

PROTECTED

Horizon Power Norseman Renewables Native Vegetation Clearing Referral Supporting Document

August 2023



HORIZON
POWER

Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Project Context	3
1.2 Scope and Purpose.....	3
2. Description of the Activity	4
3. Description of Proposed Clearing	4
3.1 Extent of Proposed Clearing	4
3.2 Proposed Clearing Location	4
3.3 Proposed Clearing Method	6
3.4 Avoidance, Mitigation and Management Measures	6
4. Suitability for the Clearing Referral Process.....	7
5. Assessment Against DWER Criterion	8
5.1 Criterion 1: The area proposed to be cleared is small relative to the total remaining vegetation	8
5.2 Criterion 2: There are no known or likely significant environmental values within the area	8
5.3 Criterion 3: The state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the region is adequate	10
5.4 Criterion 4: Conditions will not be required to manage environmental impacts	10
6. References	11
Appendix A: Construction Environmental Management Plan.....	12
Appendix B: Certificate of title.....	13
Appendix C: Site photographs	14
Appendix D: Species that may or are likely to occur	15

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Context

Horizon Power is a Western Australian (WA) Government Trading Enterprise (GTE) and the state's regional and remote energy utility. 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 an experienced asset manager undertaking active management of vast electricity networks across WA, utilising mature and robust operational, health and safety, and environmental systems.

The State Government is committed to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2030 and Horizon Power is seeking to support the delivery of emission reduction activities across regional Western Australia through the deployment of renewable energy solutions. Many towns including Norseman are reliant on high cost, high emissions fossil fuels as the primary generation source. The project will consist of the construction of several solar arrays and associated infrastructure for the purpose of increasing the renewable energy penetration of the Norseman network.

This referral application is for the minor clearing of native vegetation for the purpose of installing renewables and associated infrastructure for the supply of energy to the Norseman network. The total clearing footprint will not exceed 1.5 ha.

1.2 Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the proposed clearing of native vegetation for the renewable infrastructure satisfies the four Criterion outlined in 'Guideline: Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals' (DWER, 2021) and, as such, should be considered a 'very low environmental impact activity' that does not require a clearing permit.

To demonstrate this, Horizon Power has provided:

- An overview of the activity and a description of the proposed clearing.
- Avoidance, mitigation and management measures applied to minimise the clearing of native vegetation and reduce the likelihood of environmental impacts associated with the activity.
- An assessment of the clearing against the four Criterion specified in DWER (2021).

The construction of the renewable infrastructure will be managed under a standard Horizon Power Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix A).

2. Description of the Activity

Horizon Power has identified the southern portion of Lot 1755 as a viable site for additional solar generation. Horizon Power is the registered proprietor of the land and the certificate of title is included in Appendix B.

The proposed project will involve the mechanical clearing of the remaining degraded vegetation on the Lot to facilitate the construction of solar generation and associated infrastructure for the purpose of increasing the renewable energy supply to the Norseman network. The total clearing footprint will not exceed 1.5 ha.

3. Description of Proposed Clearing

3.1 Extent of Proposed Clearing

The proposed clearing will occur within the Project area (Figure 1) which is 1.5 ha in size. The project area is detailed in Table 1 and show on Figure 1.

3.2 Proposed Clearing Location

The Project area occurs within Lot 1755, detailed below.

Table 1 Norseman solar farm extension land parcels

Name	Lot on Plan	Tenure	Volume	Folio
Norseman solar farm extension	Lot 1755 on Deposited Plan 208985	General Industry Horizon Power	1808	26

Figure 1 Norseman Solar Farm Extension Project area



**Proposed Clearing Area
Lot 1755 Norseman**

Datum: GDA 2020

Legend

- Clearing Area
- Cadastre_Land_LGATE_218
- Road_Network

1:1000

Originator: D.Kippin	
Team: Sustainability	Date: 10/08/2023
Drawn: D.Kippin	Revision: 1
Project: Norseman Solar	

3.3 Proposed Clearing Method

Mechanical clearing is proposed with the full extent of the Project area to be cleared, this will include initial clearing of trees and civil works to supply a nominal level, graded and suitably compacted pad for the renewables infrastructure.

3.4 Avoidance, Mitigation and Management Measures

The site is within an area of degraded vegetation and adjacent to existing disturbance. The project is proposed to be located adjacent existing infrastructure, avoiding the need to clear additional native vegetation for connection corridors.

Horizon Power is a mature and competent asset manager with an established Environmental Management System and extensive assets across Western Australia under active management. Clearing activities are undertaken following standard construction management measures and will be implemented via our standard Construction Environmental Management Plan.

To mitigate and manage the impact of the clearing:

- Clearing locations will be demarcated prior to clearing activities.
- A pre-clearing toolbox will be held so all staff are aware of their responsibilities and the limits of clearing.
- Standard weed and hygiene management practices which will be applied to these works.
- Mechanical clearing will be undertaken slowly and in a one-way direction to allow fauna to move offsite if present.

No more than 1.5 ha of clearing is permitted at the Project area detailed in Figure 1.

4. Suitability for the Clearing Referral Process

The 'Guideline: Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals' (DWER, 2021) Section 5.3 outlines those clearing activities not considered to be suitable for the Clearing Referral process. Table 2 demonstrates that the proposed clearing activity (as outlined in Section 3) is suitable for assessment under the Clearing Referral process.

Table 2 Assessment of Suitability for the Clearing Referral Process

Aspect	Assessment	Suitable? (Yes/No)
The referral process cannot be used for proposed clearing on land subject to an agreement to reserve or a conservation covenant under the <i>Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945</i> (SLC Act)	Land is not subject to a conservation covenant	Yes
The referral process cannot be used for proposed clearing on land subject to an environmental protection covenant under Part VB of the EP Act	Land is not subject to an environmental protection covenant	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that is not likely to be completed within two years.	The works are set to commence mid-2024.	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that will contravene the requirements of a soil conservation notice issued under Part V of the SLC Act.	The proposed clearing activity will not contravene the requirements of a soil conservation notice issued under Part V of the SLC Act.	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that will or is likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance (MNES)	The proposed clearing is not likely to have a significant impact on MNES. No Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act listed flora, fauna or ecological communities are likely to be impacted.	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that includes marine native vegetation clearing activities	No clearing of marine native vegetation is proposed.	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that may impact on protected or otherwise significant flora or fauna	The proposed clearing is not likely to have a significant impact on protected or otherwise conservation significant flora or fauna (as detailed in Section 5).	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that will be within a highly cleared landscape or an area containing limited or restricted native vegetation types.	The proposed clearing is not within an extensively cleared landscape or an area containing limited or restricted native vegetation types, as detailed in Section 5. More than 97% of Pre-European Vegetation Association extents remain.	Yes
The referral process is not suitable for proposed clearing that is on land previously reserved as an environmental offset under the conditions of another approval under the EP Act.	A review of the DWER Offsets Register (via spatial dataset DWER-078; GoWA, 2022) indicates that the land is not reserved as an environmental offset under the conditions of an approval under the EP Act.	Yes

5. Assessment Against DWER Criterion

5.1 Criterion 1: The area proposed to be cleared is small relative to the total remaining vegetation

The proposed clearing activity satisfies Criterion 1, as detailed in the following tables.

Table 3 Assessment of the Proposed Clearing Activity Against Criterion 1

Aspect	Assessment
Extent of proposed clearing	The total proposed clearing is 1.5 ha This is less than the 5 ha threshold for clearing activities.
Threshold for remaining extent of native vegetation association or complex in the relevant IBRA bioregion	More than 30% of the relevant vegetation associations remain within the relevant IBRA bioregion, therefore; a permit is not required on this basis.
Threshold for remaining native vegetation surrounding the boundary of the proposed clearing	Within a 10 km buffer of the proposed clearing more than 30% native vegetation is remaining. Therefore, a permit is not required on this basis.

Table 4 Pre-European Vegetation Association Extents

Site	Vegetation association	Scale	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	% Remaining	% of current extent in all Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) managed land (proportion of current extent)
Norseman Solar Farm Extension	9 Wheatbelt; York gum, salmon gum etc. <i>Eucalyptus loxophleba</i> , <i>E. salmonophloia</i> . Goldfields; gimlet, redwood etc. <i>E. salubris</i> , <i>E. oleosa</i> . Riverine; rivergum <i>E. camaldulensis</i> . Tropical; messmate, woolyb	State: WA	240,509.33 ha	235,161.94	97.78	1.56
		IBRA Bioregion: Coolgardie	240,441.99	235,100.97	97.78	1.56
		IBRA Subregion: Eastern Goldfield	235,047.15	229,757.07	97.75	1.60
		LGA: Shire of Dundas	27,832.41	27,401.50	98.45	2.36

5.2 Criterion 2: There are no known or likely significant environmental values within the area

The proposed clearing activity satisfies Criterion 2, as detailed in the following tables.

Table 5 Assessment of the Proposed Clearing Activity Against Criterion 2

Environmental value	Assessment
Vegetation type and condition	<p>The northern portion of Lot 1755 was previously used for a railway depot and is cleared, the southern portion is degraded and previously disturbed with numerous tracks running through the area. Based on photographs of the proposed impact location, the Project area is sparsely vegetated with <i>Eucalyptus salubris</i> and <i>Eucalyptus oleosa</i>, known to occur in Vegetation Association 9. There is minimal understorey.</p> <p>The vegetation present at the site is well represented in the region.</p>
Significant fauna and habitat	<p>The habitat of nine conservation significant fauna species was considered likely to occur or may occur within the Project area (Appendix D).</p> <p>Significant impacts are not expected given the widespread availability of habitat in the region and small scale of proposed clearing. In addition, the area surrounding the Project area is extensively impacted by surrounding land use and unlikely to provide significant habitat for fauna.</p>
Significant ecological linkage	<p>The proposed area is not part of a significant ecological linkage.</p>
Mapped ecological community	<p>No TECs or PECs listed under the EPBC Act or Biodiversity Conservation (BC) Act were identified based on desktop searches.</p>
Significant flora	<p>The Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) result indicated that the Norseman Pea (<i>Daviesia microcarpa</i>) (listed as Critically Endangered under the BC Act and Endangered under the EPBC Act). The WA Herbarium database and the DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora database indicate that the nearest record for the species is approximately 2.3 km north of the Project area. Given the existing degradation at the site, this species is unlikely to occur. No other Threatened or Priority species were identified as likely to occur (Appendix D).</p> <p>The proposed clearing of 1.5 ha of native vegetation is not anticipated to significantly impact significant flora or their habitat.</p>
Water resources	<p>No Public Drinking Water Source areas, wetlands or rivers were identified.</p> <p>The site is within the Goldfields Groundwater Area; however, no impacts are expected and no groundwater extraction is proposed.</p> <p>No Internationally (Ramsar) or nationally important wetlands are located within 20 km of the sites.</p>
Conservation Reserve	<p>No conservation areas are present. No impacts to conservation areas are anticipated in association with this scope of works.</p>
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	<p>The proposed works are not in an Environmentally Sensitive area.</p>
Land and soil quality	<p>A review of the Australian Soil Resource Information System (ASRIS) indicates the soil at the site has an extremely low probability of Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) occurrence. The project will require minimal digging (depth to 4 m or less) and is unlikely to disturb ASS.</p> <p>The northern section of Lot 1755 was historically used as a fuel storage and dispensing depot so there is potential for contamination to be present to the north of the project area. A risk assessment based on previous land use and known infrastructure locations has been undertaken for this site. An assessment involving viewing historical aerial imagery has been undertaken on the southern portion of the site which indicated no previous use of the land, however access tracks are evident.</p>
Heritage-related values and native title matters	<p>A search of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System (AHIS) indicates that the site is within the Munguni registered Aboriginal site, which is a Ritual / Ceremonial; Creation / Dreaming Narrative; Water Source place. This site covers a large area of Norseman. Horizon Power has undertaken Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Avoidance surveys and no impacts to heritage matters are expected.</p> <p>The site is not within a World Heritage Area or National Heritage Area.</p>

5.3 Criterion 3: The state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the region is adequate

The impact area is located within the Eastern Goldfield sub-region; with over 97% of Pre-European vegetation remaining. 139 surveys of the Coolgardie region are detailed on the Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessments (IBSA) database (DWER 2023). It is, therefore, considered that the state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the region is adequate.

5.4 Criterion 4: Conditions will not be required to manage environmental impacts

Due to the small scale of clearing and low environmental impact of the clearing activity, non-standard controls are not considered to be required to manage environmental impacts for this work. Avoidance, mitigation and management measures have and/or will be applied to the scope of works, as detailed in Section 3.4. Given the application of these measures, as well as the abundance of native vegetation within and surrounding the impact area and the limited clearing proposed, it is considered that clearing can be undertaken without conditions being applied to further manage environmental impacts.

6. References

Beard, J.S 1977, Vegetation Survey of Western Australia: Kimberley, map and explanatory memoir, 1:1,000,000 series, Nedlands, University of Western Australia Press.

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) 2023, Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Protected Matters Search Tool Results, retrieved August 2023 from <https://pmst.awe.gov.au/#/map?lng=131.52832031250003&lat=-28.6905876542507&zoom=5&baseLayers=Imagery,ImageryLabels>.

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), 2021. *Guideline: Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals*, Available at: <https://www.wa.gov.au/service/environment/environment-information-services/guideline-native-vegetation-clearing-referrals>, Accessed August 2023.

DWER, 2023. Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessments (IBSA), https://biocollect.ala.org.au/ibsa#projectId%3D9fd85782-ef71-4dfb-87f6-a028e15c2521%26q%3D*dampier*%26queryText%3D*dampier*%26max%3D30%26sort%3DdateCreatedSort, accessed August 2023.

GoWA (2022). *Data WA*. Available at: <https://data.wa.gov.au/>, accessed August 2023.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)

Pre-European vegetation (DPIRD-006)

Aboriginal heritage sites (DPLH-001)

Heritage Council WA – State Register (DPLH-006)

Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)

RIWI Act, Rivers (DWER-036)

Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)

RIWI Act, Surface Water and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)

RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)

Appendix A: Construction Environmental Management Plan



Appendix B: Certificate of title

Appendix C: Site photographs



PROTECTED

Appendix D: Species that may or are likely to occur

Scientific Name	Common Name	Presence	Commonwealth Threatened Category	State listing category	Migratory status
<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>	Southern Whiteface	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable		
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Migratory
<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	Grey Falcon	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i>	Malleefowl	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Fork-tailed Swift	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area			Migratory
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Grey Wagtail	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Pectoral Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory