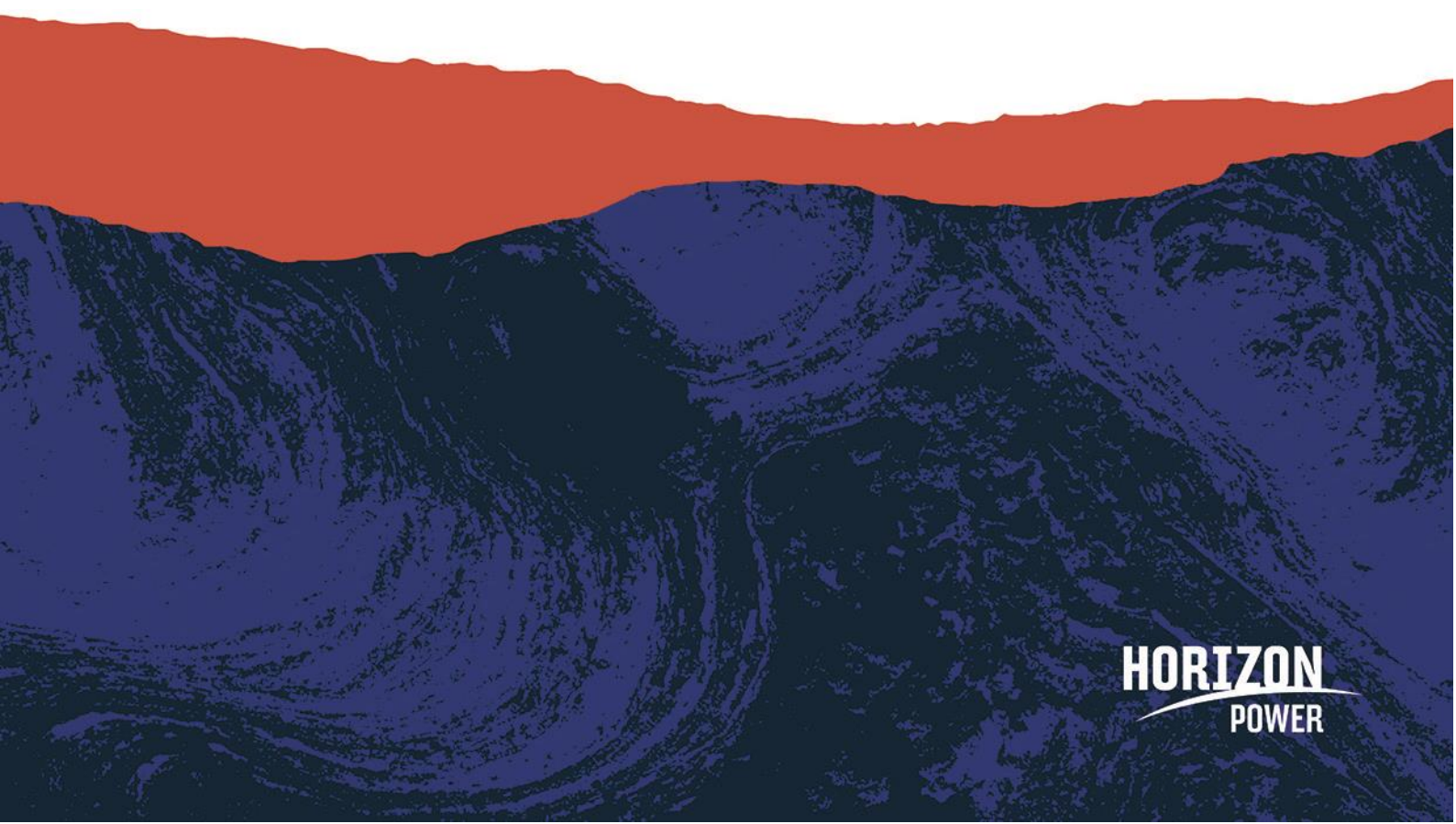


PROTECTED

Horizon Power Electric Vehicle Charging Station and Stand-alone Power System - Whim Creek

**Native Vegetation Clearing Referral
Supporting Document**



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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 is proposing to install a minimum of 54 electric vehicle (54) charging stations throughout regional Western Australia, to facilitate the decarbonisation of the transport network, in accordance with the Western Australian Climate Policy and Electric Vehicle Strategy. To facilitate a well-planned and distributed charging network, Horizon Power will need to install charging stations and associated infrastructure including Stand-alone Power Systems (SPS) in a number of Road Reserves. This referral application is for one location within the Pilbara region of Whim Creek that will require minor clearing of native vegetation to install the EV charging station and associated infrastructure.

The proposed work will involve clearing of vegetation, civil works, installation of cables, EV hardware, SPS and associated infrastructure. Areas may also need to be cleared to allow for the parking of vehicles. The total clearing footprint for the proposed works will not exceed 0.096 ha.

1.2 Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the proposed clearing of native vegetation for the EV charging station and SPS 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 Standard Construction Environmental Management Plan is also provided (Appendix D). This is a standard requirement of the Horizon Power Environmental Management System for projects clearing native vegetation where specific project approvals do not apply.

2. Description of the Activity

As discussed in Section 1, the work will involve the clearing of vegetation, civil works, installation of cables, EV hardware, poles and SPS associated infrastructure. Areas may also be required to be cleared to allow for the parking of vehicles. The proposed clearing will extend from Campbell Road, off North West Coastal Highway, Whim Creek. The total proposed clearing area will not exceed 0.096 ha.

Horizon Power have obtained permission from Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA) as the landowner for the clearing activities at the three locations, as well as access to the sites for installation (Appendix E). It is understood following discussions with DWER that the EV charging station is exempt from a clearing permit as a structure (Clearing Regulation 5 Item 1), however clearing for any associated infrastructure and parking is not exempt.

3. Description of Proposed Clearing

3.1 Extent of Proposed Clearing

The proposed clearing will occur within the Project Area (Figure 1; Table 1) which has a total clearing area of 0.096 ha in size.

3.2 Proposed Clearing Locations

Table 1 Whim Creek SPS and EV charger land parcel

Lot on Plan	Tenure	Volume	Folio	Area of clearing (ha)
Lot 81 on Deposited Plan 219327	Road Reserve	LR3119	596	0.0807
PIN 1389566	Road Reserve	N/A	N/A	0.0153

The proposed clearing locations will occur within the Project Area observed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Proposed Clearing Area.



Map

Figure 1 - Proposed Clearing Area

HORIZON
POWER



0 7.5 15 30
Meters

Scale: 1:700

3.3 Proposed Clearing Method

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

3.4 Avoidance, Mitigation and Management Measures

The site has been selected to locate in an area within and adjacent to existing disturbance while minimising disturbance to vegetation where possible. The proposed clearing area has been impacted by adjacent land use and edge effects. Utilising the existing road reserve 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 standardised processes and will be implemented in accordance with our Standard Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix B), which includes the following measures to minimise potential impacts.

- 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 demarcated prior to clearing activities.
- 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 March 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 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 0.096 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.

NOTE: Revised to 0.091 hectares during validation.

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)
Whim Creek, WA	Hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee <i>Triodia</i> spp. <i>Acacia</i> spp., <i>Grevillea</i> spp. <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp	State: WA	40,364.42	40,178.20	99.54	N/A
		IBRA Bioregion: Pilbara	40,364.42	40,178.20	99.54	N/A
		IBRA Subregion: Chichester	38,457.02	38,270.80	99.52	N/A
		LGA: City of Karratha	40,364.42	40,178.20	99.54	N/A

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 area is comprised of scattered and loosely-spaced hummock grassland consisting of <i>Triodia</i> spp., <i>Acacia</i> spp., scattered shrubs and associated species which commensurate with the mapped vegetation known to occur in Vegetation Associated 649. Vegetation is scattered and semi-sparse, showing evidence of minor degradation including possible weeds (Appendix B).</p> <p>The proposed clearing of 0.096 ha required for this scope of works is not considered likely to impact significant environmental values.</p>
Significant fauna and habitat	<p>Thirteen conservation significant fauna species were considered likely or possibly occurring within the vicinity of the proposed clearing (Appendix C).</p> <p>Significant impacts are not expected given the widespread availability of habitat in the region and poor condition of the vegetation to be cleared.</p>
Significant ecological linkage	<p>The proposed clearing 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. The vegetation to be cleared is unlikely to represent any ecological communities given the lack of species diversity.</p>
Significant flora	<p>No Threatened or Priority species were identified as likely to occur within the proposed clearing area. <i>Euploca mutica</i> and <i>Vigna triodiophila</i>, two Priority 3 taxon have been recorded approximately 2.3 km southeast of the proposed clearing area. <i>Euploca mutica</i> is a perennial herb which inhabits the flat plains with red silty sand, sandy loam or calcareous soils. Whereas <i>Vigna triodiophila</i> inhabits areas of rockpiles among boulders and shallow, red and brown sand or loam. Given the existing disturbance and poor quality of the proposed clearing area, this species is not considered likely to occur (Appendix B).</p> <p>The proposed clearing of 0.096 ha of native vegetation is not anticipated to impact significant flora or their habitat.</p>
Water resources	<p>The project area is located approximately 100 km east of the Karratha townsite, installation of the EV charger, SPS and associated infrastructure requires trenching of approximately 1.0 m below ground level, no groundwater impacts are expected from the proposed activities.</p> <p>Balla Balla Creek and Whim Creek are located approximately 400 m east and 1.5 km east, respectively. No disturbance to the creeks are expected from the proposed works associated with the clearing and construction of the EV charger and SPS. No Internationally (Ramsar) or nationally important wetlands are located within 20 km of the proposed clearing area.</p>
Conservation Reserve	<p>No conservation areas are present within 20 km of the proposed clearing. 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 no known 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 known Aboriginal heritage sites are within the proposed clearing areas. Lodged Aboriginal Heritage Site 35758 is located approximately 400 m east of the proposed clearing area, no impacts are expected to the lodged heritage area. Horizon Power has an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Policy and established internal processes to protect and mitigate the risk of impacting Aboriginal cultural heritage.</p> <p>There are no native title implications of the proposed works.</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 Pilbara bioregion and Chichester subregion; both have over 99% of Pre-European vegetation remaining. Hummock grassland with scattered shrubs or mallee *Triodia* spp. *Acacia* spp., *Grevillea* spp. *Eucalyptus* spp, has been identified as one of the most extensive vegetation type in Western Australia (Beard et al. 2013). Beard et al. (2013) described the vegetation type extending throughout 22.7 million hectares within WA and 11.4 million hectares within the Great Victoria Desert Bioregion. A further 900,000 hectares occurs within the Carnarvon, Murchison, Pilbara and Gascoyne Bioregions (Beard et al. 2013). In addition, 362 surveys of the Pilbara 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, Beeston, G.R, Judith, H., Hopkins, A. J. M 2013, The Vegetation of Western Australia at the 1:3,000,000 Scale. Explanatory Memoir. Second Edition. Conservation Science Western Australia. 9. 1-152.

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#q%3D*pilbara*%26queryText%3D*pilbara*%26max%3D30%26sort%3DdateCreatedSort , accessed February 2024

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)

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	Preferred habitat
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Migratory	Intertidal mudflats in sheltered coastal areas, including estuaries, bays, inlets and lagoons.
<i>Pezoporus occidentalis</i>	Night Parrot	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Endangered	Critically Endangered		Mature spinifex habitat in arid and semi-arid regions.
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	Eastern Curlew, Far Eastern Curlew	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Migratory	Intertidal mudflats and sandflats with beds of seagrass on estuaries, coasts, mangroves and lagoons.
<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	Grey Falcon	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable		Triodia grassland, Acacia shrubland and lightly timbered arid woodland.
<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Australian Painted Snipe	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Endangered	Endangered		Shallow terrestrial freshwater and brackish water wetlands, lakes, swamps and claypans.
<i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>	Red Goshawk	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Endangered	Vulnerable		Coastal and sub-coastal areas in woodland and forest of tropical and warm climates.
<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	Northern Quoll	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	Endangered	Endangered		Rocky areas with eucalypts, woodlands, forests, sandy lowlands, beaches and shrublands.
<i>Macrotis lagotis</i>	Greater Bilby	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable		Rocky soils with little ground cover and semi-arid shrublands and woodlands.
<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable		Migratory	Muddy edges of shallow fresh or brackish wetlands inclusive of inundated grass and low vegetation
<i>Liasis olivaceus barroni</i>	Pilbara Olive Python	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable		Escarments, gorges and waterholes and rocky areas.
<i>Macroderma gigas</i>	Ghost Bat	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable		Caves, old mine tunnels and in deep rocky crevices.
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	Greater Sand Plover, Large Sand Plover	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Migratory	Coastal and estuarine habitats, sheltered sandy or muddy beaches with intertidal mudflats.
<i>Rhinioncteris aurantia</i>	Pilbara Leaf-nosed Bat	Species or species habitat may occur within area	Vulnerable	Vulnerable		Low hilly locations, rocky outcrops, underground mine shafts, shallow gullies and gorges.

Appendix D: Standard Construction Environmental Management Plan



Appendix E: MRWA Application for Infrastructure in the Road Reserve

