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Leonora Renewable Energy Facility - Native Vegetation Clearing Permit Amendment Supporting Document

September 2024



HORIZON
POWER

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Context

Regional Power Corporation, trading as (T/A) Horizon Power, is a Western Australian (WA) Government Trading Enterprise (GTE) and the state’s regional and remote energy provider. Horizon Power operates under the *Electricity Corporations Act 2005* and is governed by a Board of Directors accountable to the Minister for Energy.

Horizon Power is proposing to construct a hybrid power station in Leonora, with two sites previously under consideration (Sites A and B). A clearing permit was obtained for the proposed works (CPS 9468/1) in May 2022 for clearing of up to 19.85 ha for the project and associated geotechnical investigations, within a specified Development Envelope (DE).

1.2 Scope and Purpose

This document has been prepared to support a Native Vegetation Clearing Permit (NVCP) amendment application for the Project. Specifically, this document provides further detail required by Form C4 *Application to amend a clearing permit*.

The original clearing permit application did not include a connection corridor between the hybrid power station and the existing network. Minor clearing is proposed along the connection corridor for the purpose of this connection.

A biological survey was undertaken for the original works (Appendix A). No additional survey has been undertaken for the connection corridor given the small scale of clearing adjacent to already surveyed areas. A site photograph of the connection corridor is included in Appendix B.

Certificates of title for the proposed areas impacted are included in Appendix C as request in Form C4.

2 Description of the Activity

A clearing permit was obtained for geotechnical investigations and construction of a new hybrid power station for the town of Leonora, consisting of thermal generation, solar and battery energy storage systems. Two sites were under consideration (Areas A and B) and a clearing permit was obtained for both (CPS 9468/1). It has been decided that Area A will not be progressed, and an approximately 12 ha hybrid power station farm will be constructed at Area B. The original clearing permit application did not include a connection corridor between the hybrid power station and the existing network. The connection corridor will consist of underground power lines to avoid impacts to the airport runway.

No increase to the amount of vegetation to be cleared is proposed as the original permit included Area A, which is no longer required.

2.1 Project Location

Land details for the relevant land parcels are summarised below (Table 1). All land parcels are in the Shire of Leonora.

Table 1 Site locations and land uses

Land parcel	Shire	Land use and previous disturbance
Lot 51 on DP59908, CT2687/617 Registered Proprietor: Shire of Leonora	Shire of Leonora	Surrounding area is previously disturbed including airport, roads, existing power
Lot 3 on DP126500, CT2687/617 Registered Proprietor: Shire of Leonora		
PIN 1250139, Dedicated Road		

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Land parcel	Shire	Land use and previous disturbance
Responsible Agency: Shire of Leonora		infrastructure and golf course
PIN 11406099, Dedicated Road		
Responsible Agency: Shire of Leonora		
PIN 1250140, Dedicated Road		
Responsible Agency: Shire of Leonora		
PIN 1188336, Dedicated Road		
Responsible Agency: Shire of Leonora		

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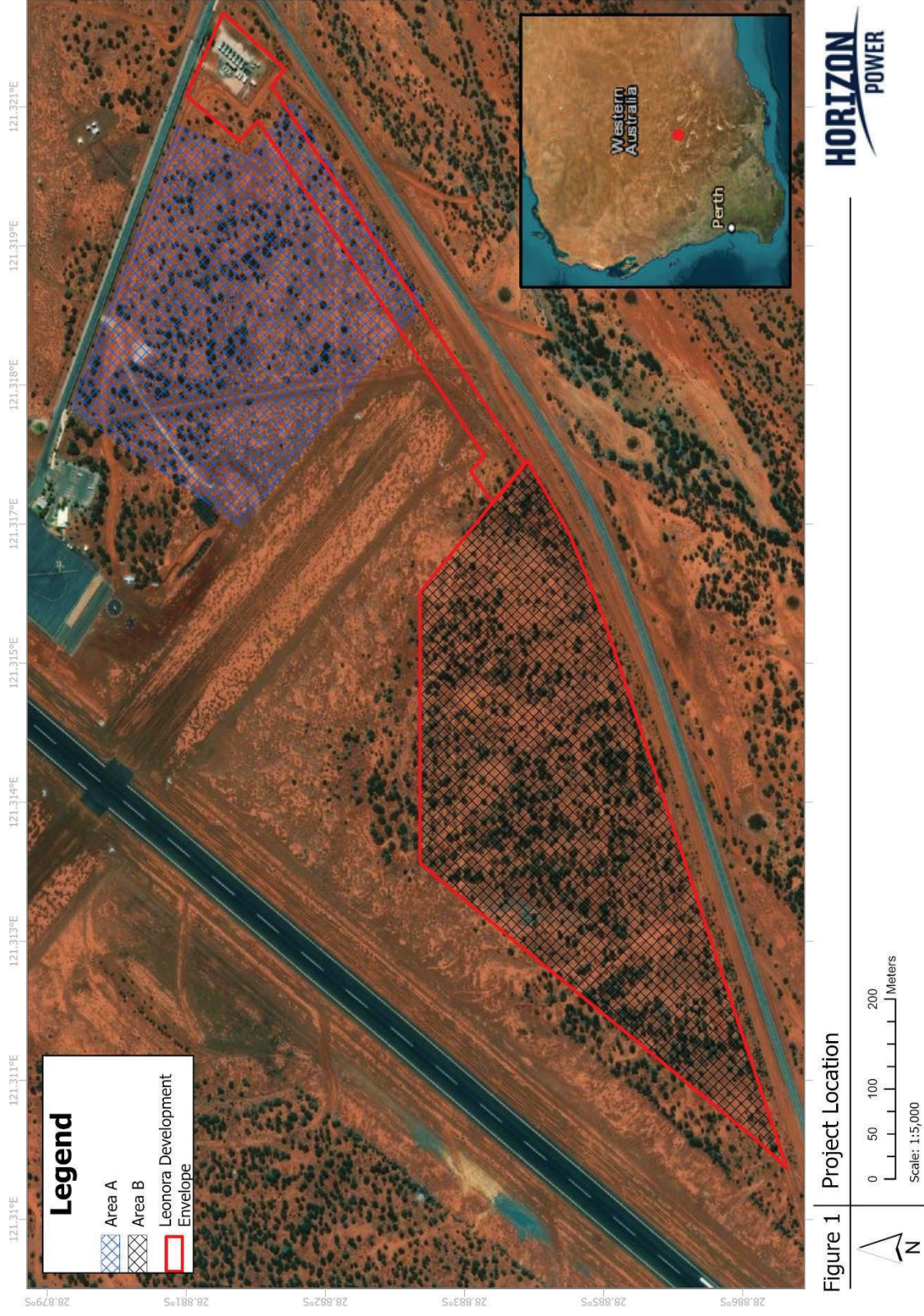


Figure 1 Project Location

Figure 1 Project location

2.2 Proposed changes to permit

Horizon Power seeks to amend CPS 9468/1 to allow for up to 19.85 ha of clearing within the amended Development Envelope (Figure 1).

The original clearing permit application did not include a connection corridor between the renewable energy facility, and the existing network. This connection is required to distribute the energy generated by the hybrid power station, to the existing network. Given that Area A is no longer going to be progressed, no increase to the amount of vegetation to be cleared is proposed for this clearing permit.

Given the connection corridor crosses through land that is already cleared for the Leonora Airport, and any vegetation to be cleared is commensurate with the surrounding region, it is not considered likely that the proposed changes would provide additional or different impacts to the original clearing permit assessment. Therefore, changes to the existing clearing permit conditions are not expected to be required.

2.3 Land Access

Lot 51 on DP59908 and Lot 3 on DP126500 will be leased from the Shire of Leonora. Horizon will utilise the access conferred by Sections 46 and 49 of the *Energy Operators (Powers) Act 1979* (the Act) for the connection infrastructure.

3 Ecological Survey

An ecological survey was undertaken for the original clearing permit application in June 2021 (Appendix A). Additional areas were also extrapolated and subject to a desktop assessment in 2022 (Appendix H of Appendix A) utilising the results of the biological survey undertaken in June 2021.

Given the sparse nature of the native vegetation required for the connection corridor adjacent to an existing road, no additional survey was considered to be required. The survey results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of Ecological Surveys Relevant to the Survey Area

Survey	Summary of Findings
Leonora Lot 51 Mt Ida Road Biological Survey IBSA Number: IBSA-2021-0433	<p>Survey Dates: 24th June 2021</p> <p>Flora / Vegetation Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No <i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) listed flora were recorded within the survey area. – No <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (BC Act) listed flora were recorded within the survey area. – No Priority flora species listed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCAs) were recorded during the survey. – One weed species was identified, <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> – 2 vegetation types were recorded within the survey area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acacia caesaneura</i> and <i>Acacia mulganeura</i> low woodland over <i>Eremophila forrestii</i> subsp. <i>forrestii</i> mid sparse shrubland over <i>Eragrostis eriopoda</i> low sparse tussock grassland • Mixed <i>Acacia</i> spp. low open woodland over <i>Eragrostis eriopoda</i> low sparse tussock grassland – Vegetation condition varied from Very Good to Good. – Disturbance included access and vehicle tracks, weeds, and rubbish. – No ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act were recorded within the survey area. – No ecological communities listed under the BC Act were recorded within the survey area. – Riparian vegetation was not recorded within the survey area. <p>Fauna / Fauna Habitat Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One fauna species of conservation significance was considered to have a high likelihood of occurrence within the Survey Area, the Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>). – Four conservation significant fauna species were considered to have a medium likelihood of occurrence within the Survey Area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oriental Plover (<i>Charadrius veredus</i>) – Migratory, Marine • Grey Falcon (<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>) – Migratory

Survey	Summary of Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Princess Parrot (<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>) – Priority 4, Vulnerable Woma (<i>Aspidites ramsayi</i>) – Priority 1 (southwest subpopulation). <p>– One fauna habitat type was identified within the Survey Area, described as Mulga woodland.</p>

4 Avoidance, Mitigation and Management Measures

The Project has been located near to existing Horizon Power infrastructure and other disturbance, including the airport and golf course, to reduce the clearing required for new/additional infrastructure or a longer connection corridor. A site with limited environmental values has been selected for the hybrid power station, and the clearing footprint proposed has been minimised to the smallest required. In addition, the connection corridor will consist of underground power lines to avoid impacts to the airport runway and to minimise clearing of vegetation for the connection corridor.

5 Record keeping

The conditions and records required to be kept by the current permit are detailed below.

Table 3 Clearing permit conditions and reporting requirements

Clearing requirement	Compliance and record keeping
<p>1. Clearing authorised (purpose)</p> <p>The permit holder is authorised to clear native vegetation for the purpose of geotechnical investigations and the construction of a renewable energy facility.</p>	Geotechnical investigations have not been undertaken and no clearing has occurred under CPS 9468/1.
<p>2. Land on which clearing is to be done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lot 51 on DP59908, CT2687/617 Lot 3 on DP126500, CT2687/617 PIN 1250139, Dedicated Road PIN 11406099, Dedicated Road PIN 1250140, Dedicated Road PIN 1188336, Dedicated Road 	Horizon Power proposed to amend the land on which clearing is to be done. No clearing has occurred to date.
<p>3. Clearing authorised</p> <p>The permit holder must not clear more than 19.85 hectares of native vegetation within the area cross-hatched yellow in Figure 1 of Schedule 1.</p>	No more than 19.85 ha is proposed to be cleared.
<p>4. Avoid, minimise, and reduce impacts and extent of clearing</p> <p>In determining the native vegetation authorised to be cleared under this permit, the permit holder must apply the following principles, set out in descending order of preference:</p> <p>(a) avoid the clearing of native vegetation;</p> <p>(b) minimise the amount of native vegetation to be cleared; and</p> <p>(c) reduce the impact of clearing on any environmental value.</p>	No clearing has occurred to date.
<p>5. Weed management</p> <p>When undertaking any clearing authorised under this permit, the permit holder must take the following measures to minimise the risk of introduction and spread of weeds:</p> <p>(a) clean earth-moving machinery of soil and vegetation prior to entering and leaving the area to be cleared;</p> <p>(b) ensure that no known weed-affected soil, mulch, fill, or other material is brought into the area to be cleared;</p> <p>(c) restrict the movement of machines and other vehicles to the limits of the areas to be cleared.</p>	No clearing has occurred to date.

Clearing requirement	Compliance and record keeping
<p>6. Erosion Management</p> <p>The permit holder must commence the geotechnical investigations and the construction of the renewable energy facility no later than three (3) months after undertaking the authorised clearing activities to reduce the potential for wind and water erosion.</p>	<p>No clearing has occurred to date.</p>
<p>7. Records that must be kept</p> <p>(a) the species composition, structure, and density of the cleared area;</p> <p>(b) the location where the clearing occurred, recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit set to Geocentric Datum Australia 1994 (GDA94), expressing the geographical coordinates in Eastings and Northings;</p> <p>(c) the date that the area was cleared;</p> <p>(d) the size of the area cleared (in hectares);</p> <p>(e) actions taken to avoid, minimise, and reduce the impacts and extent of clearing in accordance with condition 4;</p> <p>(f) actions taken to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of weeds and dieback in accordance with condition 5; and</p> <p>(g) erosion management activities undertaken in accordance with condition 6.</p>	<p>Records will be kept post-clearing as required.</p>
<p>8. Reporting</p> <p>The permit holder must provide to the CEO the records required under condition 7 of this permit when requested by the CEO.</p>	<p>Reporting will be undertaken as requested.</p>

4 References

360 Environmental (2021) Leonora (Lot 51, Mt Ida Road) Biological Survey, Prepared for Horizon Power, October 2021