



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 997/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Quadrant Energy Australia Ltd**

1.3. Property details

Property: Production Licence 6 (TL/6)
Local Government Area: Shire of Ashburton
Colloquial name: Varanus Island

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
8.36		Mechanical Removal	Fire risk reduction and maintenance activities

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 30 June 2016

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description Beard vegetation associations have been mapped for the whole of Western Australia. One Beard vegetation association is located within the application area (GIS Database):
Beard vegetation association 117: Hummock grasslands, grass steppe, soft Spinifex (*Triodia pungens*).

Semeniuk (1990) further described and mapped the vegetation of the island at a finer scale, distinguishing six vegetation assemblages. These are:

- 1) low (to 20 centimetres) open herbland of *Frankenia pauciflora* on exposed limestone, which is exposed to wind and sea spray and has poorly developed soil;
- 2) low (to 50 centimetres) open shrubland of *Scaevola spinescens*, *Rhagodia preissii*, and *Sarcostemma viminalis* subsp. *australe* on limestone plains and ridges inland from the exposed coastal limestone;
- 3) low (to 50 centimetres) open shrubland of *Sarcostemma viminalis* subsp. *australe*, *Capparis spinosa* and *Pittosporum phylliraeoides* on more sheltered and inland parts of undulating limestone terrain;
- 4) open grassland of *Spinifex longifolius* on white sands of coastal dunes;
- 5) closed mixed grassland/herbland of *Setaria dielsii* and *Amaranthus pallidiflorus* on the deeper orange sands of inland plains; and
- 6) low (to 50 centimetres) open shrubland of *Sarcostemma viminalis* subsp. *australe* with mixed grassland on orange sand, particularly where it is shallow over limestone.

Since 1999, a total of 122 plant species have been recorded on Varanus Island and neighbouring Bridled Island. No Declared Rare Flora or Priority species have been found. The majority of plant species in the proposed clearing area are colonising or invasive species that readily inhabit previously disturbed areas.

Clearing Description Varanus Island
Quadrant Energy Australia proposes to clear up to 8.36 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 12 hectares, for the purposes of fire risk reduction and maintenance activities. The project is located on Varanus Island approximately 120 kilometres north-east of Onslow, in the Shire of Ashburton.

Vegetation Condition Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery, 1994).

Comment According to Shepherd (2009), approximately 100% of Beard vegetation association 117 remains intact. However, the scale of Beards mapping is broad and previous clearing on Varanus Island has not been captured in these reports.

Vegetation communities on Varanus Island are monitored in September of each year. Transects cover both disturbed and undisturbed areas (Apache 2005).

An application for an amendment to clearing permit 997/1 was received on 3 June 2016 change the Permit holders name from Apache Northwest Pty Ltd to Quadrant Energy Australia Ltd due to a company name change, and to extend the duration of the permit from 1 July 2016 to 1 July 2026.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

Quadrant Energy Australia Ltd has applied to amend CPS 997/1 to change the Permit holders name from Apache Northwest Pty Ltd to Quadrant Energy Australia Ltd due to a company name change, and to extend the duration of the permit by 10 years.

As the amendment is only for administrative purposes, the environmental impacts will not change and the assessment of the clearing principles is consistent with the assessment in clearing permit decision report CPS 997/1.

Planning instrument, Native Title, RIWI Act Licence, EP Act Licence, Works Approval, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

There are no Native Title claims over the area under application (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2016). However, 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 (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2016). 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.

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

Methodology Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2016)

4. References

- Apache Energy (2005) Varanus Island supporting documentation for a clearing permit (purpose permit): fire-risk reduction and maintenance activities. Unpublished report to the Department of Industry and Resources. Perth, Western Australia.
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs (2016) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Government of Western Australia, <http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/>. (Accessed 13 June 2016).
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Semeniuk V. (1990) Appendix 11 Monitoring of Terrestrial Vegetation, Lowendal Island Group for Harriet Oilfield development. Results of survey June 1990. In Harriet Field development Fifth Annual Environmental Report, June 2000. Unpublished report edited by LeProvost Environmental Consultants for Hadson. Reproduced in Apache (2005).
- Shepherd, D.P. (2009) Adapted from: Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R., and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001), Native Vegetation in Western Australia. Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture Western Australia, South Perth.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DPaW and DER)
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DotE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DotE)
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Federal 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:

{DPaW (2015) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia):-

- T** **Threatened species:**
Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedules 1 to 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).
Threatened fauna is that subset of 'Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'likely to become extinct' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.
Threatened flora is flora that has been declared to be 'likely to become extinct or is rare, or otherwise in need of special protection', pursuant to section 23F(2) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.
The assessment of the conservation status of these species is based on their national extent and ranked according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List categories and criteria as detailed below.
- CR** **Critically endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- EN** **Endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- VU** **Vulnerable species**
Threatened species considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- EX** **Presumed extinct species**
Species which have been adequately searched for and there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora.
- IA** **Migratory birds protected under an international agreement**
Birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and the Bonn Convention, relating to the protection of migratory birds. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- CD** **Conservation dependent fauna**
Fauna of special conservation need being species dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 6 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- OS** **Other specially protected fauna**
Fauna otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- P** **Priority species**
Species which are poorly known; or
Species that are adequately known, are rare but not threatened, and require regular monitoring. Assessment of Priority codes 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:**
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, e.g. 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 and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species:

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, e.g. 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 and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species:

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. Such species are in need of 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 Conservation Dependent.

(c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.

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 indigenous to Western Australia.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare 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 clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.