

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details and outcomes

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	9390/2
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	Big Bell Gold Operations Pty Ltd
Application received:	21 January 2026
Application area:	450 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Mineral Production and Associated Activities
Method of clearing:	Mechanical removal
Tenure:	Mining Leases 51/427, 51/445, 51/459, 51/491, 51/796, 51/823, 51/892 Miscellaneous Licences 51/35, 51/77, 51/104, 51/107
Location (LGA area/s):	Shire of Meekatharra
Colloquial name:	Albury Heath and Euro Mining Project

1.2. Description of clearing activities

Big Bell Gold Operations Pty Ltd (BBGO) proposes to clear up to 450 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 1,702.66 hectares, for the purpose of mineral production and associated activities (BBGO, 2026). The project is located approximately 15 kilometres south of Meekatharra, within the Shire of Meekatharra (GIS Database).

Clearing permit CPS 9390/1 was granted by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (now the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration) on 5 October 2021 and was valid from 28 October 2021 to 27 October 2027. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 450 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 1,709 hectares, for the purpose of mineral production and associated activities.

On 21 January 2026, the permit holder applied to amend CPS 9390/1 to extend the duration of the permit by 5 years (BBGO, 2026). A total of 8.87 hectares (area shaded purple in Figure 1 of Section 1.5) has already been cleared under previous permit in the financial year 2021-2022 (Westgold, 2025). No clearing was conducted during the 2025 reporting period (Westgold, 2025). The remaining clearing balance is required to facilitate future mining operations where it is anticipated at least 140.10 hectares will be cleared as part of the Albury Heath project (BBGO, 2026). Albury Heath project clearing will be undertaken using mechanical means and is scheduled for commencement in between July and December 2026 (BBGO, 2026a; BBGO, 2026b).

1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Grant
Decision date:	30 June 2026
Decision area:	450 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 submissions were received.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (Appendix A), relevant datasets (Appendix E), supporting information provided by the applicant including the results of a flora and vegetation survey (Appendix D), 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 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;
- impact to priority flora species *Grevillea inconspicua*, *Calytrix verruculosa* and *Acacia speckii*;
- potentially significant impact to the restricted vegetation communities;

- the loss of foraging habitat for conservation significant fauna;
- the potential loss of significant habitat for meekatharra Slider;
- impacts to vegetation associated with a watercourse, and
- potential land degradation in the form of water and soil erosion.

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;
- undertake slow, progressive one-directional clearing to allow terrestrial fauna to move into adjacent habitat ahead of the clearing activity;
- restricted clearing within vegetation type F3 (shall not clear within the areas shaded red in Figure 1 of Section 1.5);
- restricted clearing within vegetation type F4 (shall not clear more than 1.2 hectares within the area shaded green in Figure 1 of Section 1.5);
- a staged clearing condition to minimise erosion;
- a rehabilitation condition to support landform recovery;
- a vegetation management condition to avoid clearing riparian vegetation; and
- a watercourse management condition requiring that surface water flows are not impacted by the proposed clearing, and the clearing of riparian vegetation is avoided, where practicable.

1.5. Site map

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

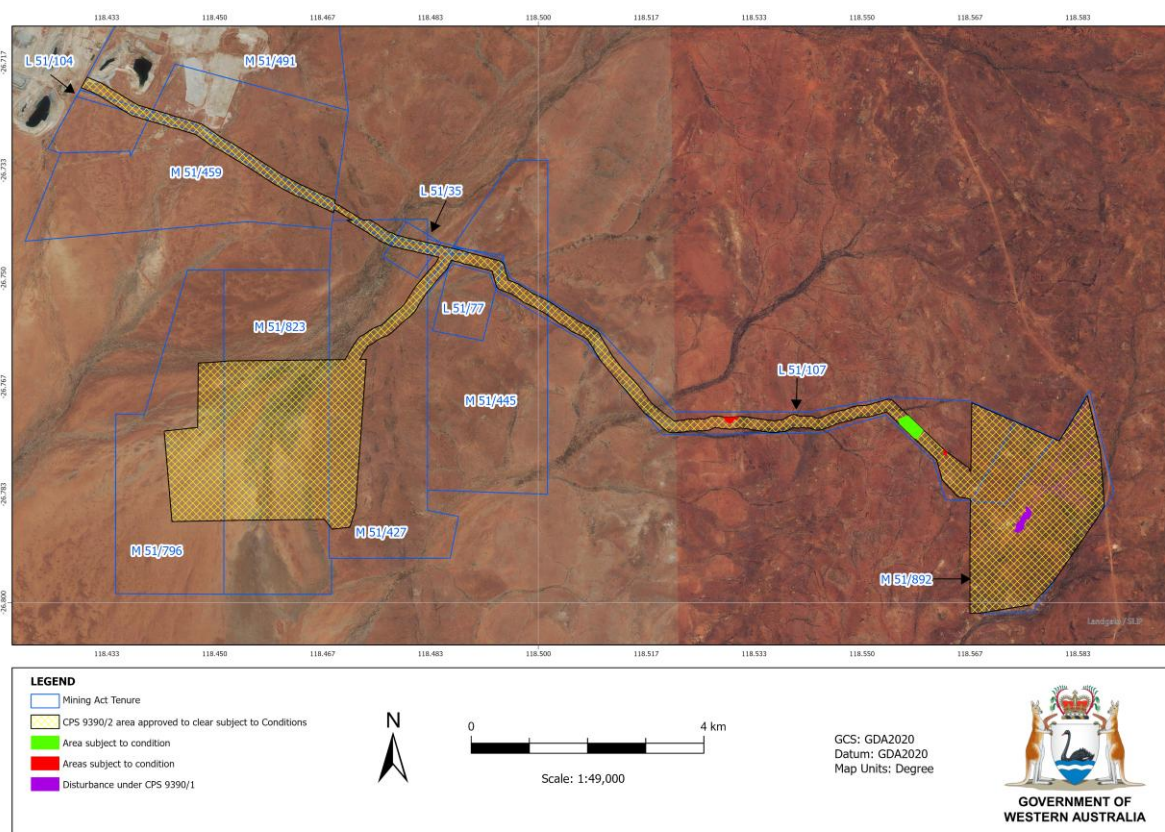


Figure 1. Map of the application area. The area cross-hatched yellow indicates the area within which conditional authorised clearing can occur under the granted clearing permit. The areas shaded red indicates the area within which no clearing shall occur. The area shaded in green indicates the area within which no more than 1.2 hectares of clearing can occur. The area shaded in purple indicates the area disturbed under CPS 9390/1.

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)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Mining Act 1978* (WA)

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (DER, December 2014)
- *Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits* (DWER, October 2021)
- Technical guidance – *Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2016)
- Technical guidance – *Terrestrial Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA, 2020)

3. Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

Big Bell Gold Operations (2026) has considered alternatives and preferentially undertake operations within existing disturbance and surrounding land previously disturbed by historical mining activities.

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

In assessing the application, the Delegated Officer has had regard for the site characteristics (Appendix A) and the extent to which the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological, conservation, or land and water resource values.

The assessment against the clearing principles identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological values (fauna, adjacent flora and vegetation) and / or land and vegetation growing in association with the watercourse. The consideration of these impacts, and the extent to which they can be managed through conditions applied in line with sections 51H and 51I of the EP Act, is set out below.

3.2.1. Biological values (flora, fauna and vegetation) - Clearing principle (a) and (b)

Assessment

Priority flora

Calytrix verruculosa (Priority 3) is found in the sandy or loamy soil with sparse mulga (*Acacia aneura*), in the Murchison bioregion (Atlas of Living Australia (ALA), 2026a; Western Australian Herbarium (WAH), 1998-). Within the amendment area, 2 individuals were recorded in a minor drainage line, within the D1 vegetation type (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). The proposed clearing of 2 individuals of this species is not likely to impact the conservation status of this species.

Grevillea inconspicua (Priority 4) is found in gravel or loamy soil often along drainage lines on rocky outcrops or creeklines (ALA, 2026b; WAH, 1998-). 14 individuals of *Grevillea inconspicua* were recorded in the survey area, out of which seven were recorded within F4 vegetation type within the amendment area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). The proposed clearing of 7 individuals of this species is not likely to impact the conservation status of this species.

Acacia speckii (Priority 4) is found in rocky hills or rises (WAH, 1998-). There was only one individual in one location of *Acacia speckii* recorded during the reconnaissance flora and vegetation survey (Spectrum, 2020). The proposed clearing of one individual of *A. speckii* is not likely to impact the conservation status of this species.

Heliotropium mitchellii was recorded in the survey by Spectrum Ecology (2020) as Priority 1. However, at the time of assessment, this species has been delisted and is no longer a species of conservation concern (WAH, 1998-).

Vegetation type

The survey identified six vegetation types within the amendment area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). Out of these, vegetation types F3 and F4 are considered to be of local or regional significance (Spectrum Ecology, 2020)

The F3 vegetation type is restricted to small pockets within and adjacent to the proposed haul route and does not appear to be widespread in the local area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; Westgold, 2021). Westgold (2021) advise that no clearing of the F3 vegetation type will occur.

The F4 vegetation type is located on a rocky rise within the amendment area and also falls within the haul road route (Westgold, 2021). This vegetation type may have a restricted distribution within the amendment area, it is unlikely to be locally restricted given that there are many similar such hills in the surrounding areas (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). Approximately 8 hectares of the F4 vegetation type was mapped within the amendment area, with 1.2 hectares proposed to be cleared as per the current mining footprint (Westgold, 2021).

Potential impacts to restricted vegetation communities may be minimised by continuing the implementation of a restricted clearing condition.

Fauna habitat types

The fauna survey identified following three fauna habitats within the amendment area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020):

- Open plain;
- Mulga woodland; and
- Rock outcrop

The Open plain habitat was the most dominant within the amendment area. This habitat type has limited vegetation present for fauna habitat and foraging resources (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). The Mulga woodland habitat contains tall Acacias which may provide habitat for bird species, and tussock grasses, dense vegetation and sandy drainage lines may provide suitable habitat for mammals and reptiles (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; Westgold, 2021). Rock outcrop habitat only accounted for approximately 0.3 hectares within the application area (GIS Database). This habitat type may provide shelter for rock dwelling fauna, mammals and reptiles (Spectrum Ecology, 2020).

Based on fauna habitats within the amendment area, there are five species of conservation significance that may utilise the application area; the Meekatharra Slider (*Lerista eupoda*) (Priority 1), Long-tailed Dunnart (*Antechinomys longicaudatus*) (Priority 4), Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*) (VU), Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*) (M1) and Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) (OS).

Spectrum Ecology (2020) suggest that a population of Long-tailed Dunnart (*Antechinomys longicaudatus*) may exist in the wider region. A small amount of suitable habitat occurs within the application area, and the Long-tailed Dunnart may utilise the application area as part of its foraging habitat, however it is unlikely to be core habitat for this species.

The Mulga woodland habitat forms suitable habitat for the Meekatharra Slider (*Lerista eupoda*), particularly when leaf litter accumulates on loamy soils along the drainage lines (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). This habitat type is common in the surrounding region, particularly around Lake Annean and occurs only in small pockets within the application area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). Potential impacts to the Meekatharra Slider may be minimised by continuing the implementation of a watercourse management condition.

The remaining three conservation significant fauna species (Grey Falcon, Fork-tailed Swift, and Peregrine Falcon) are wide ranging bird species that are expected to only utilise the application area occasionally to forage. No suitable nesting habitat was recorded within the application area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020).

Potential impacts to conservation significant fauna may be minimised by the implementation of directional clearing condition.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment, the proposed clearing will result in potential impact to the restricted vegetation communities (F3 and F4) and habitats of significant conservation fauna species.

Impacts to the priority flora species are unlikely to be significant.

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing on the vegetation communities and significant fauna habitats can be minimised and managed by continuing the implementation of restricted clearing conditions, avoiding, minimising and reducing the impacts and extent of clearing, watercourse management condition and fauna management condition.

Conditions

To address the above impacts, the following management measures will be required as conditions on the clearing permit:

- a restricted clearing condition where no clearing in area shaded in red (see Figure 1) can occur;
- a restricted clearing condition where clearing of no more than 1.2 hectares can occur in area shaded in green (see Figure 1);
- avoid, minimise to reduce the impacts and extent of clearing;
- a watercourse management condition to reduce the impact to Meekatharra Slider habitat; and
- Slow directional clearing to allow faunas to move into adjacent vegetation ahead of the clearing activity will minimise impact to individuals.

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The amendment application was advertised on 10 April 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 no native title claims over the area under application (DPLH, 2026). 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 no 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.

Other relevant authorisations required for the proposed land use include:

- A Programme of Work approved under the *Mining Act 1978*
- 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 area proposed to be cleared is part of an expansive tract of native vegetation in the extensive land use zone of Western Australia (GIS Database). It is surrounded by the landscape and vegetation of Western Murchison of the Murchison bioregion as described in Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) (GIS Database). The predominant land use in the region is grazing native pastures (CALM, 2002).
Ecological linkage	According to available databases, the application area does not contain any known or mapped ecological linkages (GIS Database).
Conservation areas	There are no conservation areas in the vicinity of the amendment area (GIS Database). The nearest DBCA (formerly DPaW) managed land is an ex-pastoral station (ex Mooloogool) proposed for conservation, which is located approximately 75 kilometres north-east of the application area (GIS Database).

Vegetation description

The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation associations:

18: Low woodland; mulga (*Acacia aneura*); and

39: Shrublands; mulga scrub (GIS Database).

A reconnaissance and targeted flora and level 1 fauna survey was conducted during June 2020, and targeted flora assessment was conducted during September 2020, over the amendment area by Spectrum Ecology. The following vegetation associations were recorded within the amendment area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020):

Type	Description	Landform, Soil & Geology	Sites	Area (ha)	Significance	Photograph
Flat / Undulating Plains						
F1	<i>Acacia macraneura</i> or <i>Acacia fuscaneura</i> low isolated trees to open woodland over +/- <i>Acacia grassbyi</i> or <i>Acacia craspedocarpa</i> tall isolated shrubs over <i>Aristida contorta</i> low isolated tussock grasses.	Flat plain; red brown orange, sandy clay loam; laterite, cobbles of abundant ironstone / granite.	AR01, AR02, AR05, AR06, AR07, ER08, ER15	1,157.6	-	
F2	<i>Eremophila fraseri</i> subsp. <i>parva</i> mid isolated shrubs over <i>Ptilotus roei</i> low isolated shrubs over <i>Aristida contorta</i> low isolated tussock grasses.	Flat plain; red orange, clay sand; fine ironstone gravel.	ER12	271.2	-	
F3	<i>Tecticornia</i> spp. low-mid sparse samphire shrubland over <i>Aristida contorta</i> , <i>Diplachne fusca</i> subsp. <i>muelleri</i> low sparse tussock grassland.	Flat plain; red orange, clay sand; abundant medium ironstone gravel.	ER09	2	Restricted distribution, role as refuge for <i>Tecticornia</i> spp.	
Drainage / Floodplains / Creeks						
F4	<i>Acacia aptaneura</i> tall isolated shrubs over <i>Micromyrtus sulphurea</i> , <i>Grevillea inconspicua</i> (P4) low sparse shrubland over <i>Aristida contorta</i> low sparse tussock grassland.	Low hills; red brown, sandy loam; abundant medium granite gravel.	AR03	12.1	Restricted distribution in Survey Area, hills in the vicinity are not widespread. Role as refuge for <i>Heliotropium mitchellii</i> (P1), which is only known from few records all within the vicinity of Meekatharra, <i>Grevillea inconspicua</i> (P4) and <i>Acacia speckii</i> (P4). Mostly widespread in the local and regional area.	
D1	<i>Acacia aptaneura</i> , <i>A. craspedocarpa</i> , <i>A. macraneura</i> tall open shrubland over <i>A. tetragonophylla</i> mid sparse shrubland over <i>Enteropogon ramosus</i> , <i>Dichanthium sericeum</i> subsp. <i>humilis</i> or <i>Eragrostis cunningii</i> low open tussock grassland.	Drainage line on flats; red brown orange sandy clay. No rocks to abundant medium ironstone gravel.	AR04, ER10, ER11, ER13	275.5	-	
D2	<i>Eucalyptus kingsmillii</i> low open woodland over <i>Senna artemisioides</i> subsp. <i>x artemisioides</i> , <i>Acacia burkittii</i> tall open shrubland over * <i>Cenchrus setiger</i> low open tussock grassland.	Creek bed; red orange sandy loam; Fine creek stones.	ER14	13.1	Restricted distribution in Survey Area, but drainage lines in the vicinity not restricted.	

Mapping of vegetation type is provided in Appendix D (Spectrum Ecology, 2020).

Characteristic	Details
Vegetation condition	The vegetation survey (Spectrum Ecology, 2020) of the amendment area found the vegetation to be in excellent to completely degraded (Trudgen, 1991) condition. The full Trudgen (1991) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C. Mapping of vegetation condition is provided in Appendix D.
Climate and landform	The climate of the Western Murchison subregion is described as arid with bimodal rainfall that usually falls in winter (CALM, 2002). The amendment area receives an average annual rainfall of approximately 233.4 millimetres (BoM, 2026).
Soil description and Land degradation risk	The soils of the application area are broadly mapped as the following land systems (DPIRD, 2026a; GIS Database): - The Gabanintha land system is described as greenstone ridges and hills supporting sparse acacia shrublands. Stone mantles afford protection against soil erosion, the exception being narrow drainage tracts which are mildly susceptible to water erosion (Payne et al., 1998). - The Jundee land system consists of hardpan plains with ironstone gravel mantles supporting mulga shrublands. This land system may be susceptible to erosion (Payne et al., 1998). - The Wiluna land system consists of greenstone hills, breakaways and lower plains supporting mulga shrublands occasionally with understoreys of halophytic shrubs. This land system is generally not susceptible to erosion, however disturbance of the stony mantle, especially on sloping areas can result in erosion (Payne et al., 1998). - The Yandil land system consists of mainly hardpan mulga shrubland, potentially supporting a useful variety of palatable perennial shrubs and herbs but now widely degraded through preferential grazing and chronic overuse around easily obtained supplies of permanent fresh water. This land system may be susceptible to erosion if vegetation cover is removed (Curry et al, 1994).
Waterbodies	The desktop assessment and aerial imagery indicated that several minor, non-perennial watercourses transect the area proposed to be cleared (GIS Database).
Hydrogeography	The nearest Public Drinking Water Source Area is Meekatharra Water Reserve located approximately 20 kilometres north of the amendment area (GIS Database). The amendment area is located within the East Murchison Ground Water Area proclaimed under the <i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> (GIS Database). The groundwater salinity is mapped as 1000 to 3000 milligrams per litre total dissolved solids which is described as brackish (BoM, 2019; GIS Database).
Flora	The flora survey conducted by Spectrum Ecology (2020) recorded four conservation significant flora species within the amendment area. No threatened flora species were recorded within the amendment and survey area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020).
Ecological communities	There are no known records of Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities within the amendment area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database).
Fauna	The level 1 fauna survey conducted by Spectrum Ecology (2020) did not record any conservation significant fauna species within the amendment area. However, the desktop assessment recorded 15 conservation significant fauna species in the vicinity of the amendment area (50 kilometres) (GIS Database).
Fauna habitat	A level 1 fauna survey was conducted over the amendment area by Spectrum Ecology (2020). The following fauna habitats were recorded within the amendment area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020): - Open plain; - Mulga woodland; and - Rock outcrop

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 - Murchison	28,120,586	28,044,823	~99	2,185,987	7.77
Beard vegetation associations - State					
- 18	19,892,306	19,843,148	~99	1,317,179	6.62
- 39	6,613,567	6,602,578	~99	795,070	12.02
Beard vegetation associations - Bioregion					

- 18	12,403,172	12,363,252	~99	614,964	4.96
- 39	1,148,400	1,138,064	~99	40,834	3.56

Government of Western Australia (2019)

A.3. Flora analysis table

The following conservation significant flora species have records within a 20 kilometres radius of the application area (GIS Database). Habitat suitability and likelihood of occurrence was determined utilising biological survey information (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; WA Herbarium, 1998-; GIS Database).

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Likelihood of occurrence	Number of known records (total)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
<i>Acacia sclerosperma</i> subsp. <i>glaucescens</i>	P3	N	<20	Unlikely	25	Y
<i>Acacia speckii</i>	P4	Y	0	Recorded – discussed in Section 3.2.1	40	Y
<i>Calytrix verruculosa</i>	P3	Y	0	Recorded – discussed in Section 3.2.1	14	Y
<i>Drummondita miniata</i>	P3	N	<15	Unlikely	26	Y
<i>Eragrostis</i> sp. Erect spikelets (P.K. Latz 2122)	P3	N	<15	Unlikely	6	Y
<i>Eremophila fasciata</i>	P3	N	<20	Unlikely	8	Y
<i>Eremophila retropila</i>	P1	N	<10	Unlikely	6	Y
<i>Euploca mitchellii</i>	P1	N	<20	Unlikely	7	N/A
<i>Grevillea inconspicua</i>	P4	Y	0	Recorded – discussed in Section 3.2.1	63	Y
<i>Hemigenia virescens</i>	P3	N	<20	Unlikely	11	Y
<i>Homalocalyx echinulatus</i>	P3	N	<20	Unlikely	34	Y
<i>Indigofera rotula</i>	P3	N	<15	Unlikely	17	N/A
<i>Ptilotus lazaridis</i>	P3	N	<15	Unlikely	15	Y
<i>Ptilotus luteolus</i>	P3	N	<5	Unlikely	20	Y
<i>Tecticornia cymbiformis</i>	P3	N	<20	Unlikely	16	Y
<i>Tribulus adelacanthus</i>	P3	N	<15	Unlikely	19	Y

T: threatened, CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, P: priority

A.4. Fauna analysis table

The following conservation significant fauna species have records within a 50 kilometres radius of the application area (GIS Database). Habitat suitability, likelihood of occurrence and impact was determined utilising biological survey information (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008; Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database).

Species name	Common name	Conservation status		Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Likelihood of occurrence	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
		EPBC	WA				
<i>Antechinomys longicaudatus</i>	long-tailed dunnart		P4	Y	Possibly	<15	
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	fork-tailed swift	MI	MI	Y	Possibly	<20	

Species name	Common name	Conservation status		Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Likelihood of occurrence	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Are surveys adequate to identify? [Y, N, N/A]
		EPBC	WA				
<i>Branchinella simplex</i>	a fairy shrimp (inland WA)		P1	N	Unlikely	<25	Y
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	sharp-tailed sandpiper	MI	MI	N	Possibly	<25	Y
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	curlew sandpiper	CR & MI	CR	N	Unlikely	<25	Y
<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	pectoral sandpiper	MI	MI	N	Unlikely	<25	Y
<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	grey falcon		VU	Y	Possibly	<30	Y
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	peregrine falcon		OS	Y	Possibly	<35	Y
<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	gull-billed tern	MI	MI	N	Unlikely	<10	N/A
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	malleefowl	VU	VU	N	Unlikely	<15	Y
<i>Lerista eupoda</i>	meekatharra slider		P1	Y	Likely	<50	Y
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	wood sandpiper	MI	MI	N	Unlikely	<15	Y
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	common greenshank	MI	MI	N	Unlikely	<20	Y

T: threatened, CR: critically endangered, EN: endangered, VU: vulnerable, MI: migratory, CD: conservation dependent, OS: other specially protected, P: priority

Appendix B. Assessment against the clearing principles

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Environmental value: biological values		
<u>Principle (a):</u> "Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biodiversity." <u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared contains regionally significant flora, fauna habitats and vegetation communities (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	Yes Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.
<u>Principle (b):</u> "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." <u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared contains foraging and suitable habitat for conservation significant fauna (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	Yes Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.
<u>Principle (c):</u> "Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora." <u>Assessment:</u> The area proposed to be cleared does not contain threatened flora or habitat for flora species listed under the BC Act (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No
<u>Principle (d):</u> "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." <u>Assessment:</u> No threatened ecological communities (TECs) are known from the local area (50 kilometre radius of the application area) and flora and vegetation surveys did not detect and vegetation representative of a TEC (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<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 Murchison Bioregion of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) (GIS Database). Approximately 99% of the pre-European vegetation still exists in the IBRA Murchison Bioregion (Government of Western Australia, 2019). Approximately 99% of the pre-European extent of the Beard vegetation association present within the application area remains uncleared at both the state and bioregional level (Government of Western Australia, 2019; GIS Database). The extent of the native vegetation in the local area is consistent with the national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001; Appendix A.2).	Not at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No
<u>Principle (h):</u> <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> Given the distance to the nearest conservation area (approximately 75 kilometres), the proposed clearing is not likely to have an impact on the environmental values of nearby conservation areas (GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No
Environmental value: land and water resources		
<u>Principle (f):</u> <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> There are no permanent watercourses within the application area, however, there are several ephemeral watercourses that intersect the application area (GIS Database). There were two vegetation types identified growing in association with drainage lines; D1 and D2 (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). The vegetation type D2 was mapped as restricted in the application area as the haul road crosses through an ephemeral watercourse (Spectrum Ecology, 2020; GIS Database). However, drainage lines within the local area are not restricted (Spectrum Ecology, 2020). Potential impact to the vegetation growing in association with watercourses may be minimised by continuing the implementation of a watercourse management condition.	At variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No
<u>Principle (g):</u> <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 application area lies within the Gabanintha, Jundee, Wiluna and Yandil land systems (DPIRD, 2026a; GIS Database). These land systems rely on protective stone mantles or vegetation cover that, when disturbed or removed, expose soils to erosion (Curry et al, 1994; Payne et al., 1998). The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) (2026b) advice raised concern regarding the adequacy of rehabilitation in these land systems. The clearing of up to 450 hectares of native vegetation for the purpose of mineral production and associated activities may cause appreciable land degradation. Potential erosion may be minimised by continuing the implementation of a staged clearing condition. Accordingly, a rehabilitation condition has been imposed to mitigate potential land degradation and support landform recovery.	May be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No
<u>Principle (i):</u> <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."</i> <u>Assessment:</u> Given no permanent water courses, wetlands, or Public Drinking Water Sources Areas are recorded within the application area (GIS Database), the proposed clearing is unlikely to impact surface or ground water quality.	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	No

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
<u>Principle (j):</u> "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>Assessment:</u> Given no permanent water courses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to contribute to waterlogging (GIS Database).	Not likely to be at variance (as per CPS 9390/1)	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 Trudgen, M.E. (1991) *Vegetation condition scale* in National 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.
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.

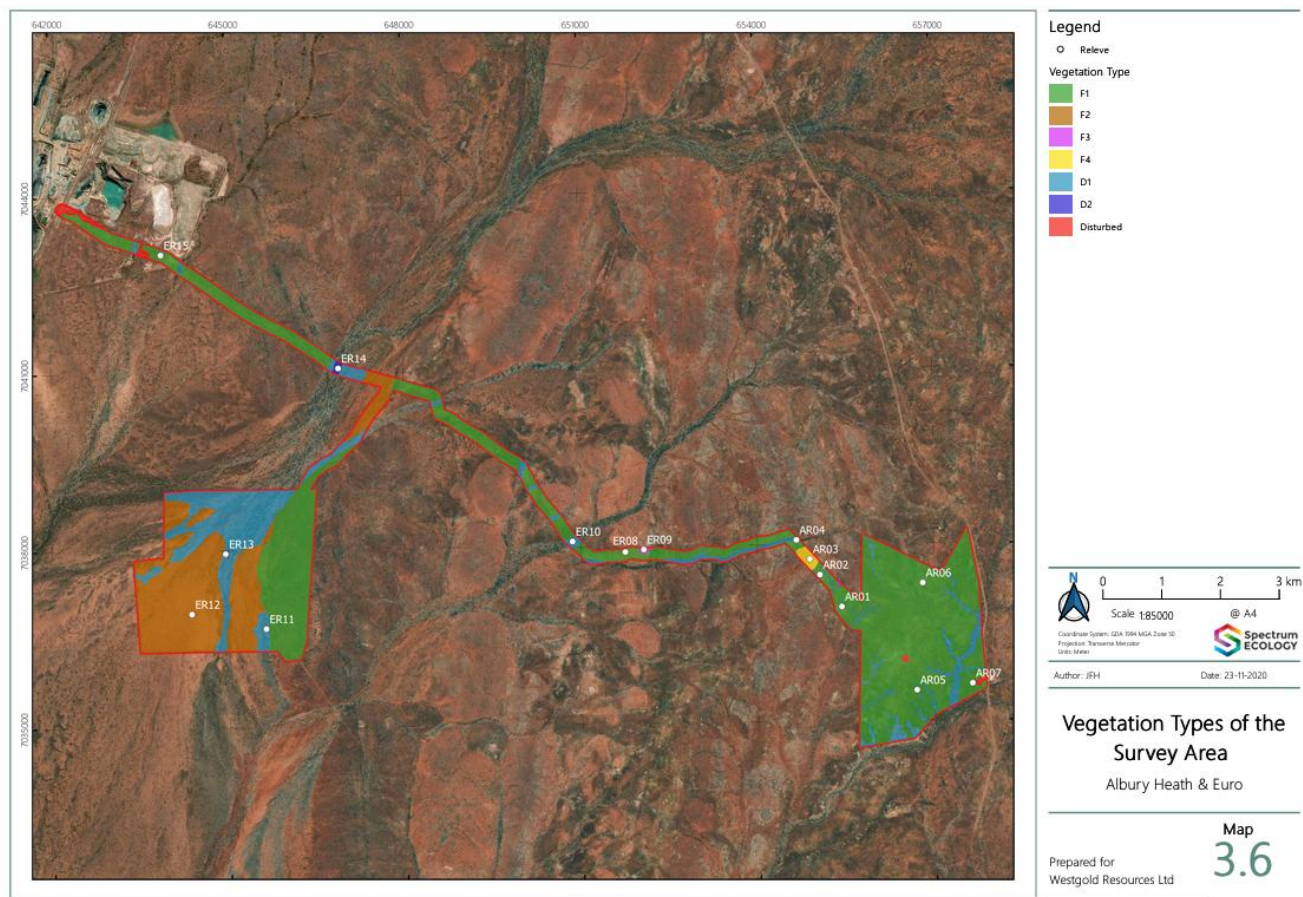


Figure 2: Vegetation types mapped within the surveyed area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020).

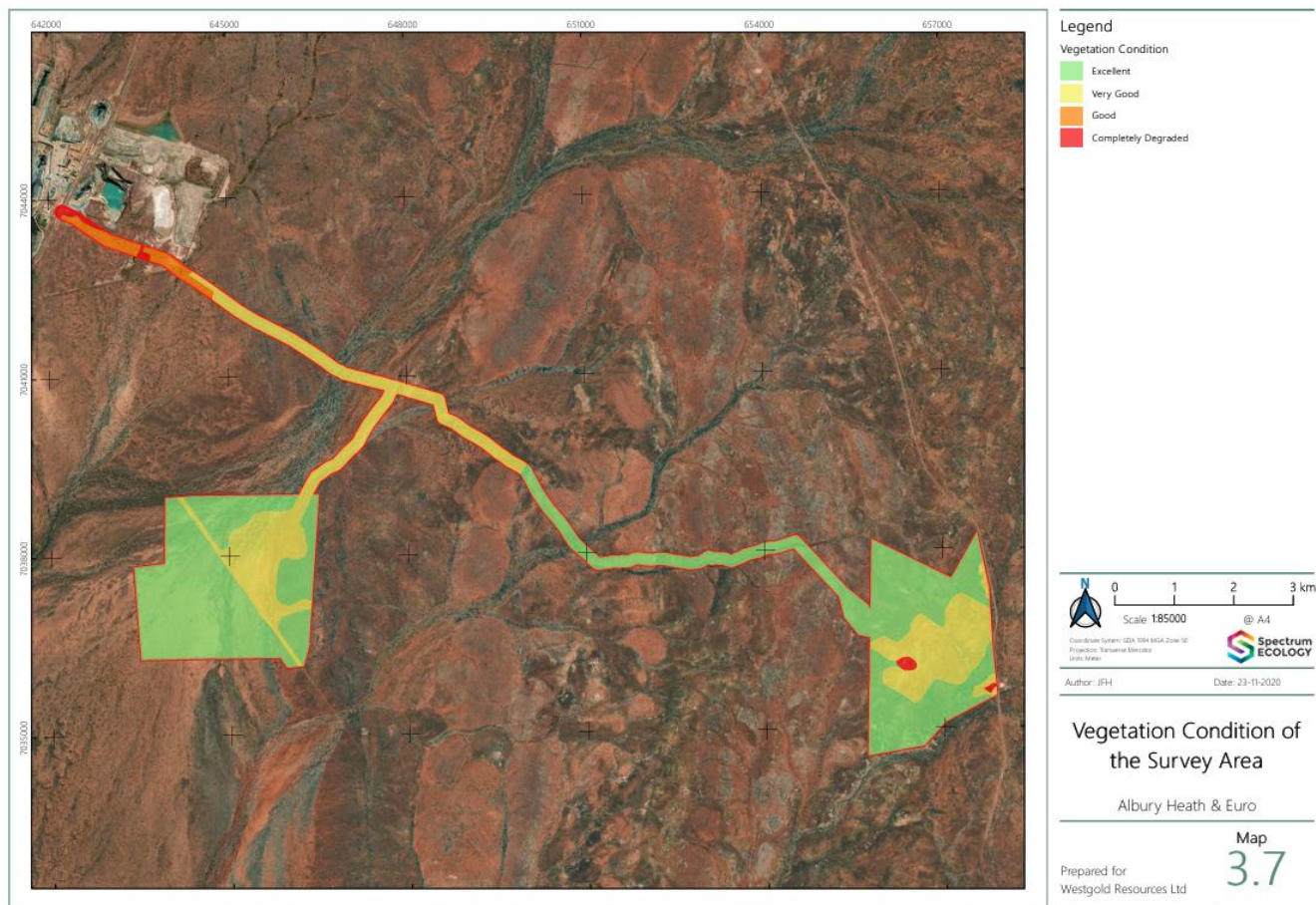


Figure 3: Vegetation condition mapped within the surveyed area (Spectrum Ecology, 2020).

Appendix E. Sources of information

E.1. GIS datasets

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

- Cadastre (Polygon) (LGATE-217)
- Clearing Instruments Activities (Areas Approved to Clear) (DWER-076)
- Clearing Instruments Conditions (Areas Subject to Conditions) (DWER-077)
- 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)
- Localities (LGATE-234)
- 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)

E.2. References

- Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) (2026a) [Calytrix verruculosa | Atlas of Living Australia](#) (Accessed 27 May 2026).
- Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) (2026b) [Grevillea inconspicua : Cue Grevillea | Atlas of Living Australia](#) (Accessed 27 May 2026).
- Big Bell Gold Operations (2026a) Clearing permit application form, CPS 9390/2, received 21 January 2026.
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- Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) (2019) Bureau of Meteorology Website – Groundwater Information – Average Salinity. Bureau of Meteorology. <https://www.bom.gov.au/water/groundwater/insight/metadata.shtml> (Accessed 26 May 2026).
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- Commonwealth of Australia (2008) Species Profile and Threats Database. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Australia. <https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl> (Accessed 26 May 2026).
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- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) (2026b) Advice received in relation to Clearing Permit Application CPS 9390/2. Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia, 15 April 2026.
- Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) (2021) Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits. Joondalup. <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2024-11/procedure-native-vegetation-clearing-permits.pdf>
- Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) (2016) Technical Guidance - Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment. http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Policies_and_Guidance/EPA%20Technical%20Guidance%20-%20Flora%20and%20Vegetation%20survey_Dec13.pdf
- Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) (2020) Technical Guidance – Terrestrial Fauna Surveys. https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Policies_and_Guidance/2020.09.17%20-%20EPA%20Technical%20Guidance%20-%20Vertebrate%20Fauna%20Surveys%20-%20Final.pdf
- 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.