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Horizon Power Halls Creek Water Corporation Water Supply - Native Vegetation Clearing Referral Supporting Document

November 2023



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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 Locations	4
3.3 Proposed Clearing Method	11
3.4 Avoidance, Mitigation and Management Measures	11
4. Suitability for the Clearing Referral Process.....	12
5. Assessment Against DWER Criterion	13
5.1 Criterion 1: The area proposed to be cleared is small relative to the total remaining vegetation	13
5.2 Criterion 2: There are no known or likely significant environmental values within the area	13
5.3 Criterion 3: The state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the region is adequate	15
5.4 Criterion 4: Conditions will not be required to manage environmental impacts	15
6. References	16
Appendix A: Certificate of Titles	17
Appendix B: Site photographs	18
Appendix C: Species that may or are likely to occur	21
Appendix D: Construction Environmental Management Plan	22
Appendix E: Proposed Clearing Area	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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.

Horizon Power has been engaged by Water Corporation for the provision of supporting infrastructure for the expansion of the water supply at the Water Corporation facility in Halls Creek, WA. Horizon Power is proposing to install 19 new poles with associated infrastructure expanding to the new bore locations which will require minor clearing of native vegetation.

The work will involve clearing of vegetation, civil works, installation of overhead cables and associated infrastructure, bollards, security, lighting and shade (if required), signage and branding. The total clearing footprint for will not exceed 0.128 ha.

1.2 Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the proposed clearing of native vegetation for the extension of the existing network to increase the Water Corporation water supply 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).

A Construction Environmental Management Plan is also provided, as this is a standard requirement of the Horizon Power Environmental Management System for projects clearing native vegetation where an exemption does not apply.

2. Description of the Activity

As discussed in Section 1, the work will involve the mechanical clearing of vegetation, civil works, installation of overhead cables, poles and associated infrastructure, bollards, security, lighting and shade (if required), signage and branding. The existing access track will be utilised, with the proposed new clearing extending from the existing access track. The total clearing area will not exceed 0.128 ha.

Horizon Power intends to undertake these works through the exercise of powers conferred by sections 46 and 49 of the *Energy Operators (Powers) Act 1979* (the Act) and as such do not require landowner permission. As required under the Act, Horizon Power will notify all landowners of the proposed work through a formal Notice of Entry.

3. Description of Proposed Clearing

3.1 Extent of Proposed Clearing

The proposed clearing will occur within the Project Area (Figures 1 - 6) which has a total clearing area of 0.128 ha in size. A total cleared area of 0.128 ha is required for the activity within the Project Area, detailed in Table 1 and shown in Figures 1 - 6.

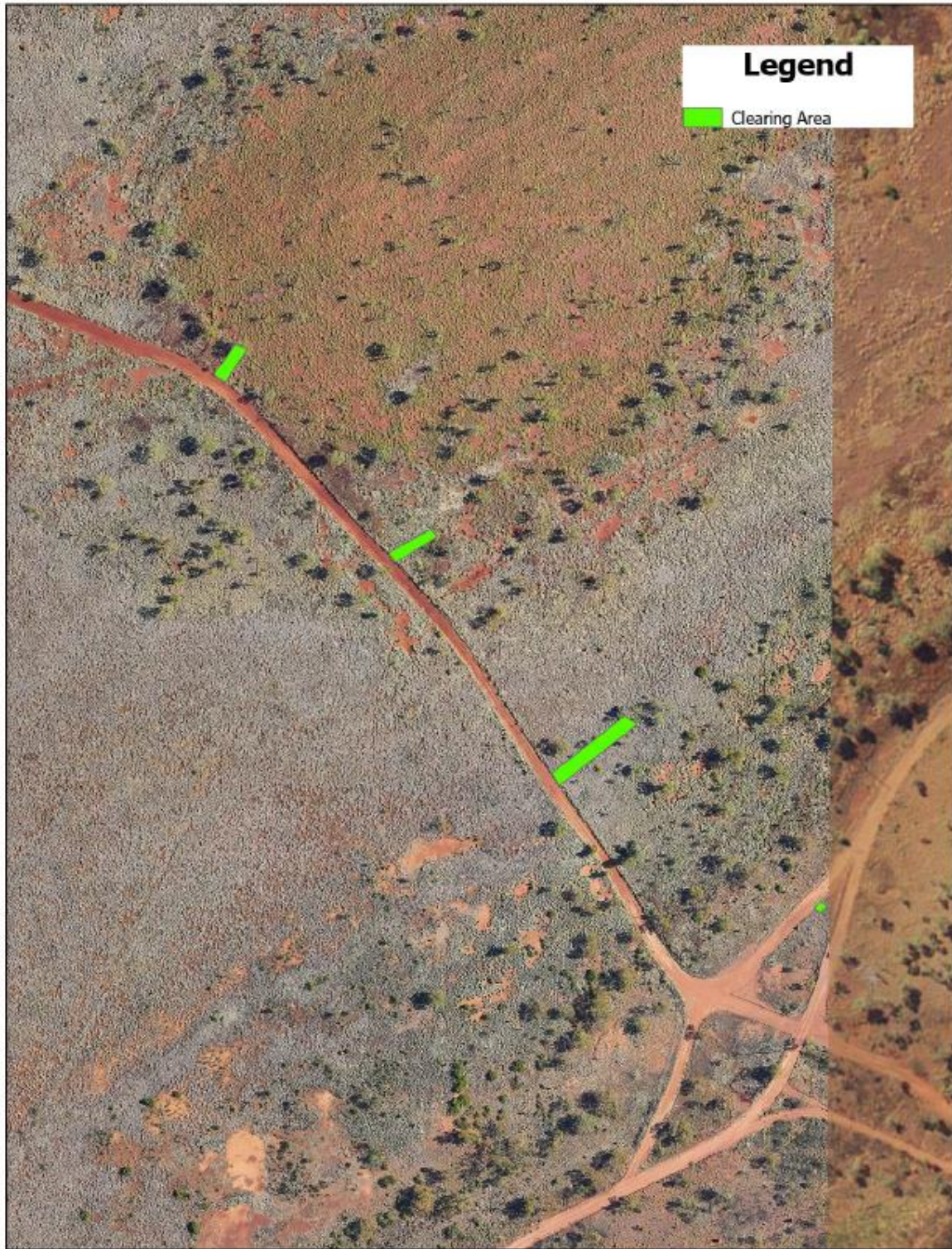
3.2 Proposed Clearing Locations

Table 1 Water Corporation water supply land parcels

Name	Lot on Plan	Volume	Folio
Halls Creek Bores – Duncan Road	Lot 505 on Deposited Plan 064833, being Reserve 23136	LR3158	961
Halls Creek Bores – Duncan Road	Lot 360 on Deposited Plan 076780	LR3164	221

The proposed clearing locations will occur within the Project Area observed in Figures 1 - 6.

Figure 1. Proposed clearing locations.



Map

Figure 1



 Reference only
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Figure 2. Proposed clearing locations.



Map

Figure 2

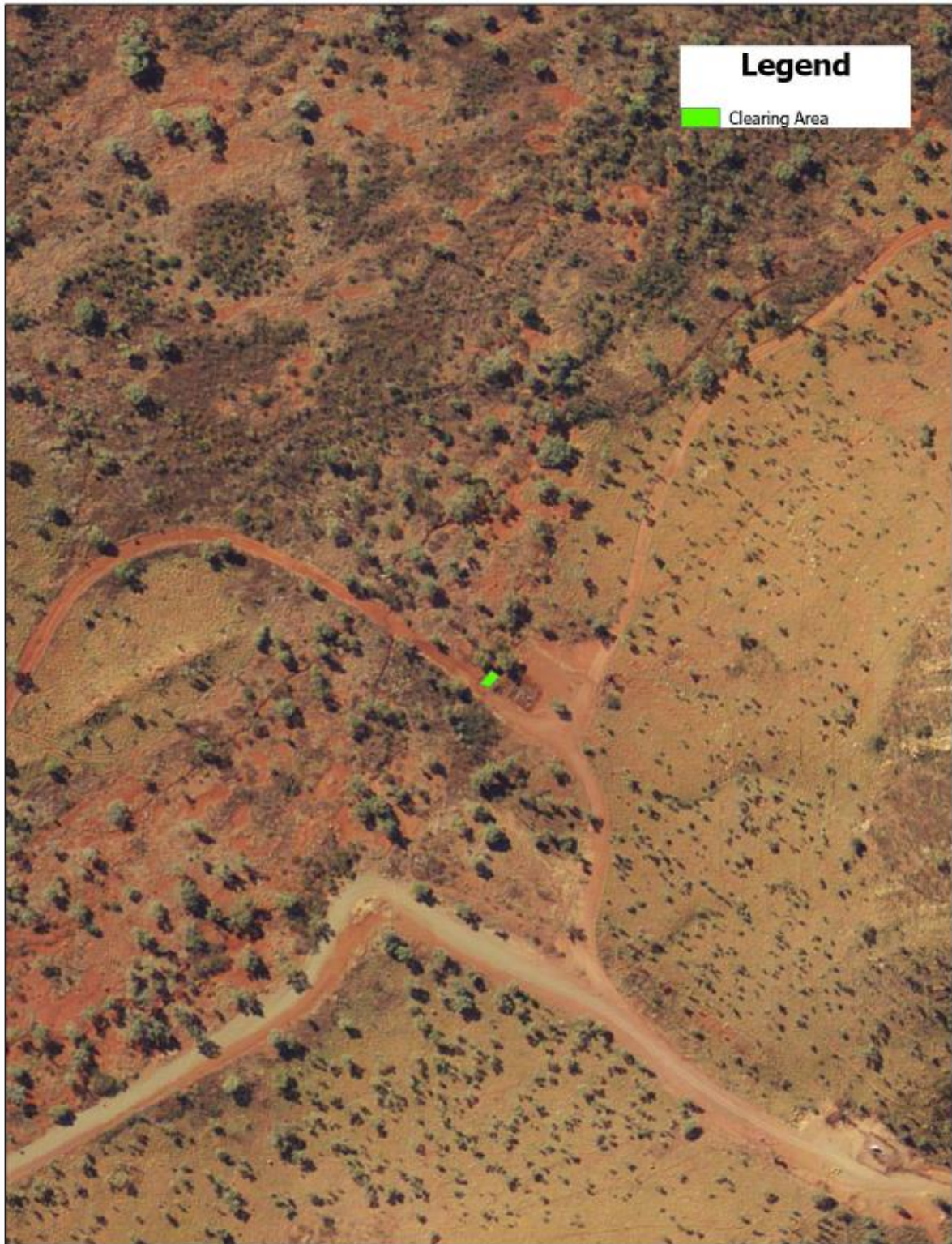


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Figure 3. Proposed clearing locations.



Map | Figure 3

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Figure 4. Proposed clearing locations.



Map

Figure 4



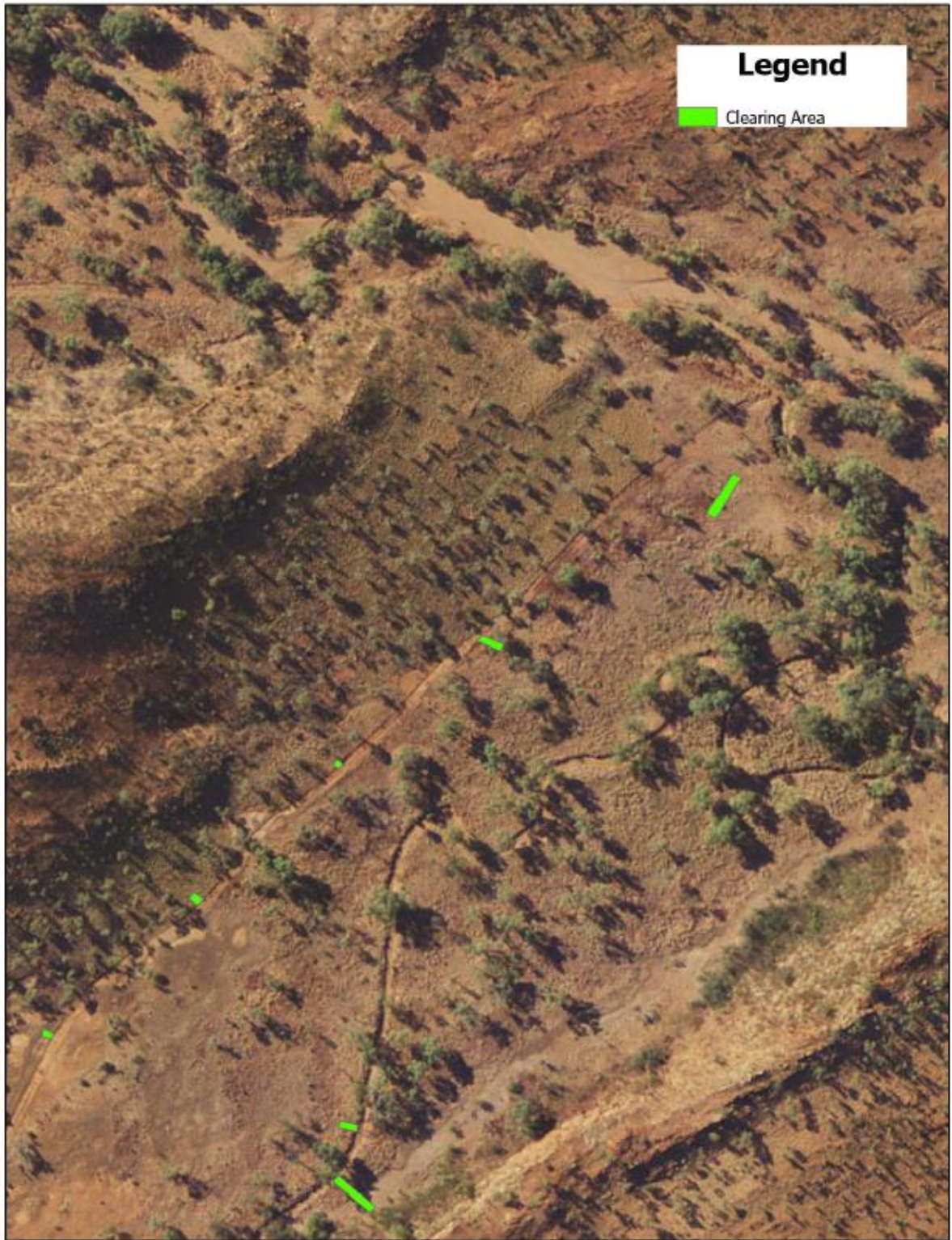
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Figure 5. Proposed clearing locations.



Map	Figure 5	 Reference only Confirm Current Network State in EO Web Last updated on 30/10/2023 by H180297
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Figure 6. Proposed clearing locations.



Map

Figure 6



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3.3 Proposed Clearing Method

Clearing will be undertaken by backhoe / bulldozer (i.e. mechanical clearing).

3.4 Avoidance, Mitigation and Management Measures

Sites have been selected to locate them in areas adjacent to existing disturbance while minimising disturbance to vegetation where possible. Utilising the existing access track will reduce the disturbance and clearing to vegetation, along with the placement of poles and associated infrastructure where minimal vegetation is located to further reduce clearing and disturbance to vegetation.

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.

The following standard construction management measures will be implemented via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix D) to minimise potential impacts to native vegetation within the impact area.

- Clearing will be minimised where possible through placement of assets in existing cleared or areas of minimal vegetation where possible, along with utilising the existing access track.
- The clearing locations are to 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.

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 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 Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945 (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 proposed to commence in December 2023.	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 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 99% 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 0.128 ha This is less than the 10 ha threshold for clearing activities located north of the 26° latitude line.
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)
Water Corporation – Duncan Road, Halls Creek	831 Hummock grassland with sparse Eucalypts e.g. bloodwoods & snappy gum Triodia spp., Corymbia dichromophloia, C. opaca, Eucalyptus leucophloia	State: WA	381,764.51	381,594.39	99.96	8.42
		IBRA Bioregion: Ord Victoria Plain	380,910.53	380,744.09	99.96	8.42
		IBRA Subregion: Purnululu	379,001.70	378,835.26	99.96	8.42
		LGA: Shire of Halls Creek	375,174.35	375,004.23	99.95	7.94

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>Based on photographs of the site locations, the proposed clearing sites are comprised of scattered Hummock grassland, bloodwoods and snappy gum <i>Triodia</i> spp., <i>Corymbia dichromophloia</i>, <i>C. opaca</i>, <i>Eucalyptus leucophloia</i> commensurate with the mapped vegetation known to occur in Vegetation Association 831. Vegetation is sparse showing evidence of some degradation including possible weeds (Appendix B).</p> <p>The proposed clearing of 0.128 ha required for this scope of works is not considered likely to impact significant environmental values.</p>
Significant fauna and habitat	<p>Twenty-one conservation significant fauna species were considered likely or possibly occurring within the vicinity of the three sites (Appendix C).</p> <p>Significant impacts are not expected given the widespread availability of habitat in the region and small scale of proposed clearing.</p>
Significant ecological linkage	<p>The proposed area is not part of a significant ecological linkage.</p>
Mapped ecological community	<p>No Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities listed under the EPBC Act or BC Act were identified based on desktop searches.</p>
Significant flora	<p>No Threatened or Priority species were identified as likely to occur within 500 m of the proposed clearing sites.</p> <p>DBCA WA Herb database identifies the closest record to the proposed clearing area to be approximately 3 kms to the southwest. <i>Eriachne armitii</i> Benth, a Priority 1 taxon which has recorded habitats consisting of mudstone, shale, slate and coarse river sand, clayey, loamy and sandy soils over quartzite, granite or laterite which can be saline or gravelly. Also occurring within seasonally wet sites of proximity to swamps, salt pans, lakes and watercourses and disturbed ground. The proposed clearing areas are not located within proximity to watercourses, swamps, salt pans or lakes, therefore it is unlikely this taxon may occur. Vegetation</p> <p>The proposed clearing of 0.128 ha of native vegetation is not anticipated to significantly impact significant flora or their habitat.</p>
Water resources	<p>The project area is located within the Halls Creek Public Drinking Water Source area, the proposed works are part of the extension of the Water Corporation water supply, however, no groundwater impacts are expected from extension of the transmission infrastructure.</p> <p>No wetlands or rivers were identified.</p> <p>No Internationally (Ramsar) or nationally important wetlands are located within 20 km of the project area.</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 under the project area are of no risk of Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS).</p> <p>The sites do not intersect any known contamination. No off-site impacts are anticipated in association with the activity. Land and soil quality is not likely to be impacted by the activity.</p>
Heritage-related values and native title matters	<p>No Aboriginal heritage sites are within the proposed clearing areas. Registered Aboriginal Heritage Site 16012 and 16013 are located approximately 450 m of the proposed clearing areas, no impacts are expected to these heritage areas.</p> <p>None of the proposed clearing areas are 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 Project area is located within the Ord Victoria Plain bioregion and Purnululu subregion; both have over 99% of Pre-European vegetation remaining. The Kimberley region has been surveyed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and others for the purposes of land classification, mapping and resource evaluation. One hundred and eleven land systems have been described for the Kimberley region, which are distinguished on the basis of topography, geology, soils and vegetation (Payne and Schoknecht 2011). An inventory of the Pilbara region was undertaken between 1995 to 1999 by the Department of Agriculture to describe and map the natural resources of the region (van Vreeswyk et al 2004). The report identified and described the condition of soils, landforms, vegetation, habitat, ecosystems, and declared plants and animals. In addition, 25 surveys of the Kimberley region are detailed on the Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessments (IBSA) database (DWER 2022). It is, therefore, considered that the state of scientific knowledge of native vegetation within the regions 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 been applied to the scope of works, as detailed in Section 3.4. A standard CEMP will be applied during construction (Appendix D). 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) 2021, Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Protected Matters Search Tool Results, retrieved February 2022 from <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/pmst/index.html>

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 October 2022

DWER, 2022. 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 February 2023

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

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)

Payne, A and Schoknecht, N 2011, Land Systems of the Kimberley Region, Western Australia, Technical Bulletin No. 98, Perth, DAFWA.

van Vreeswyk, A M, Leighton, K A, Payne, A L, and Hennig, P. (2004), *An inventory and condition survey of the Pilbara region, Western Australia*. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Perth. Technical Bulletin 92.

Appendix A: Certificate of Title

Appendix B: Site photographs







Appendix C: Species that may or are likely to occur

Scientific Name	Common Name	Presence	Commonwealth Threatened Category	State listing category	Migratory Status
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Migratory
<i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>	Red Goshawk	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Endangered	Endangered	
<i>Pristis pristis</i>	Freshwater Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, River Sawfish, Leichhardt's Sawfish, Northern Sawfish	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Migratory
<i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>	Gouldian Finch	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	Endangered	Priority 4	
<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Australian Painted Snipe	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Endangered	Endangered	
<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	Grey Falcon	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	
<i>Macrotis lagotis</i>	Greater Bilby	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	
<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>	Princess Parrot, Alexandra's Parrot	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Priority 4	
<i>Macroderma gigas</i>	Ghost Bat	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	
<i>Trichosurus vulpecula arnhemensis</i>	Northern Brushtail Possum	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Migratory
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Grey Wagtail	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	Oriental Pratincole	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Fork-tailed Swift	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area			Migratory
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory
<i>Charadrius veredus</i>	Oriental Plover, Oriental Dotterel	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>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common 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
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area			Migratory

Appendix D: Construction Environmental Management Plan

