

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form



1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	T6/7 Widening - M031 – Northam Cranbrook – SLK 67.59 – 82.37		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt		
Local Government Authority:	Shire of Beverley		
Road/Bridge Name and No:	Northam Cranbrook (M031)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	72.89 SLK LHS		
TRIM Link to Spatial Data:	D23#182920		
EOS Number:	2944		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	July 2023		
Project No:	30000432	Task No:	19114

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

The Region proposes to undertake a shoulder sealing programme along M031 to improve safety and reduce run off road crashes.

The proposed works involve widening the seal to 8.6-9m, which equates to a 0.5-1.2m extension to the seal on each side of the road, depending on the section of road.

Two trees (with a total canopy area of 0.028 ha) are proposed to be removed as part of shoulder sealing works, as they are located too close to the proposed new seal. It is proposed to manage this clearing under CPS818.

Affected trees:

Tree No.	SLK	Description of tree and surrounding vegetation
1	72.89 LHS	Remove tree – Wandoo. 12m high, 47cm DBH, no observable hollows, no scars. Completely Degraded. No signs of fauna.
2	72.89 LHS	Remove tree – Wandoo. 12m high, 94cm DBH, no observable hollows, no scars. Completely Degraded. No signs of fauna.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

As this Proposal is for the removal of two trees within one metre of the edge of the new seal, and would pose a safety issue if left uncleared, then there is limited scope to alter the clearing. Only two trees are proposed to be cleared in a Completely Degraded condition.

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

There are limited measures to avoid, mitigate clearing impacts, being the removal of two trees next to each other due to the safety risk to road users and the location of the trees.

The trees will be removed progressively by hand using an EWP, reducing the potential for impact on surrounding vegetation that would normally be impacted when using other felling techniques. The trees will be mulched with chip being used as mulch on adjacent land if there is no native understorey vegetation in the proposed mulching spread area. Otherwise, the chipped mulch will be removed offsite. Where possible/required, wood/branches/chip from the trees (Wandoo) will be collected and used in artificial Cockatoo hollow manufacture.

5. APPROVED POLICES AND PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act* (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):	0.028 (canopy)	No. Trees Cleared:	2
Species Names:	Wandoo		
Easting and Northing:	-32.160607 116.945983		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Vegetation Association 352 described as Medium woodland; York gum
Site Vegetation Condition:	Completely Degraded

Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	142,012 ha (19.61%) remains at a Statewide level with 3,972 ha (9.58%) remaining at a LGA level
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.	It is proposed to clear two trees (Wandoo) located on the edge of the maintenance zone, with no understorey and considered to be in Completely Degraded condition. A desktop assessment was undertaken and according to DBCA GIS Herbarium layer, the closest Threatened and Priority flora records were: • <i>Eremophila</i> sp. Beverley (P1), <i>Cryptandra beverleyensis</i> (P3) – 1.9 km north west • <i>Anigozanthos bicolor</i> subsp. <i>exstans</i> (P3) – 3.8 km south east A survey conducted by Ecoscape (2022) on the greater Northam Cranbrook Road between SLK 57-99 SLK identified no threatened or priority flora within 1.9 km of the Proposal area. The removal of the two trees will not significantly impact (directly or indirectly) on rare or priority flora. According to DBCA TEC/PEC GIS layer, the Proposal area is not located in a mapped PEC/TEC. The closest mapped patch of TEC/PEC is 1.15 km from the Proposal area. A search of Main Roads GIS shapefiles layers indicates that the closest nature reserve, conservation areas or Bush Forever Site is an un-named Nature Reserve (R16584/C Class), located more than 5.3 km south of the Proposal area. The removal of the two trees will not directly or indirectly impact on this nature reserve. The Proposal area is not located within an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) with the closest ESA (Perched wetlands of the Wheatbelt region TEC) located 1.14 km to the southwest of the Proposal area. The removal of the two trees will not directly or indirectly impact this ESA. Although both trees have a DBH over 30cm, the trees do not contain hollows and are considered to provide only low value foraging habitat for Black Cockatoos with no evidence to support foraging use. Based on the above, the Proposal area has limited biodiversity value and 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 indigenous to Western Australia.	According to DBCA GIS Threatened Fauna layer, the closest records to the Proposal area were: • <i>Bettongia lesueur graii</i> (Boodie) (EX) and <i>Amytornis textilis textilis</i> (Western grasswren) (P4) – 5 km north west • <i>Calyptorhynchus</i> sp. (White-tailed Black Cockatoo) EN was recorded 7.9 km south east of the Proposal area. The Proposal area is also located within the mapped range of Carnaby's Cockatoo and in an area of low value foraging habitat (Ecoscape 2022). According to the DBCA GIS layer, two records exist (from 1966 and 1978) for a <i>Calyptorhynchus</i> sp. (White-tailed Black Cockatoo) within the 10km study area. No individuals were recorded utilising habitat during Ecoscapes' survey and during a Main Roads site inspection on 1 February 2023, and no hollows, foraging debris or night roosting evidence was recorded.

	Removal of the two trees is highly unlikely to be significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.	The desktop assessment and biological survey of the greater Northam Cranbrook Road (Ecoscape, 2022) did not record or identify any threatened or rare flora within 4 km of the proposal. The removal of the two trees will not significantly impact (directly or indirectly) rare flora. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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.	According to the DBCA TEC/PEC GIS layer, the Proposal area is not located in a mapped PEC/TEC with the closest mapped patch of Threatened Ecological Community (TEC)/Priority Ecological Community (PEC) 1.15 km from the Proposal area. The trees are in a Completely Degraded condition with a predominantly weed understory and do not meet the classification requirements for TEC when using the Main Roads Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC Factsheet (D19#584174). Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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.	One vegetation association of Beard (1976) has been mapped over the Proposal area, namely: Vegetation Association 352 described as a Medium woodland; York gum. The pre-European extent remaining of this Vegetation Association is 142,012 ha (19.61%) remaining at a Statewide level with 3,972 ha (9.58%) remaining at a LGA level. The removal of two isolated trees (with a canopy of approximately 0.028 ha) in a Completely Degraded condition on the edge of the maintenance zone, equates to 0.0007% of this vegetation association at a LGA level, and is not to vegetation that is significant as a remnant. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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.	Wandoo is not representative of riparian vegetation. The closest mapped waterway is approximately 1.2 km east of the Proposal area. The two trees to be removed are not considered to be growing in association with a watercourse or wetland. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Principle (g) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.	DPIRD mapping indicates that the area has: • 6% very high to extreme water erosion hazard • 25% high to extreme wind erosion hazard • 18% very poor to poor site drainage potential • 18% moderate salinity hazard The Australian Soil Resource Information System (ASRIS) has been used to determine the likelihood of Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) occurring within the Proposal area. The ASRIS database (accessed 08-Mar-2023) indicates there is a low probability of occurrence within the Proposal area. The removal of two trees in a Completely Degraded condition will not cause appreciable land degradation, especially as the majority of the land where the vegetation is located is covered with road infrastructure and agricultural pursuits. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.

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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.	A search of Main Roads GIS shapefiles layers indicates that the closest nature reserve, conservation areas or Bush Forever Site is an un-named Nature Reserve (R16584/C Class), located more than 5.3 km south of the Proposal area. As works will be primarily constrained to the edge of the maintenance zone at 72.89 SLK, therefore no impacts to these areas are anticipated. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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.	The Proposal area is not located within 100m of the following areas: • Public Drinking Water Source Area; • groundwater 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); or • wetlands or watercourses. Further, as the work is limited to the removal of two trees, no groundwater will be intersected and works will not require dewatering. No change to surface or groundwater level or quality will occur as a result of these works. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Principle (j) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.	The removal of two trees in Completely Degraded condition is unlikely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. DPIRD mapping indicates that the area has: • 86% moderate to high flood hazard, • 86% moderate to very high waterlogging and inundation risk. A review of ArcGIS shapefiles has confirmed that the proposed works will not disturb or interrupt any natural drainage and surface run-off patterns. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Methodology Used and References:	Proposal Area (Appendix 1) Contextual photographs of Proposal area (Appendix 1) Australian Soil Resource Information System (ASRIS) Mapping (http://www.asris.csiro.au/mapping/viewer.htm) DPIRD mapping (https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/) Main Roads GIS Shapefiles Ecoscape (2022) M031 Northam-Cranbrook Road Widening SLK 57 -99 Biological Survey (D22#1051365)
Completed By:	
Name	Redacted
Signature	Redacted
Job Title	Senior Environment Officer
Date	09-Mar-2023

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT		
Clearing Assessment	ENDORSED ☒	REFUSED ☐
Comments	I endorse the recommendation that the removal of two wandoo trees is not at variance with the 10 clearing principals	
Name	Redacted	

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Signature	Redacted
Job Title	Principal Environment Officer
Date	09/03/2023

Appendix 1: Photographs and Figures



Tree 1 (middle) and 2 (right) 72.89 SLK



Tree 1 72.89 SLK



Tree 2 72.89 SLK

