

16 October 2023

Attention: Assessing Officer Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Prime House 8 Davison Terrace JOONDALUP WA 6027

SLR Project No.: 675.030177.00001

RE: Native Vegetation Clearing Permit Referral for Lot 383, Part Lot 710, Part Road Reserve along Simpson Street, First Street and Third Avenue, Onslow

Introduction

SLR Consulting Pty Ltd (SLR) was engaged by Mineral Resources Limited (MinRes) to prepare and submit a Native Vegetation Clearing Permit (NVCP) Referral application for the Onslow Township Village located on Lot 300 Back Beach Road, Onslow.

An NCVP (CPS 9922/1) was granted to MinRes for clearing approximately 12.42 ha on Lot 300 Back Beach Road, Onslow (Attachment A) to support construction of the Onslow transient workforce accommodation.

The development application for Lot 300 Back Beach Road, Onslow was approved by the Joint Development Assessment Panel (JDAP) (dated 24 December 2022). A subsequent amendment changing the developments access to Back Beach Road was approved by the Shire of Ashburton on 3 March 2023 (Attachment B). The JDAP development approval included a condition requiring the proponent to connect water, power, and sewer infrastructure to existing services outside the development site.

The proponent has also received consent from the Shire of Ashburton to carry out works to construct the crossover between Lot 300 and Back Beach Road, Onslow (Attachment C).

The request for consent to construct and install the water, power and sewer services to Lot 300 has been presented at the Shire of Ashburton's Council Meeting on Tuesday 10 October 2023. Receipt of this consent is also attached (Attachment C).

This Referral application is seeking confirmation from the DWER that the clearing of approximately 1.11ha within Lot 383, part Lot 710 and part road reserve along Simpson Street, First Street and Third Avenue (referred within as the site) does not require an amendment to CPS 9922-1, or a standalone new NVCP. This proposed clearing is required to facilitate the connection and installation of water, power, and sewer infrastructure in accordance with the JDAP development approval (refer below and Attachment B).

MinRes considers the proposed clearing appropriate for Referral to DWER given the existing land use (primarily road reserves), existing disturbance (existing tracks) and assessment of a very low environmental impact, which aligns with the criteria as detailed in the *DWER Guideline – Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals* (October 2021). Subsequently we seek confirmation this will not require a clearing permit (refer to **Table 2** below).

Proposed Clearing Area

The proposed sewer infrastructure will be constructed and connected to the existing infrastructure within Lot 383 on Plan 205462, part Lot 710 on Plan 400278, and part of road reserves along Simpson Street and First Street. The water and power infrastructure will be constructed and connected to the existing infrastructure on part of the road reserve at Third Avenue.

Lot 383 is approximately 1.22 ha and part Lot 710 is approximately 0.27 ha zoned 'Reserve' and 'Public Purposes, Conservation, Recreation, and Nature Landscape' under the Shire of Ashburton Local Planning Scheme No. 7(LPS7). Both Simpson Street, First Street and Third Avenue Road reserves are zoned 'Local Road' under the Shire's LPS7. **Table 1** presents the proposed clearing area applicable to this Referral application.

Parameter	Lot 383	Lot 710	Simpson Street	First Street	Third Avenue
Total area (ha)	1.224	0.270	0.3696	0.81	0.225
Total vegetation area (ha)	0.834	0.112	0.0005	0.081	0.107
Existing degraded area (ha)	0.390	0.029	0.3691	-	0.118
Proposed clearing (ha)	0.834	0.084	0.0005	0.081	0.107

Table 1: Proposed Clearing Area

The total clearing area **(1.11 ha)** is dependent on the final design of the water, sewer, and power infrastructure to be installed and connected to Lot 300.

Based on the information to date, it is understood that within Lot 383, that 0.65ha of native vegetation will be retained in this lot unless the proposed final design for the infrastructure needs to be modified based on site conditions rearrangement of existing in-situ services when exposed. This Referral application has considered the retention of this native vegetation.

Site Environmental Conditions

Climate

The nearest Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) weather station to the site is Onslow Airport (Station No:005017) located approximately 3.6 km away. The long-term mean minimum temperature for Onslow Airport Station is 19.2° and the mean maximum is 32.1°. Onslow area receives rainfall 29.3 days annually with an average annual mean rain of 304.2 mm (BoM,2023).

Topography

The topography of the site is gentle, ranging from 9 m Australian Height Datum (AHD) to 7 m AHD. The highest elevation point is on the northern side of the site and the lower points are on the south side of the site (Landgate 2023).

Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA)

The site is mapped within the Carnarvon bioregion and the Cape Range (CAR01) subregion. The Carnarvon bioregion is composed of quaternary alluvial, aeolian and marine sediments overlying Cretaceous strata. A mosaic of saline alluvial plains with samphire and saltbush low shrublands, Bowgada low woodland on sandy ridges and plains, Snakewood scrub on clay flats, and tree to shrub steppe over hummock grasslands on and between red sand dune fields (Kendrick and Mau, 2002).

Soil Landscape Systems

The site intercepts one soil land system, Dune System 201 DU described as dune fields supporting soft spinifex and minor hard spinifex grasslands (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, 2019).

Hydrology

The site is mapped within the Pilbara Surface Water Area (SWA) under the RIWI Act Surface Water Proclamation Areas. No surface watercourses intercept with the Amendment site (Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), 2023). No Ramsar or Geomorphic wetlands were identified within the site.

A review of the Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA) online mapping tool did not identify any PDWSAs within the Amendment Site or a 10km radius (DWER 2023).

Aboriginal Heritage

The land parcels fall within the dithered boundaries of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) places (Site No. 6617 and 6618). The applicant has engaged with Buurabalayji Thalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (BTAC) and conducted a heritage survey on Lots 383 and 710 with no ACH being identified. In addition, the applicant has received a response from the DPLH advising the following:

"A review of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Directory concludes that the subject land, as per the spatial data provided (Lot 300 Sewer Connection GDA2020z50), intersects the public boundaries of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) ID 6617(Burubarladji) and ID 6618 (Dew Talu), but does not with the actual boundaries as administered by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)."

The applicant received consent from the Buurabalayji Thalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, who are the landowners of the Lot 300 Back Beach Road, on 27 September 2022 to commence development activities on Lot 300 Back Beach Road, Onslow. Consent was included in the NVCP CPS9922/1 approval.

Bushfire Risk

The site is mapped within a Bushfire Prone Area. A Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) and Bushfire Emergency Management Plan (BEMP) has been prepared to support the development of Lot 300(360 Environmental 2022).

Appropriate bushfire management measures will need to be considered for this site.

The proponent will implement the management measures outlined in Lot 300 BMP (Attachment D) and BEMP (Attachment E) and any management measures included in the CEMP for the construction of the site and operation phases of the development (Attachment F).

Flora, Vegetation and Fauna

360 Environmental undertook a biological assessment for the areas required for the sewer, power and water infrastructure proposed to be connected with the transient workforce accommodation at Lot 300 Back Beach Road (refer to Attachment G). The assessment identified the key biological values within the site to support the referral application.

The site is mapped within the Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117 broad vegetation type. Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117 is described as hummock grassland with *Triodia* spp., the vegetation structure is grass-steppe (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, 2018).

Vegetation Type	Pre-European Extent (ha)	Current Extent (ha)	Remaining (%)	Current Extent Managed in DBCA Lands (%)
Representation across Western Australia				
Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117	919,517.05	886,005.79	96.36	14.79
Representation across the Carnarvon Bioregion				
Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117	12,424.35	10,907.99	87.80	27.48
Representation across the Cape Range Subregion				
Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117	12,424.35	10,907.99	87.80	27.48
Representation across the Shire of Ashburton				
Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117	14,506.04	9,073.90	62.55	19.13

Table 1: Broad vegetation type representation within the State, Bioregion, Subregion and Local Government Area (Government of Australia, 2019)

The Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) Guidance Statement No. 33 – Environmental Guidance for Planning and Development has set out a threshold for the retention of 10% of the pre-existing extent of native vegetation within constrained areas (EPA 2008). The Cape Yannare Coastal Plain vegetation meets the recommendation, it has 96.36% representation remaining within the State.

Vegetation, condition, and fauna habitat mapping was extrapolated from mapping produced for Lot 300 (360 Environmental, 2021), with boundaries delineated over aerial photography (May 2022 Imagery; Landgate, 2022), at a scale of 1:5,000.

Flora and Vegetation Results

Results from the biological assessment identified one broad vegetation unit within the site. The Coastal Dunes vegetation unit was continuous throughout the assessed area covering approximately 2.9ha of the site (**Figure 2**). The remaining 1.8ha of the site is cleared (360 Environmental, 2023, Attachment G).

The coastal dunes vegetation type is associated with *Acacia Coriacea* subsp. *Coriacea* and *Acacia tetragonophylla* (with *Crotalaria cunninghamii* subsp. *Sturtii*) mid to low sparse



shrubland over **Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Eulalia aurea* low tussock grassland Triodia *epactia*, low sparse hammock grassland over Euphorbia *myrtoides* low sparse herb land.

The vegetation condition is likely to be of Good to Poor quality, and any cleared areas are Highly Degraded in quality. Aerial imagery (May 2022 Imagery; Landgate, 2022) suggests that the site has been impacted by clearing, weeds, and tracks. It can also be assumed that littering/rubbish dumping has occurred based on the evidence previously found in Lot 300, considering the proximity of the site to Lot 300 (360 Environmental 2023).

No threatened or priority flora taxa were identified within Lot 300 during a field survey conducted for the NVCP application. Four introduced species were recorded **Tamarix aphylla* (Declared Pest, listed WoNS), **Cenchrus ciliaris,* **Aerva javanica,* and **Washingtonia filifera*. No significant flora species were identified as having a high or medium likelihood of occurrence within Lot 300 (360 Environmental, 2022). No Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) or Priority Ecological Community (PEC) are mapped within the site.

Fauna

One broad fauna habitat was identified and mapped within the site. The Coastal Dunes fauna habitat was continuous throughout the area and is analogous with the Coastal Dunes vegetation type. The Coastal Dunes fauna habitat covers 0.92 ha of the area proposed for the sewer infrastructure and covers 0.19ha for the area proposed for the water and power infrastructure. This habitat provides suitable Good quality habitat for passerine birds (perching birds and songbirds) and suitable, but low-quality habitat for reptile and small mammal species due to the presence of cats and foxes, and alteration of understory structure by **C. ciliaris* and clearing. Coastal Dunes fauna habitat within the proposed clearing areas is likely to be of Good to Disturbed quality (Attachment G).

A pair of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*; DBCA: MI; EPBC: MI, MA) have an established nest in Onslow and were observed perched on the pole at Lookout Point (~300 m from the Survey Area) and hunting and collecting nesting materials from Lot 300 during the detailed terrestrial fauna survey (360 Environmental, 2022) (Attachment H). Direct sightings of three migratory bird species were recorded in areas immediately surrounding Lot 300, approximately 500 m north and northwest of the NVCP application area, including:

- Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia) MI (DBCA); MI, MA (EPBC).
- Common Sandpiper (Actitis hypoleucos) MI (DBCA); MI, MA (EPBC).
- Greater Crested Tern (Thalasseus bergii) MI (DBCA); MI, MA (EPBC).

One significant fauna species, *Lerista planiventralis maryani* (P1), utilises dune habitat in the bioregion and records indicate that it historically occurred within 1 km of the site. The detailed vertebrate fauna survey conducted on Lot 300 did not identify its presence, thus it was deemed to have a low likelihood of occurrence within the site (Attachment H).

Cumulative Environmental Impact

The proposed clearing was assessed against the Native Vegetation Clearing Referrals Guidance to determine if a referral or a NVCP application is required. **Table 2** provides the results of the assessment against the NVCP Referrals Guidance.

Table 2: Assessment Against the NVCP Requirements Criterion

Criterion	Justification
The area proposed to be cleared is small relative to the total remaining vegetation.	The site is mapped within the Carnarvon Bioregion and the Cape Range (CAR01) subregion under the Interim Biogeographic Regionalization of Australia (IBRA) which divides Australia biological regions (Department of the Environment and Energy, 2016). This region is characterised with quaternary alluvial, aeolian and marine sediments overlying Cretaceous strata.
	Pre-European broad vegetation mapping identifies the site being located within the Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117 which is described as hummock grassland with <i>Triodia</i> spp., the vegetation structure is grass-steppe (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, 2018). The representation of the remaining Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117 vegetation within Western Australia, Carnarvon Bioregion, Cape Range subregion and the Shire of Ashburton is 96.36%, 87.80%, 87.80% and 62.55% respectively. The remaining vegetation is above the 30% threshold set by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for clearing remaining extent of native vegetation.
	Considering the above, the proposed clearing of 1.11 ha, will not trigger a NVCP application as the site is not more than 5 ha and is located in an extensive land use zone. The remaining pre- European vegetation mapped within the site (Cape Yannare Coastal Plain 117) is above the 30% clearing threshold for remaining native vegetation within the Stage, Bioregion, Sub-Bioregion and Local Government area.
	The proposed clearing area is insignificant and negligible compared to the remaining native vegetation in the State, Region, and Local Government Area.
There are no known or likely significant environmental values within the area.	A biological survey conducted within Lot 300 identified a total of 33 flora taxa from across 13 families, this was extrapolated for the mapping of vegetation within the site. Survey results identified that no vegetation taxa found within the survey area resemble any potentially occurring Threatened and Priority Flora, or flora of Conservation significance (360 Environmental 2021). No Threatened flora species pursuant to the EPBC Act 1999 and/or gazetted as Threatened Ecological Communities pursuant to the BC Act 2016 were recorded during the survey. Vegetation mapped on the site is described as <i>Acacia coriacea</i> subsp. <i>coriacea</i> and <i>Acacia tetragonophylla</i> (<i>with Crotalaria cunninghamii</i> subsp. <i>sturtii</i>) mid to low sparse shrubland over <i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i> and <i>Eulalia aurea</i> low tussock grassland with <i>Triodia epactia</i> low sparse hummock grassland over
	relative to the total remaining vegetation.

Criterion	Justification
	Vegetation condition within the site was determined to be Very Good with evidence of disturbance including old vehicle tracks, littering and weeds. None of the vegetation within the site is groundwater dependent.
	One broad fauna habitat was mapped and identified within the site. The coastal dune fauna habitat was continuous throughout the site and is analogous with the Coastal Dune vegetation type. The habitat quality was identified to be in a good condition throughout the site except for areas covered in tracks and weeds.
	A terrestrial fauna survey and a marine and shorebird survey undertaken in 2021 and 2022 respectively recorded a total of 62 fauna species from 32 families. No fauna species of conservation significance (Threatened or Priority), or evidence of these species such as tracks, scats, nest, diggings, burrows, or direct sightings were recorded within or directly surrounding the survey area (360 Environmental, 2021).
	A pair of Eastern Ospreys (<i>Pandion haliaetus cristatus</i> ; DBCA: IA; EPBC: MI, MA) have an established nest in Onslow and were observed perched on the pole at Lookout Point (~40 m from the survey area), and hunting and collecting nesting materials from the survey area (360 Environmental, 2022). One significant fauna species, <i>Lerista planiventralis maryani</i> (P1), utilises dune habitatin the bioregion, and records indicate that it historically occurred within 1 km of the survey area. <i>Lerista</i> tracks were abundant throughout the survey area, however, no <i>L.p. maryani</i> individuals were captured or sighted during the single-phase detailed vertebrate fauna survey (360 Environmental, 2023).
	A review of available surface water feature mapping did not identify any surface watercourses, rivers, creeks, or streams that intersect the site. The site is located approximately 200m from the Indian Ocean. No Ramsar or Geomorphic wetlands were identified within the site. The Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA) online mapping tool did not identify any PDWSAs within the site.
	No Regional Parks or Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) managed lands intersect the site. The site is not located within any Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) and there are no ESAs located within a 20 km radius of the site.
	DWER Acid Sulfate Soils mapping, identified an area with moderate to low risk of ASS occurring within 3m of natural soil surface but high to moderate risk of ASS beyond 3m of natural soil surface, 50 m east of the site. An ASS assessment has been carried out for the site, results from the assessment determined that there is no presence of ASS within Lot 300.
	No contaminated sites were identified as occurring within the site, a desktop contamination review conducted for the area adjacent to the site identified that there have not been any significant

	Criterion	Justification
		historical contaminating activities occurring within the survey area, as the survey area has been vacant and undeveloped. Soil erosion, salinity and nutrient export is not expected to increase as a result of the proposed clearing.
		The lots fall within the mapped boundaries of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) places (Site No. 6617 and 6618). The cCultural heritage survey, consultation with Buurabalayji Thalanyji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC and the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage has confirmed that despite this, there are no actual heritage values associated with this Registered Site(s) within the subject lots.
		Given the above, the referral will have no impact on the identified environmental features of the site. Management of environmental features on the site and surrounding areas will be implemented as part of the Onslow Township Village Project, including a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) addressing the potential impacts from the project (refer to Attachment F).
3.	The state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the region is adequate.	Biological surveys completed for the site identifies that there are no conservation significant flora and/or fauna species occurring within the proposed clearing area. The site has evidence of disturbance including old vehicle tracks, waste dumping and weeds within Lots 383 and 710 and. Simpson Street and Third Avenue have been cleared for the development of the road reserves.
		The clearing of 1.11ha will have a negligible impact on the native vegetation mapped on the site. Pre-European vegetation remaining within the Carnarvon Bioregion is approximately 10,907.99 ha (87.80%) making the proposed clearing negligible.
		The proposed clearing is insignificant and negligible compared to the remaining amount of native vegetation in the region.
4.	Conditions will not be required to manage environmental impacts	The proposed clearing will be managed as a part of the Onslow Township Village project. The Shire of Ashburton has approved a CEMP to support those works associated with the project.
		The proponent will ensure the design of the sewer, power and water infrastructure will avoid, minimise, and manage the potential impacts from the proposed clearing. Some management measures as per the CEMP, to minimize the risk of impact associated with the proposed clearing include:
		 Induction of all contractors and/or internal personnel undertaking the clearing in accordance with MINRES procedures.
		GPS coordinates of clearing permit area to be supplied to contractor undertaking the clearing activities.

Criterion	Justification
	• Clearing area will be demarcated prior to the commencement of project activities and prior to the commencement of native vegetation clearing.
	• Prior to clearing and earthworks commencing within the clearing permit area, the area will be clearly outlined (by barrier tape or star pickets) to ensure that no over clearing occurs beyond the permitted area.
	• Utilize existing cleared access tracks for the proposed access road, rather than creating new tracks to limit unnecessary clearing of native vegetation, where practicable.
	• Weed hygiene measures will be in place to minimise the risk of spread or introduction of new weed species to the site.
	No conditions would be required to address environmental impacts resultant from the proposed clearing as the intended works are considered negligible and appropriate measures will be implemented to minimise risks to the environment within the site as part of the CEMP (refer to the Attachment F).
Conclusion: Considering the limited significant enviror and manage potential impacts, the proposed clearing is	nmental features of the proposal and the commitments made by the proponent to avoid, minimize, s considered negligible and an NVCP is not required.

The assessment concludes that the clearing of 1.11ha of native vegetation for the construction and connection of water, power and sewer infrastructure to Lot 300 is negligible. The proposed clearing area is relatively small with a total of less than 5 ha, being the minimum extent of clearing being required for a permit. Native vegetation on the site and across the region is above the 30% threshold for clearing associated with remaining native vegetation.

No known significant environmental values were identified within the proposed clearing area. Scientific evidence available and presented in the biological assessment identifies the proposed works as having a very low environmental impact, which is considered negligible on the existing native vegetation. The potential impacts related to the proposed works will be minimised and managed in accordance with the commitments made in the approved CEMP for the adjacent Lot 300 development (refer to Attachment F).

Closure

Based on the results of the biophysical assessment, previous reporting, and assessment against the NVCP Referral Guidance, the environmental issues identified do not constrain development of the proposed sewer, power, and water service infrastructure to Lot 300.

Appropriate environmental management measures being implemented as part of the Lot 300 Back Beach approval will minimise any potential impact on flora and vegetation and fauna associated with the overall development of the sewer, power and water infrastructure and associated connections.

The construction and connection of the sewer, power and water infrastructure will result in the clearing of approximately 1.11 ha (covering 0.83 ha of Lot 383, 0.08 ha of part Lot 710, 0.0.0005 ha of Simpson Street, 0.08 ha of First Street and 0.11 ha of Third Avenue Road reserves).

Considering the outcomes from the desktop and field assessments for the site and Lot 300 it is considered that the proposal to clear approximately 1.11ha of native vegetation for the proposed sewer, power and water infrastructure is considered to be of a very low environmental impact.

An assessment of the proposed clearing against the NVCP Referral Guidance (refer to **Table 2**) determines a NVCP would not be required for the intended approved works. The Referral assessment concludes the proposed area is below the 5 ha which triggers the requirement for a NVCP application and will have a very low environmental impact.

In addition, no known or likely significant environmental values were identified within the proposed clearing area. Scientific evidence available for the site identifies native vegetation within the site is above the 30 % threshold for clearing remaining native vegetation on site, in the Local Government Area and the region.

The proponent considers a clearing permit is not required for the nature and types of works proposed within this Referral application, given the small area of clearing proposed for these approved works for Lot 300.

Should you require any further information in relation to the application, please contact Genelle Abolis on <u>gabolis@slrconsulting.com</u> or alternatively call on 0408295190.

Kind Regards,

SLR Consulting Australia

Genelle Abolis Principal Environmental Consultant gabolis@slrconsulting.com

Attachments

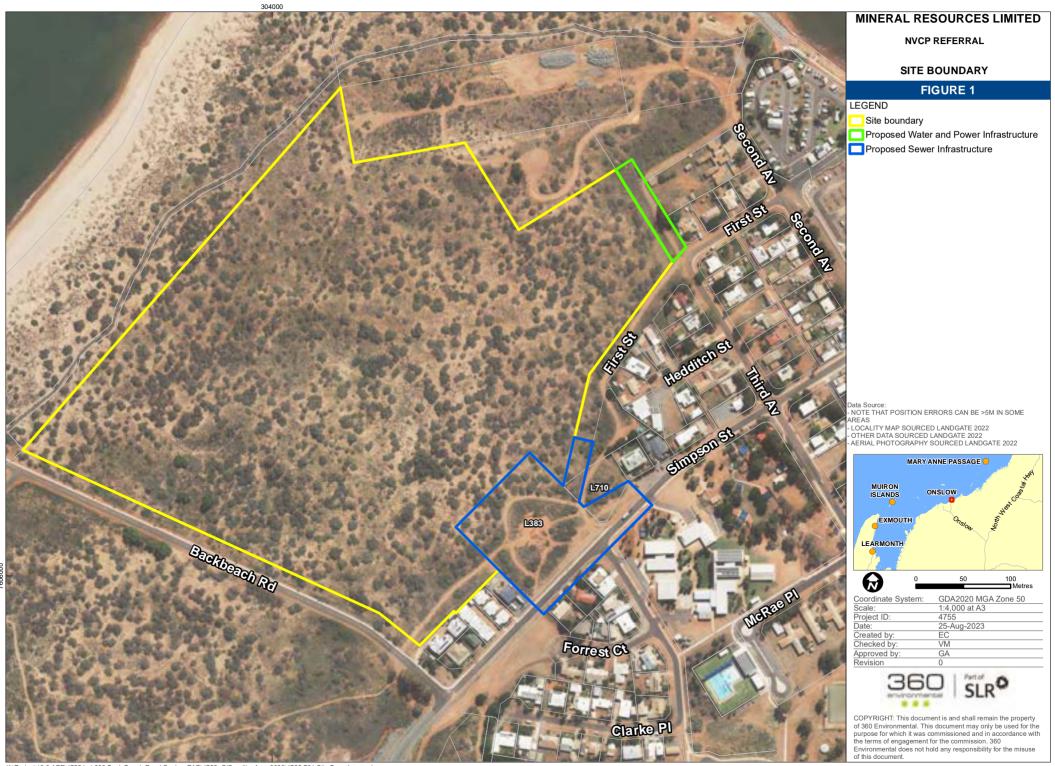
Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Figure 2: Proposed Clearing Areas

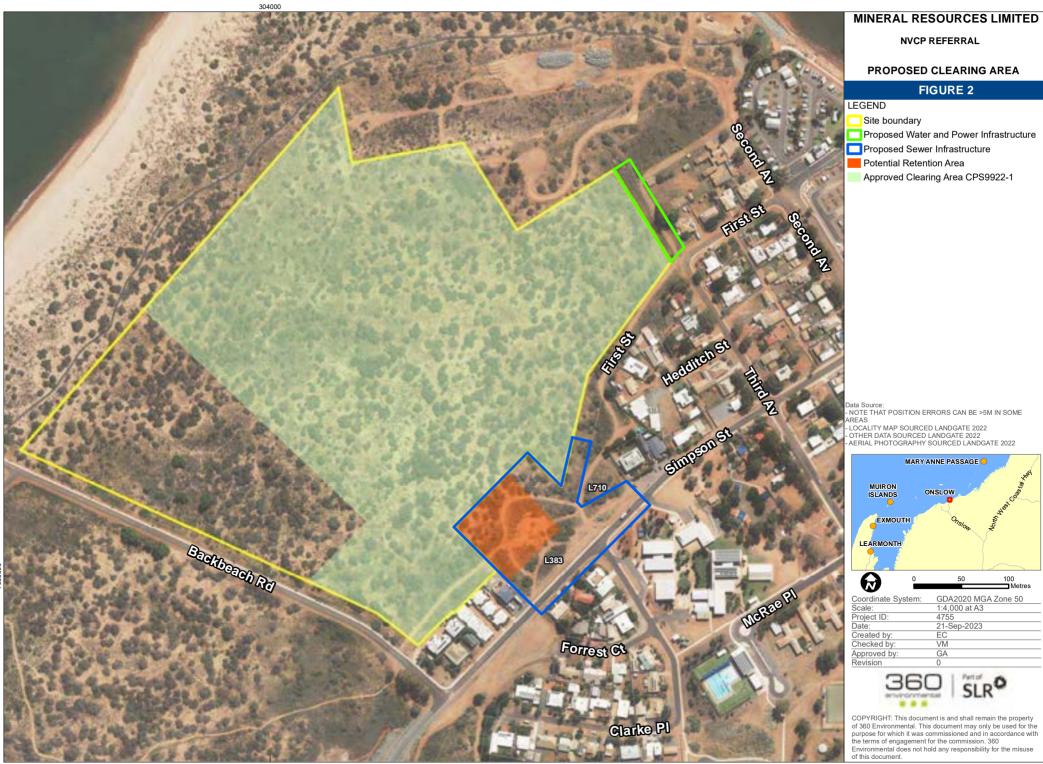
Figure 3: Vegetation Type

Attachment A: Lot 300, Back Beach Road, Onslow, NVCP CPS9922/1 Approval.

- Attachment B: Shire of Ashburton Notice of Determination on Application for Development Application and Onslow Township Village Development Application Plan.
- Attachment C: Shire of Ashburton Correspondence and Certificate of Titles
- Attachment D: Onslow Township Village Bushfire Management Plan
- Attachment E: Onslow Township Bushfire Emergency Management Plan
- Attachment F: Lot 300 Back Beach Road, Onslow. Construction Environmental Management Plan. Prepared for Mineral Resources Limited.
- Attachment G: Lot 383, Part Lot 710, Simpson Street, First Street and Third Avenue, Onslow Supplementary Biological Assessment.
- Attachment H: Lot 300 Back Beach Road, Onslow. Detailed Terrestrial Fauna and Shorebird Survey. Prepared for Mineral Resources Limited.



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