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation associations (GIS Database): 82: Hummock grasslands, low tree steppe; snappy gum over <i>Triodia wiseana</i> (11 ha) 93: Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; kanji over soft spinifex (428 ha) 647: Hummock grasslands, dwarf-shrub steppe; <i>Acacia translucens</i> over soft spinifex (332 ha) There has been numerous flora and vegetation surveys undertaken over various parts of the application area. A desktop review of the previous surveys was undertaken and the vegetation mapping over the application area was consolidated (Ecoscape, 2018). The following vegetation types were mapped within the application area (FMG, 2021): <u>NORTH</u> Ac15: <i>Eucalyptus victrix</i> low open woodland to woodland over <i>Acacia colei</i> scattered tall shrubs to high open shrubland over <i>Triodia epactia</i> scattered hummock grasses and <i>Eriachne</i> species tussock grasses Ac30: <i>Corymbia hamersleyana</i>, <i>Corymbia candida</i> low open woodland over <i>Acacia colei</i>, <i>Acacia tumida</i> scattered tall shrubs over <i>Triodia epactia</i> hummock grassland and very open herbland Ah5a: <i>Acacia inaequilatera</i> scattered tall shrubs over <i>Triodia</i> aff. <i>Lanigera</i> mid dense hummock grassland Aps6: <i>Acacia tumida</i> open shrubland to shrubland over <i>Triodia schinzii</i> hummock grassland Aps7: <i>Acacia colei</i> high shrubland over <i>Triodia epactia</i>, <i>Triodia lanigera</i> mid dense hummock grassland Apt10: <i>Acacia stellaticeps</i> scattered shrubs to low shrubland over <i>Triodia epactia</i> dense hummock grassland Apt11: <i>Acacia</i> species scattered tall shrubs over <i>Acacia stellaticeps</i> low open shrubland over <i>Triodia lanigera</i> hummock grassland Apt12: <i>Acacia inaequilatera</i> scattered tall shrubs over <i>Triodia lanigera</i> mid dense hummock grassland Apt13: <i>Acacia ancistrocarpa</i> open shrubland to open heath over <i>Triodia lanigera</i> hummock grassland Apt15/Aps7: <i>Acacia inaequilatera</i>, <i>Acacia ancistrocarpa</i> scattered tall shrubs over <i>Triodia epactia</i>, <i>Triodia lanigera</i> hummock grassland / <i>Acacia colei</i> high shrubland over <i>Triodia epactia</i>, <i>Triodia lanigera</i> mid dense hummock grassland Apt16: <i>Acacia colei</i>, <i>Acacia tumida</i> high open shrubland over <i>Triodia epactia</i> hummock grassland Apt3: <i>Triodia epactia</i> hummock grassland to mid dense hummock grassland TIAs: <i>Triodia lanigera</i>, <i>Acacia stellaticeps</i>, and <i>Indigofera monophylla</i> hummock grassland

Characteristic	Details
	<u>SOUTH</u> AbiS3: <i>Acacia bivenosa</i> and <i>Acacia orthocarpa</i> open shrubland over <i>Acacia stellaticeps</i> low shrubland over tussock grassland of <i>Triodia lanigera</i> AbTOS/AoAbAmTS: Tall open shrubland dominated by <i>Acacia bivenosa</i> over a grassland of <i>Triodia basedowii</i> with scattered <i>Ptilotus gomphrenoides</i> var. <i>gomphrenoides</i> and <i>Eucalyptus leucophloia</i> subsp. <i>leucophloia</i> on rocky soils Ac28: <i>Acacia bivenosa</i> open heath over <i>Triodia lanigera</i> hummock grassland Ac4: <i>Eucalyptus victrix</i> scattered low trees to low open woodland over <i>Melaleuca glomerata</i> high shrubland to open scrub over <i>Triodia epactia</i>, tussock grasses and patches of sedges Ac8: <i>Eucalyptus victrix</i> scattered low trees over <i>Acacia trachycarpa</i> open scrub over <i>Triodia epactia</i> mid dense hummock grassland or *<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> open to closed tussock grassland AoAbTI: <i>Acacia orthocarpa</i> and <i>Acacia trachycarpa</i> tall open shrubland, over <i>Acacia bivenosa</i>, <i>Acacia stellaticeps</i> and <i>Acacia pyrifolia</i> var. <i>pyrifolia</i> mid sparse shrubland, over <i>Triodia longiceps</i> and <i>Triodia epactia</i> hummock grassland Aps1/Aps2: <i>Acacia orthocarpa</i> high open shrubland to open scrub over <i>Triodia epactia</i> mid dense hummock grassland / <i>Acacia orthocarpa</i> high shrubland to open scrub over <i>Triodia lanigera</i> mid dense hummock grassland Apt12/Aps1: <i>Acacia inaequilatera</i> scattered tall shrubs over <i>Triodia lanigera</i> mid dense hummock grassland / <i>Acacia orthocarpa</i> high open shrubland to open scrub over <i>Triodia epactia</i> mid dense hummock grassland Apt2/Apt7: <i>Triodia secunda</i> mid dense hummock grassland / <i>Acacia</i> species, <i>Pluchea ferdinandi-muelleri</i> scattered shrubs over <i>Triodia longiceps</i> mid dense hummock grassland Apt7: <i>Acacia</i> species, <i>Pluchea ferdinandi-muelleri</i> scattered shrubs over <i>Triodia longiceps</i> mid dense hummock grassland Ar1/Ar2/Ar3/Ar4: <i>Ficus brachypoda</i>, <i>Flueggea virosa</i> subsp. <i>melanthesoides</i>, <i>Terminalia canescens</i>, <i>Clerodendrum</i> species scattered shrubs over <i>Triodia epactia</i> hummock grassland and *<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> tussock grassland / <i>Acacia tumida</i> high shrubland to open scrub over <i>Triodia epactia</i> hummock grassland / <i>Tripogon loliiformis</i> dwarf open grassland / <i>Bulbostylis burbidgeae</i> sedgeland Cc20: <i>Corymbia</i> species scattered low trees over <i>Acacia coriacea</i> subsp. <i>pendens</i>, <i>Acacia ancistrocarpa</i>, <i>Acacia tenuissima</i> tall open shrubland over <i>Triodia epactia</i> mid dense hummock grassland and open tussock grasses Ch17: <i>Acacia aneura</i>, <i>Acacia adsurgens</i>, <i>Grevillea wickhamii</i>, <i>Senna glutinosa</i> subsp. <i>glutinosa</i>, <i>Senna glutinosa</i> subsp. x <i>luerssenii</i> scattered shrubs over <i>Triodia</i> aff. <i>Basedowii</i> mid dense hummock grassland Ch17/Ch20: <i>Acacia aneura</i>, <i>Acacia adsurgens</i>, <i>Grevillea wickhamii</i>, <i>Senna glutinosa</i> subsp. <i>glutinosa</i>, <i>Senna glutinosa</i> subsp. x <i>luerssenii</i> scattered shrubs over <i>Triodia</i> aff. <i>Basedowii</i> mid dense hummock grassland Ch24: <i>Acacia bivenosa</i> open shrubland over <i>Triodia wiseana</i> mid dense hummock grassland ChAiTw4: <i>Corymbia hamersleyana</i> low sparse woodland, over <i>Acacia inaequilatera</i> tall sparse shrubland over <i>Senna glutinosa</i> subsp. <i>glutinosa</i> mid sparse shrubland over <i>Triodia wiseana</i> hummock grassland EcOW: Open woodland to 11m dominated by <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> var. <i>obtusa</i> with emergent <i>Melaleuca leucadendra</i> over a tall shrubland to 3m dominated by <i>Melaleuca linophylla</i> and <i>Acacia adsurgens</i> over a grassland dominated by <i>Melaleuca linophylla</i> and <i>Acacia adsurgens</i> over a grassland ExAaCv: <i>Eucalyptus xerothermica</i> low isolated trees, over <i>Acacia ampliceps</i>, <i>Acacia coriacea</i> 7ubsp.. <i>pendens</i> and <i>Melaleuca glomerata</i> tall sparse shrubland, over <i>Cyperus vaginatus</i> sparse sedgeland and <i>Triodia longiceps</i> sparse hummock grassland An additional 67.2 hectares of the application area was either unmapped, not assessed, or considered highly degraded. * denotes weed species
Vegetation condition	Vegetation condition of the application areas has not been previously recorded or assessed using the Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale, however the majority of the vegetation present is considered to be in excellent and very good condition (FMG, 2021; GIS Database). Areas that have been cleared are considered to be completely degraded (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021; GIS Database). The full Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C.

Characteristic	Details
	The following nine introduced flora species have previously been recorded within the application area (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021; GIS Database): • <i>Aerva javanica</i> • <i>Bidens bipinnata</i> • <i>Calotropis procera</i> • <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> • <i>Chloris barbata</i> • <i>Citrullus amarus</i> • <i>Citrullus colocynthis</i> • <i>Citrullus lanatus</i> • <i>Malvastrum americanum</i> None of the above species are considered Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) (Weeds Australia, 2026). <i>Calotropis procera</i> is considered a Declared Pest – s22(2) under the BAM Act (WA), however, this species is not subject to any control or keeping requirements (DPIRD, 2026b).
Climate and landform	The climate of the Chichester and Roebourne subregions is described as arid (semi-desert) tropical, with the nearest weather station recording an average rainfall of approximately 332.1 millimetres per year (BoM, 2026; CALM, 2002). The application area is mapped at elevations of 30-440 metres Australian height datum (GIS Database). The dominant landforms within the application area are broad sandy plains, gently undulating stony and gritty surfaced plains, and hillcrests and ridges and their associated lower slopes (DPIRD, 2026a; Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004; GIS Database).
Soil description	The soils within the application area are predominately mapped as red deep sandy duplex, with smaller areas consisting of red shallow loam, red sandy earth, red shallow sand, stony soil, and red loamy earth (DPIRD, 2026a; Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004; GIS Database).
Land degradation risk	The majority of mapped land systems within the application area are generally not susceptible to erosion, however some localised areas such as alluvial plains and drainage tracts are moderately to highly susceptible to erosion if vegetative cover is seriously reduced (DPIRD, 2026a; Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004; GIS Database).
Waterbodies	Several minor non-perennial watercourses intersect the application areas (GIS Database). Yule River, a major non-perennial watercourse intersects the southern portion of the application area (GIS Database). There is also a small non-perennial lake that intersects the northern portion of the application area (GIS Database).
Hydrogeography	The application area is not located within any Public Drinking Water Source Areas (GIS Database). The nearest Public Drinking Water Source Area is the Yule River Water Reserve, located approximately 28 kilometres west of the northern portion of the application area (GIS Database). The application area is located within both the Pilbara Surface Water Area and Pilbara Groundwater Area, proclaimed under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 (GIS Database). The mapped groundwater salinity of the northern portion of the application area is 1,000-3,000 total dissolved solids milligrams per litre, which is described as brackish water quality (GIS Database). The southern portion is mapped as 500-1,000 total dissolved solids milligrams per litre, which is described as marginal water quality (GIS Database).
Flora	There are records of 18 priority flora species within a 20 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database). Of these species there are three priority 1, one priority 2, 12 priority 3, and two priority 4 species (GIS Database).
Ecological communities	There are no mapped threatened or priority ecological communities within the application area (GIS Database). The nearest ecological community is the 'Wona Land System' priority ecological community (P1), located approximately 12 kilometres southwest of the southern section of the application area (GIS Database).
Fauna	There are records of 59 conservation significant fauna species within a 20 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database).

Characteristic	Details
	There are records of 45 bird species, 40 which are listed as migratory, and the remaining nine bird species are similar in that they have highly mobile and have large home ranges (GIS Database). There are records of 11 mammal and three reptile species (GIS Database).
Fauna habitat	There have been numerous fauna surveys undertaken over various parts of the application area. A desktop review of the previous surveys has consolidated the habitat mapping and fauna records within the application area and surrounds (Spectrum Ecology, 2018). The following fauna habitats have been mapped within the application area (FMG, 2021): - sandy/loamy plain with spinifex grassland (281.5 ha) - stony plains and low rises with hummock grassland (190.4 ha) - minor creekline (23.3 ha) - clay pan (2.4 ha) - loamy/stony plain with mixed shrubland (1.5 ha) - granite outcrop (0.9 ha) - sandy/loamy plain with mixed shrubland (0.3 ha) In addition, approximately 271 hectares of the application area was mapped as cleared, and are associated with the rail, access tracks, and existing cleared areas (FMG, 2021).

A.2. Vegetation extent

	Pre-European area (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current extent in all DBCA Managed Land (proportion of pre-European extent) (%)
IBRA Bioregion - Pilbara	17,808,657	17,731,764	~99	1,801,714	10.12
Beard vegetation associations - State					
82	2,565,901	2,553,206	~99	295,377	11.51
93	3,044,309	3,040,640	~99	59,536	1.96
647	195,860	191,711	~97	N/A	N/A
Beard vegetation associations - Pilbara bioregion					
82	2,563,583	2,550,888	~99	295,377	11.52
93	3,042,114	3,038,471	~99	59,536	1.96
647	195,859	191,710	~97	N/A	N/A

Government of Western Australia (2019)

Appendix B. Assessment against the clearing principles

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Environmental value: biological values		
Principle (a): “Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biodiversity.” <u>Assessment:</u> Three priority flora species have previously been recorded within the application areas (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021; WAH, 1998-; GIS Database). <i>Abutilon</i> sp. Pritzelianum (S. van Leeuwen 5095) (P3) <i>Euploca mutica</i> (P3) <i>Stylidium weeliwolli</i> (P3)	Not likely to be at variance <i>as per CPS 9282/1</i>	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
FMG (2021) has designed the placement of clearing and infrastructure to avoid the recorded locations of priority flora. The proposed clearing is not likely to impact any priority flora. None of the vegetation types were considered to be representative of a priority ecological community (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021; GIS Database). The vegetation types recorded are considered common and widespread within the region (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021; Spectrum Ecology, 2018; GIS Database).		
<u>Principle (b):</u> <i>"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> The areas proposed to be cleared contain habitat for a number of conservation significant fauna species (Appendix A.1; FMG, 2021; Spectrum Ecology, 2018). The design and placement of power poles and access tracks have been considered to avoid watercourses, drainage lines, creeklines and granite outcrops where possible (FMG, 2021). Some of the fauna habitats with a greater mapped extent (Appendix A.1; FMG, 2021; Spectrum Ecology, 2018) were utilised by greater bilby (<i>Macrotis lagotis</i>) and brush-tailed mulgara (<i>Dasymercus blythi</i>) and cannot be avoided. These areas were conditioned on CPS 9282/1, requiring pre-clearance inspections and relocation of any individuals found. Given the assessment has not changed from the assessment of CPS 9282/1, potential impacts to greater bilby and brush-tailed mulgara as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the continued implementation of a fauna management condition.	May be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No
<u>Principle (c):</u> <i>"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> There are no known records of threatened flora within a 50 kilometre radius of the application area (GIS Database). Flora and vegetation surveys of the application areas did not record any species of threatened flora (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021). Based on the habitat present, threatened flora species known from the Pilbara bioregion are not likely to be present within the application areas and the vegetation proposed to be cleared is unlikely to be necessary for the continued existence of any species of threatened flora.	Not likely to be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No
<u>Principle (d):</u> <i>"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."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> There are no known state or federally listed threatened ecological communities (TECs) located within or in close proximity to the application area (GIS Database). The nearest known threatened ecological community is the state listed 'Themeda grasslands (<i>Themeda</i> sp. Hamersley Station (M.E. Trudgen 11431)) on cracking clays (Hamersley Station, Pilbara)' (CR), located approximately 123 kilometres southwest of the application area (GIS Database). The consolidated vegetation mapping of the application areas did not identify any ecological communities that could be representative of a TEC (Ecoscape, 2018; FMG, 2021; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		
<u>Principle (e):</u> <i>"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> The application area falls within the Pilbara bioregion of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) (GIS Database). Approximately 99% of the pre-European vegetation still exists in the Pilbara bioregion (Government of Western Australia, 2019).	Not at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
The application area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation associations: 82: Hummock grasslands, low tree steppe; snappy gum over <i>Triodia wiseana</i> (11 ha); 93: Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; kanji over soft spinifex (428 ha); and 647: Hummock grasslands, dwarf-shrub steppe; <i>Acacia translucens</i> over soft spinifex (332 ha) (GIS Database). Approximately 97-99% of the pre-European extent of these vegetation associations remain uncleared at both the state and bioregional level (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The application area does not represent a significant remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.		
Principle (h): <i>"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."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> The application area is not located within or in close proximity to any legislated conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest legislated conservation areas are located over 35 kilometres away from the application area (Appendix A.1; GIS Database). Given the distance to the nearest conservation areas, the proposed clearing is unlikely have an impact on the environmental values of any conservation areas.	Not likely to be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No
Environmental value: land and water resources		
Principle (f): <i>"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> Several minor non-perennial watercourses intersect the application areas (GIS Database). Yule River, a major non-perennial watercourse intersects the southern portion of the application area (GIS Database). There is also a small non-perennial lake that intersects the northern portion of the application area (GIS Database). Ecoscape (2018) considered the following vegetation types recorded within the application areas to be representative of a groundwater dependent ecosystem (GDE), potential GDE, or other creekline/riparian vegetation (Appendix A.1): • EcOW (GDE) • Ac4 (potential GDE) • Ac8 (potential GDE) • Ac15 (potential GDE) • ExAaCv (creekline/riparian vegetation) The total extent of the above vegetation types within the application areas is 28.7 hectares (Spectrum Ecology, 2018), however the extent that is proposed to be cleared is much smaller (FMG, 2021). The clearing of riparian vegetation has the potential to cause localised erosion and degrade faunal habitats. Given the proposed clearing is spread over a large area, it is not anticipated that it will have a significant impact on minor drainage lines within the application areas. Provided disturbance to riparian vegetation is avoided or minimised where possible, and weed hygiene procedures are followed, the proposed clearing is unlikely to significantly impact these vegetation types. Potential impacts to vegetation growing in association with these drainage lines may be minimised by the continued implementation of a vegetation management and staged clearing condition.	At variance as per CPS 9282/1	No
Principle (g): <i>"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> The majority of mapped land systems within the application areas are generally not susceptible to erosion, however some localised areas such as alluvial plains and drainage tracts are moderately to highly susceptible to erosion if vegetative cover is seriously reduced (DPIRD, 2026a; Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004; GIS Database).	May be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Given the narrow and linear shape and extent of the proposed clearing, large areas will not remain unvegetated and at significant risk of erosion. While some land systems have a higher risk of erosion, only a minor extent of vegetation within each land system will be impacted. In addition, the proposed clearing follows the existing rail line and situated in or adjacent to existing disturbed areas. Potential impacts in the form of erosion may be minimised by the continued implementation of a staged clearing condition.		
<u>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."</u> <u>Assessment:</u> There are no Public Drinking Water Source Areas within or in close proximity to the application areas (GIS Database). The proposed clearing of 38.5 hectares over a 55 kilometre linear corridor is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of groundwater. There are no permanent watercourses or waterbodies within the application areas (GIS Database). Several minor non-perennial watercourses intersect the application areas (GIS Database). Yule River, a major non-perennial watercourse intersects the southern portion of the application area (GIS Database). There is also a small non-perennial lake that intersects the northern portion of the application area (GIS Database). The linear corridor of proposed clearing will impact some of these watercourses, however the clearing is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface water.	Not likely to be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No
<u>Principle (j): "Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding."</u> <u>Assessment:</u> There are no permanent watercourses or waterbodies within the application areas (GIS Database). Several minor non-perennial watercourses intersect the application areas (GIS Database). Yule River, a major non-perennial watercourse intersects the southern portion of the application area (GIS Database). There is also a small non-perennial lake that intersects the northern portion of the application area (GIS Database). Seasonal drainage lines and watercourses are common in the region and temporary localised flooding may occur briefly following heavy rainfall events. The proposed clearing of 38.5 hectares within an application area of approximately 771.36 hectares spanning over 55 kilometres is not likely to cause an increase in the incidence or intensity of flooding in the local area.	Not likely to be at variance as per CPS 9282/1	No

Appendix C. Vegetation condition rating scale

Vegetation condition is a rating given to a defined area of vegetation to categorise and rank disturbance related to human activities. The rating refers to the degree of change in the vegetation structure, density and species present in relation to undisturbed vegetation of the same type. The degree of disturbance impacts upon the vegetation's ability to regenerate. Disturbance at a site can be a cumulative effect from a number of interacting disturbance types.

Considering its location, the scale below was used to measure the condition of the vegetation proposed to be cleared. This scale has been extracted from Trust (WA) 1993 Urban Bushland Policy. National Trust of Australia (WA), Wildflower Society of WA (Inc.), and the Tree Society (Inc.), Perth.

Measuring vegetation condition for the Eremaean and Northern Botanical Provinces (Trudgen, 1991)

Condition	Description
Excellent	Pristine or nearly so, no obvious signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement.
Very good	Some relatively slight signs of damage caused by human activities since European settlement. For example, some signs of damage to tree trunks caused by repeated fire, the presence of some relatively non-aggressive weeds, or occasional vehicle tracks.
Good	More obvious signs of damage caused by human activity since European settlement, including some obvious impact on the vegetation structure such as that caused by low levels of grazing or slightly aggressive weeds.

Condition	Description
Poor	Still retains basic vegetation structure or ability to regenerate it after very obvious impacts of human activities since European settlement, such as grazing, partial clearing, frequent fires or aggressive weeds.
Very poor	Severely impacted by grazing, very frequent fires, clearing or a combination of these activities. Scope for some regeneration but not to a state approaching good condition without intensive management. Usually with a number of weed species present including very aggressive species.
Completely degraded	Areas that are completely or almost completely without native species in the structure of their vegetation; i.e. areas that are cleared or 'parkland cleared' with their flora comprising weed or crop species with isolated native trees or shrubs.

Appendix D. Sources of information

D.1. GIS datasets

Publicly available GIS datasets used (sourced from www.data.wa.gov.au):

- Clearing Regulations - Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Clearing Regulations - Schedule One Areas (DWER-057)
- DBCA - Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA - Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- DBCA Fire History (DBCA-060)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- IBSA Survey Details (DWER-118)
- Local Government Area (LGA) Boundaries (LGATE-233)
- Medium Scale Topo Contour (Line) (LGATE-015)
- Medium Scale Topo Water (Line) (LGATE-018)
- Medium Scale Topo Water (Polygon) (LGATE-016)
- Native Title (Determination) (LGATE-066)
- Native Vegetation Extent (DPIRD-005)
- Pre-European Vegetation (DPIRD-006)
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Mapping - Best Available (DPIRD-027)
- Townsites (LGATE-248)
- WA Now Aerial Imagery

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Threatened and Priority Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened and Priority Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened and Priority Fauna
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

D.2. References

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Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) (2019) Notice of Referral Determination – Pilbara Transmission Project, Case Number: CMS17515. <https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/proposals/pilbara-transmission-project>

Fortescue (2022) Annual clearing report for CPS 9282/1, 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022. Fortescue Metals Group Ltd, July 2022.

Fortescue (2023) Annual clearing report for CPS 9282/1, 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Fortescue Metals Group Ltd, July 2023.

Fortescue (2024) Annual clearing report for CPS 9282/1, 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Fortescue Ltd, July 2024.

Fortescue (2025) Annual clearing report for CPS 9282/1, 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. Fortescue Ltd, July 2025.

Fortescue Ltd (2026a) Clearing permit application cover letter, CPS 9282/2, received 9 January 2026.

Fortescue Ltd (2026b) Clearing permit application form, CPS 9282/2, received 9 January 2026.

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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.

<https://catalogue.data.wa.gov.au/dataset/dbca-statewide-vegetation-statistics>

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Glossary

Acronyms:

BC Act	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> , Western Australia
BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australian Government
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
DEMIRS	Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (now DMPE)
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia (now DMPE)
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMPE)
DMPE	Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration
DoEE	Department of the Environment and Energy (now DCCEEW)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora (now known as Threatened Flora)
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia

EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Commonwealth Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
PEC	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
RIWI Act	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

DBCA (2023) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia:

Threatened species

T Listed by order of the Minister as Threatened in the category of critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under section 19(1), or is a rediscovered species to be regarded as threatened species under section 26(2) of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act).

Threatened fauna is the species of fauna that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

Threatened flora is the species of flora that are listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable threatened species.

The assessment of the conservation status of threatened species is in accordance with the BC Act listing criteria and the requirements of [Ministerial Guideline Number 1](#) and [Ministerial Guideline Number 2](#) that adopts the use of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Red List of Threatened Species Categories and Criteria](#), and is based on the national distribution of the species.

CR Critically endangered species

Threatened species considered to be “*facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as critically endangered under section 19(1)(a) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 20 and the ministerial guidelines.

EN Endangered species

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as endangered under section 19(1)(b) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 21 and the ministerial guidelines.

VU Vulnerable species

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as vulnerable under section 19(1)(c) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 22 and the ministerial guidelines.

Extinct species

Listed by order of the Minister as extinct under section 23(1) of the BC Act as extinct or extinct in the wild.

EX Extinct species

Species where “*there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 24 of the BC Act).

EW Extinct in the wild species

Species that “*is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; and it has not been recorded in its known habitat or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 25 of the BC Act).

Currently there are no threatened fauna or threatened flora species listed as extinct in the wild.

Specially protected species**SP Specially protected species**

Listed by order of the Minister as specially protected under section 13(1) of the BC Act. Meeting one or more of the following categories: species of special conservation interest; migratory species; cetaceans; species subject to international agreement; or species otherwise in need of special protection.

Species that are listed as threatened species (critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable) or extinct species under the BC Act cannot also be listed as specially protected species.

MI Migratory species

Fauna that periodically or occasionally visit Australia or an external Territory or the exclusive economic zone; or the species is subject of an international agreement that relates to the protection of migratory species and that binds the Commonwealth; and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 15 of the BC Act).

Migratory species include birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) or The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and fauna subject to the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (Bonn Convention), an environmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Program. Migratory species listed under the BC Act are a subset of the migratory animals, that are known to visit Western Australia, protected under the international agreements or treaties, excluding species that are listed as Threatened species.

CD Species of special conservation interest (conservation dependent fauna)

Species of special conservation need that are dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 14 of the BC Act).

Currently only fauna are listed as species of special conservation interest.

OS Other specially protected species

Species otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 18 of the BC Act).

Currently only fauna are listed as species otherwise in need of special protection.

Priority species**P Priority species**

Priority is not a listing category under the BC Act. The Priority Flora and Fauna lists are maintained by the department and are published on the department's website.

All fauna and flora are protected in WA following the provisions in Part 10 of the BC Act. The protection applies even when a species is not listed as threatened or specially protected, and regardless of land tenure (State managed land (Crown land), private land, or Commonwealth land).

Species that may possibly be threatened species that do not meet the criteria for listing under the BC Act because of insufficient survey or are otherwise data deficient, are added to the Priority Fauna or Priority Flora Lists under Priorities 1, 2 or 3. These three categories are ranked in order of prioritisation for survey and evaluation of conservation status so that consideration can be given to potential listing as threatened.

Species that are adequately known, meet criteria for near threatened, or are rare but not threatened, or that have been recently removed from the threatened species list or conservation dependent or other specially protected fauna lists for other than taxonomic reasons, are placed in Priority 4. These species require regular monitoring.

Assessment of priority status is based on the Western Australian distribution of the species, unless the distribution in WA is part of a contiguous population extending into adjacent States, as defined by the known spread of locations.

P1 Priority One - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, none on conservation lands

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, for example, agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species – known from few locations, some on conservation lands

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, for example, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements for threatened listing and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. These species are in urgent need of further survey.

P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species – known from several locations

Species that are known from several locations and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat.

Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. These species need further survey.

P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring

- (a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.
- (b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for vulnerable but are not listed as a conservation dependent specially protected species.
- (c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species or lists of conservation dependent or other specially protected species, during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.
- (d) Other species in need of monitoring.

Principles for clearing native vegetation:

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.
- (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.
- (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.
- (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (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.
- (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.
- (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.