

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form (redacted)

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Great Eastern Highway Improvements Walgoolan to Southern Cross (Package 6) – Improvements to Access to Maddocks Pit and Construction of Offshoot Drain (336.73 SLK)		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt		
Local Government:	Shire of Yilgarn		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	Great Eastern Highway (H005)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	Offshoot Drain (336.73 SLK), Maddocks Entrance (335.35) Appendix 1, Figure 1		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D24#1578806		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	D24#1579349		
EOS Number:	2058		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	December 2024		
Oracle Project No:	21115080	Task Code:	19301
LISC TRIM Number:	D24#1576347	HRA TRIM Number:	D24#1579252

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

Works are required to address drainage issues with a culvert on Great Eastern Highway (at SLK 336.73) which currently does not allow for the free flow of water away from the culvert outlet. The offshoot drain extends from the road table drain to a track to the north of the road at approximately 336.73 SLK.

Additionally, intersection access to Maddocks Pit poses a current safety hazard with only one way truck traffic capacity. Works are proposed to improve the intersection by allowing for two-way truck traffic.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The Proposal involves clearing of vegetation to allow for an offshoot drain to function and to improve safety at an existing intersection.

Clearing is limited to that necessary to achieve functional drainage and road safety at the intersection. Accordingly, there is limited scope to alter the clearing.

4. MEASURES TO AVOID, MINIMISE, MITIGATE AND MANAGE PROPOSAL CLEARING IMPACTS

The following alternatives to clearing were considered during the development of the Proposal:

- The width and length of the offshoot drain is just enough to allow for the effective discharge of collected stormwater away from the road, through a sand ridge into a lower lying area.
- The vegetation to be removed at the entrance to Maddocks Pit is the minimum required to make the intersection safe.
- Main Roads retains frangible vegetation where a clear zone is to be established for road projects. For this project, however, clearing will only be required to accommodate drainage works and access improvements, with no additional clear zone being established. Accordingly, the retention of frangible vegetation does not apply to this proposal.
- Reducing the speed limit to minimise clearing requirements, while still balancing safety (driver fatigue) and freight efficiency. Speed Limits are an essential mechanism to ensure the safe and efficient operation of road networks. The application of appropriate speed limits and other traffic management measures is a key mechanism in managing vehicle speeds to achieve desired safety, mobility, traffic management, local amenity, and road user expectations. There are several factors involved in road safety, including road conditions, driver behaviour and overall road design. Except in special situations, reducing speed limits below national standards on state and national roads is not typically supported as it has the potential to contribute to driver frustration, impatience, tiredness and recklessness. The environmental values protected by reducing the speed limit, do not justify the impacts on freight efficiencies nor road user safety. Given this proposal relates to drainage and

access, the reduction of the speed limits to avoid clearing of native vegetation for this proposal is not proposed.

5. APPROVED POLICES AND PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) and the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 (Clearing Regulations).

In addition to the matters considered in accordance with section 51O of the EP Act (see Section 1.3), Main Roads has also had regard to the following documents.

Environmental Protection Policies:

- Environmental Protection (Peel Inlet - Harvey Estuary) Policy 1992
- Environmental Protection (Western Swamp Tortoise Habitat) Policy 2011

Other legislation of relevance for assessment of clearing and planning/other matters:

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (WA) (BC Act)
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (WA) (CALM Act)
- *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* (WA) (CAWS Act)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act)
- *Planning and Development Act 2005* (WA) (P&D Act)
- *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* (WA)
- *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (WA) (RIWI Act)
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (WA) (AHA)
- *Town Planning and Development Act (WA) 1928*

Relevant other policies and guidance documents:

- Environmental Offsets Policy (Government of Western Australia, 2011)
- A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation (DEC, December 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, October 2019)
- Environmental Offsets Guidelines (Government of Western Australia, August 2014)
- Technical guidance – Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2016)
- Technical guidance – Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment (EPA, 2020)
- Approved conservation advice under section 266B of the EPBC Act for threatened flora/fauna/vegetation communities
- Approved Recovery Plans for threatened species
- EPBC Act Referral guidelines for the three threatened black cockatoo species
- Strategic advice - EPA

6. CLEARING AREA

Clearing Area (ha):	0.035 ha	No. Trees Cleared:	N/A
Species Name(s):	Vegetation Association 1413 – Moorine Rock, described as Wattle, <i>casuarina</i> and tea tree <i>acacia-allocauarina-melaleuca</i> alliance.		
Easting and Northing:	119.039281 , -31.320227		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Vegetation Association 1413 – Moorine Rock, described as Wattle, <i>casuarina</i> and tea tree <i>acacia-allocauarina-melaleuca</i> alliance.		
Site Vegetation Condition:	Degraded		
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	The below table displays the current extents of the remaining Vegetation for VA: 1413 on a Statewide and LGA level.		
	Scale	Current Extent (ha)	% Remaining
	Statewide	1,286,855	76.6
	LGA (Yilgarn)	395,458	73.4

8. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL AGAINST CLEARING PRINCIPLES

Is vegetation to be cleared at variance with:

Justification or Evidence:

Principle (a) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

One vegetation type occurs within the Clearing Area:

- Vegetation Association (VA) 1413: Moorine Rock.

VA 1413 retains more than the 30% threshold Statewide guideline value and the proposed minor clearing will not significantly impact vegetation remaining at a local or statewide level.

The vegetation proposed to be cleared is in Degraded condition.

The Clearing Area is not located within any mapped Threatened or Priority ecological communities (TEC/PEC) or buffer areas. Additionally, in accordance with Main Roads *Technical Guidance on the Threatened Ecological Community Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt* (2024), the species are contraindicators of the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian (WA) Wheatbelt TEC/PEC.

A desktop assessment was undertaken and according to the DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora and WA Herbarium databases, the closest Threatened and Priority flora records within 1km of the Clearing Area are:

Flora	Distance from Clearing area
<i>Acacia crenulata</i> (P3)	redacted
<i>Eucalyptus crucis</i> subsp. <i>crucis</i> (T)	redacted

The potential occurrence of conservation significant flora within the Clearing Area is considered unlikely due to the Degraded condition of vegetation due to prior and ongoing disturbance and edge effects.

According to DBCA Threatened and Priority fauna database, the closest records within 3km of the Clearing Area are:

Fauna	Distance from Clearing area
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Mallee Fowl) (VU) in 1999 (dead)	redacted
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Mallee Fowl) (VU) in 2006	redacted

Due to the location of the Clearing Areas on the roadside and within an intersection, and the Degraded condition of the vegetation, it is unlikely this species would rely on the Clearing Area to provide quality habitat.

There are no DBH trees within the Clearing Area. Expert advice received by Main Roads (Johnstone, 2020) advises that the Clearing Area no longer occurs within the distribution area for Carnaby's Cockatoo. Consequently, the proposed clearing will not impact on Carnaby's Cockatoo breeding, roosting or foraging habitat.

Based on the above, the Clearing Area is not considered to comprise a high level of biological diversity.

The proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.

Principle (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.

According to DBCA Threatened and Priority fauna database, the closest records within 3km of the Clearing Area are:

Fauna	Distance from Clearing area
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Mallee Fowl) (VU) in 1999 (dead)	redacted
<i>Leipoa ocellata</i> (Mallee Fowl) (VU) in 2006	redacted

Due to the location of the Clearing Areas on the roadside and within an intersection, and the Degraded condition of the vegetation, it is unlikely this species would rely on the Clearing Area to provide quality habitat.

	<p>There are no DBH trees within the Clearing Area. Expert advice received by Main Roads (Johnstone, 2020), advises that the Clearing Area no longer occurs within the distribution area for Carnaby's Cockatoo. Consequently, the proposed clearing will not impact on Carnaby's Cockatoo breeding, roosting or foraging habitat.</p> <p>The Clearing Areas were inspected on 11 December 2024, by Main Roads Environment Officers and no Mallee Fowl mounds were recorded within or in close proximity of the Clearing Area.</p> <p>The small quantity (0.035 ha) of native vegetation proposed to be cleared from the roadside and within an intersection is unlikely to comprise significant habitat for fauna.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.</p>						
<p>Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora.</p>	<p>According to DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora, and WA Herbarium GIS layers, the closest Threatened flora records within 5km of the Clearing Area are:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Flora</th><th>Distance from Clearing area</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Acacia crenulata</i> (P3)</td><td>redacted</td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Eucalyptus crucis</i> subsp. <i>crucis</i> (T)</td><td>redacted</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The potential occurrence of conservation significant flora within the Clearing Area is considered unlikely due to the Degraded condition of vegetation from previous and ongoing disturbance and edge effects.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.</p>	Flora	Distance from Clearing area	<i>Acacia crenulata</i> (P3)	redacted	<i>Eucalyptus crucis</i> subsp. <i>crucis</i> (T)	redacted
Flora	Distance from Clearing area						
<i>Acacia crenulata</i> (P3)	redacted						
<i>Eucalyptus crucis</i> subsp. <i>crucis</i> (T)	redacted						
<p>Principle (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.</p>	<p>The Clearing Area is not located within any mapped TEC/PECs or buffer areas. Additionally, in accordance with Main Roads <i>Technical Guidance on the Threatened Ecological Community Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt</i> (2024), the species are contraindicators of the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian (WA) Wheatbelt TEC/PEC.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>						
<p>Principle (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.</p>	<p>One vegetation association of Beard (1976) has been mapped over the Clearing Area, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation Association 1413 described Wattle, <i>casuarina</i> and tea tree <i>acacia-allocauarina-melaleuca</i> alliance. <p>The pre-European extent remaining of this Vegetation Association is 1,286,855 ha (76.6%) at a Statewide level with 395,458 ha (73.41%) at a LGA (Yilgarn) level.</p> <p>VA 1413 retains more than the 30% threshold Statewide guideline value. The small amount of clearing proposed of vegetation in Degraded condition will not significantly impact the availability of this vegetation association on a local or regional scale.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>						
<p>Principle (f) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.</p>	<p>According to Surface_Hydrolines_Regional layer, no mapped watercourses or wetlands intersect the Clearing Area, with the closest mapped watercourse being more than 3km away.</p> <p>The vegetation in the Clearing Area is not growing in or in association with a watercourse or wetland.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>						
<p>Principle (g) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.</p>	<p>DPIRD mapping indicates that the Clearing Area has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0% of map unit has a very high to extreme water erosion hazard, 5-12% of map unit has a high to extreme wind erosion hazard, 0% of map unit has very poor to poor site drainage potential, and 0-13% of map unit has a moderate salinity hazard. 						

	<p>The CSIRO ASRIS Acid Sulphate Soils layer indicates that the area is classified as <i>"Extremely Low Probability of Occurrence"</i>.</p> <p>The proposed small amount of clearing of 0.035 ha in Degraded condition from the roadside and within an existing intersection, is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle</p>
Principle (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.	<p>According to DBCA Lands and Waters layer, no Nature Reserves, Conservation Areas or Bush Forever Areas are located within or adjacent to the Clearing Area. The closest DBCA reserve is located more than 2 km from the Clearing Area and no mapped Bush Forever sites occur within 2 km of the Clearing Area.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
Principle (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.	<p>The Proposal Area is not located within any Public Drinking Water Source Area, surface water area proclaimed under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 (RIWI Act) or catchment proclaimed under the Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947 (CAWS Act). It is located in a groundwater area proclaimed under the RIWI Act, however as the Proposal will not significantly alter natural drainage or surface runoff patterns, impacts on groundwater are unlikely.</p> <p>According to Surface_Hydrolines_Regional layer, no mapped watercourses intersect the Clearing Area, with the closest mapped watercourse more than 3km away.</p> <p>Clearing is proposed to be undertaken during low or no flow conditions.</p> <p>The proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or groundwater.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
Principle (j) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.	<p>DPIRD mapping indicates that the Clearing Area has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0% of the map unit has a moderate to high flood hazard, and • 0% of map unit has a moderate to very high waterlogging and inundation risk. <p>A review of ArcGIS shapefiles has confirmed that the proposed clearing will not disturb or interrupt any natural drainage and surface run-off patterns.</p> <p>Clearing of 0.035 ha of native vegetation in Degraded condition from the roadside and within an existing intersection, is unlikely to cause or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding in this area.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
Methodology Used and References:	<p>DPIRD mapping (https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/)</p> <p>Johnstone, Ron (2020) – advice to Main Roads contained in email (D20#801347).</p> <p>Main Roads GIS Shapefiles</p> <p>Main Roads Site Observations (11 December 2024)</p> <p>Photographs of the vegetation: Appendix 1 (Figures 2 and 3)</p>

9. REHABILITATION, REVEGETATION AND OFFSETS

Offset Proposal:	No offset proposal is required as the proposed clearing will not result in a significant residual impact on native vegetation within the region.
Revegetation and Rehabilitation:	No temporary clearing will be undertaken as part of the Proposal activities.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH CPS818

The clearing associated with the Proposal is not at, or not likely to be at variance with the Clearing Principles. Additional management actions under CPS 818 are detailed below.

Impact of Clearing	Yes/No or NA	Further Action Required
1. Proposal is within a Region that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has rainfall greater than 400mm; and, is South of the 26th parallel; and, works are necessary in 'Other than dry conditions'; and, works have potential for uninfested areas to be impacted. 	No	Standard Vehicle and Plant Management Actions from Annexure 204B (TABLE 204B.9.1), Hygiene Checklists (D17#859669) and Vehicle, Plant and Machinery Hygiene Vehicle Register Template (D23#179551) will be applied.
2. Do the proposed works require clearing within or adjacent to DBCA managed lands in non-dry conditions?	No	No further action required.
3. Main Roads has been notified by DWER or an environmental specialist that the area to be cleared is susceptible to a pathogen other than dieback.	No	No further action required.
4. Weeds are likely to spread to and result in environmental harm to adjacent areas of native vegetation that are in good or better condition.	NA	No further action required.
Completed By:		
Name	redacted	
Signature	redacted	
Job Title	Senior Environmental Officer	
Date	16 December 2024 and 29 January 2025	

Once all sections are completed, send the form to CRSP for review and endorsement.

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT	
Name	redacted
Signature	redacted
Job Title	Senior Environment Officer
Date	19/12/2024 and 29/01/2025

Appendix 1

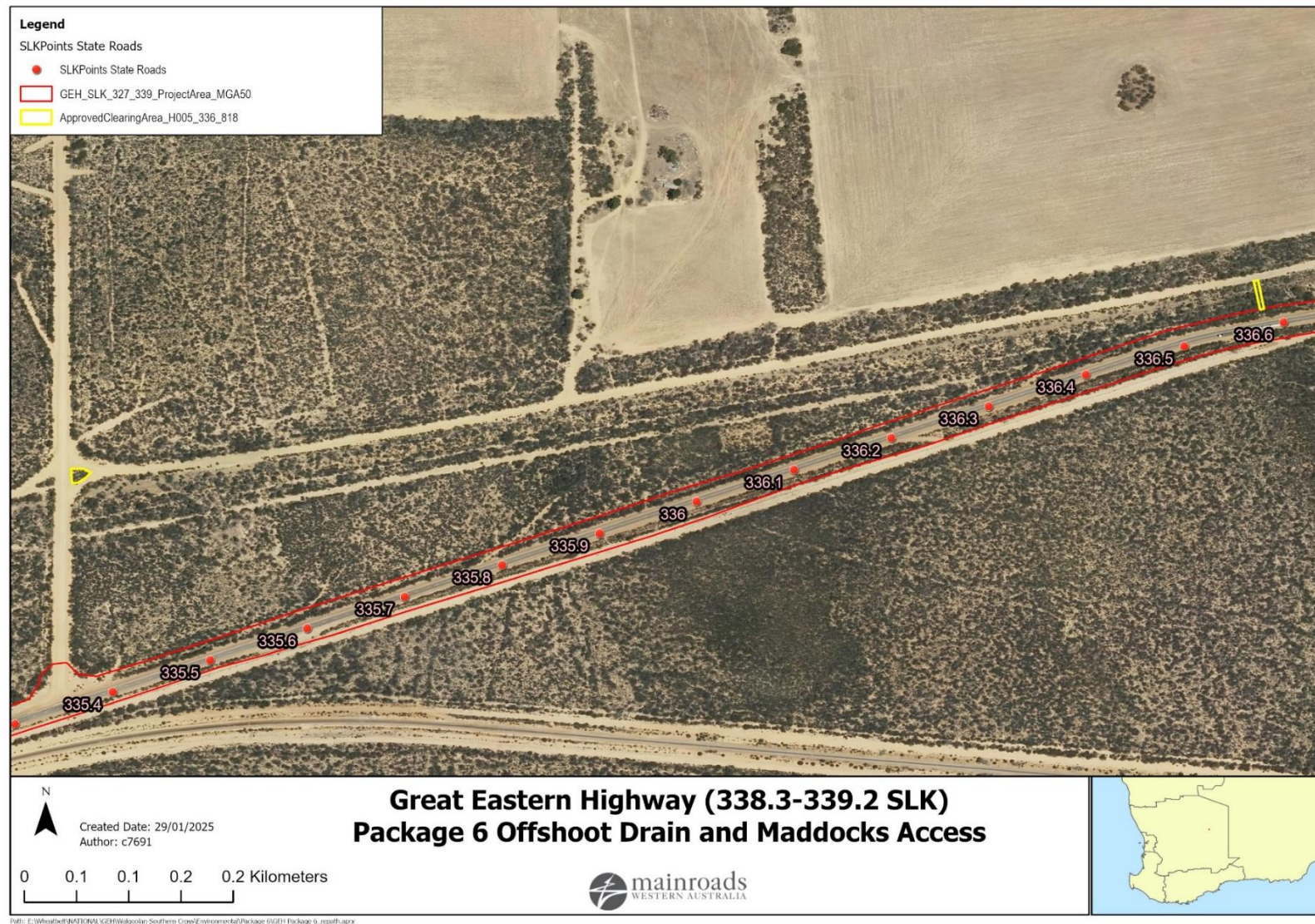


Figure 1: Proposal Area



Figure 2: Vegetation proposed to be cleared for Offshoot Drain



Figure 3: Vegetation proposed to be cleared to improve access to Maddocks Pit