

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form



1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Great Eastern Hwy Karalee and Boondi upgrades		
Region/Directorate:	Goldfields Esperance Region		
Local Government:	Shire of Yilgarn / Shire of Coolgardie		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	Great Eastern Highway (H005)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	SLK 399.2 to SLK 435.35		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D24#1267965		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	D24#1269332		
EOS Number:	3519		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	01 Nov 24		
Oracle Project No:	21116565	Task Code:	19202
LISC TRIM Number:	D24#1265282	HRA TRIM Number:	D24#1265281

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

Main Roads Western Australia is currently planning to undertake road improvement projects along Great Eastern Highway (H005). In order to facilitate these projects Western Power power poles located adjacent to the existing highway are required to be relocated further from the road. A small amount of native vegetation clearing is required as a result of the pole relocation.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

Not relocating the poles would result in future road improvement projects not being undertaken which will result in continued deterioration of the road pavement and narrow sealed width which poses a risk to the safety of the public using the road. The clearing of native vegetation has been kept to a minimum with poles relocated ~4.4m from their existing location.

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

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

- Clearing will be kept to the minimum amount required to relocate the power poles.
- 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 the road formation, with no 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. Accordingly, 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):	0.0075 ha	No. Trees Cleared:	NIL
Species Name(s):	<i>Allocasuarina</i> and <i>Acacia</i> shrubland		
Easting and Northing:	119.8497921 °E / 32.2780337 °S		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	<i>Allocasuarina campestris</i> tall shrubland over <i>Melaleuca cordata</i> , <i>Grevillea excelsior</i> and <i>Verticordia picta</i> shrubland over <i>Triodia rigidissima</i> , <i>Chrysitrix distigmata</i> , <i>Lepidosperma sanguinolentum</i> hummock grassland/sedgeland
Site Vegetation Condition:	Good to Excellent - as mapped by Ecologica (2021 & 2024)
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	80-100%

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.	A desktop review of ArcGIS databases indicates that there are no known Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or Priority Ecological Communities (PECs) within, or in close proximity to the proposed clearing area. The area is mapped as pre-European vegetation associations 141 and 214 which are both common and widespread locally and regionally.

	A review of the DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora GIS dataset identified 35 Threatened and Priority flora species within 40km of the proposal area, none of which are located within the proposed clearing area. Likewise, no species of conservation significance were identified within the proposed clearing area during biological survey by Botanica (2021 and 2024). A review of the DBCA Threatened and Priority Fauna GIS dataset identified 12 Threatened and Priority fauna species that have been identified within 40km of the proposed clearing area. Only one sighting is located within 12 km of the proposed clearing being a Malleefowl record (1995). Whilst there is potential for the presence of significant fauna species within the surrounding areas the small size of proposed clearing (0.0075 ha) adjacent to the existing road network will not have any impact on these species given the proposed clearing does not provide any suitable habitat for conservations significant species. Analysis of aerial imagery indicates the proposed clearing area is located directly adjacent to the existing road network and maintenance zone. The proposed clearing area contains no important biodiversity features such as watercourses and the flora and fauna species diversity is not expected to be high given the survey observations and small size of the proposed clearing area (0.0075 ha). Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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.	A desktop review of DBCA Threatened and Priority Fauna indicates it is possible that Malleefowl may occur within the area, with the nearest record being ~1 km from the proposed clearing area. This species will not be impacted by the proposed clearing based on the minor clearing of roadside vegetation. Whilst there is a possibility of Threatened fauna occurring within the surrounding area, the habitat and vegetation within the Proposed Clearing area is common and broadly available beyond the proposal area. Noting the minimal extent of clearing of vegetation that is directly adjacent to the existing road network and no recorded observations of species during the survey, the proposed clearing is therefore not considered to comprise the whole, or part of or be an area that is necessary for the maintenance of a significant habitat or fauna indigenous to Western Australia. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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, threatened flora.	A desktop review of DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora and WA Herbarium GIS datasets indicates that there are no Threatened flora species recorded within 5 km of the proposed clearing area. Biological surveys by Botanica (2024 and 2021) did not identify any Threatened flora species and none were considered likely to occur. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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	A review of the DBCA Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (TEC/PEC) GIS dataset (DBCA-038) indicates that the native vegetation proposed to be cleared is not located within, or in proximity of a mapped TEC/PEC.

necessary for the maintenance of, a threatened ecological community.	Likewise biological surveys by Botanica (2021, 2024) did not consider the identified vegetation type to constitute a PEC/TEC. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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.	The proposed clearing area is mapped as pre-European vegetation associations 141 and 214 (DPIRD=006). Both of these associations have greater than 80% of pre-European extent remaining across all scales. Noting the minimal extent of clearing (0.0075 ha) directly adjacent to the existing road network, the vegetation proposed to be cleared does not represent a significant remnant of native vegetation in an extensively cleared landscape. Pre-European Vegetation Representation <table><tr><th>Pre-European Vegetation Association</th><th>Scale</th><th>Pre-European (ha)</th><th>Current Extent (ha)</th><th>% Remaining</th><th>% Remaining in DBCA reserves</th></tr><tr><td rowspan="4">Veg Assoc No. 141</td><td>Statewide</td><td>1,158,760.28</td><td>960,755.60</td><td>82.91</td><td>35.24</td></tr><tr><td>IBRA Bioregion <i>Coolgardie</i></td><td>883,085.75</td><td>858,525.10</td><td>97.22</td><td>46.08</td></tr><tr><td>IBRA Sub-region <i>Southern Cross</i></td><td>883,085.75</td><td>858,525.10</td><td>97.22</td><td>46.08</td></tr><tr><td>Local Government Authority <i>Shire of Yilgarn</i></td><td>711,450.38</td><td>690,599.08</td><td>97.07</td><td>39.76</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="4">Veg Assoc No. 214</td><td>Statewide</td><td>505,487.06</td><td>505,487.06</td><td>100.00</td><td>0.97</td></tr><tr><td>IBRA Bioregion <i>Coolgardie</i></td><td>16,584.59</td><td>16,584.59</td><td>100.00</td><td>29.50</td></tr><tr><td>IBRA Sub-region <i>Southern Cross</i></td><td>15,692.86</td><td>15,692.86</td><td>100.00</td><td>31.17</td></tr><tr><td>Local Government Authority <i>Shire of Coolgardie</i></td><td>15,571.47</td><td>15,571.47</td><td>100.00</td><td>31.42</td></tr></table> Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation clearing is not at variance to this Principle.	Pre-European Vegetation Association	Scale	Pre-European (ha)	Current Extent (ha)	% Remaining	% Remaining in DBCA reserves	Veg Assoc No. 141	Statewide	1,158,760.28	960,755.60	82.91	35.24	IBRA Bioregion <i>Coolgardie</i>	883,085.75	858,525.10	97.22	46.08	IBRA Sub-region <i>Southern Cross</i>	883,085.75	858,525.10	97.22	46.08	Local Government Authority <i>Shire of Yilgarn</i>	711,450.38	690,599.08	97.07	39.76	Veg Assoc No. 214	Statewide	505,487.06	505,487.06	100.00	0.97	IBRA Bioregion <i>Coolgardie</i>	16,584.59	16,584.59	100.00	29.50	IBRA Sub-region <i>Southern Cross</i>	15,692.86	15,692.86	100.00	31.17	Local Government Authority <i>Shire of Coolgardie</i>	15,571.47	15,571.47	100.00	31.42
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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.	A desktop review of ArcGIS databases indicates there are no mapped watercourses or wetlands within the proposed clearing area. The vegetation to be cleared is not growing in, or near to an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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 proposed clearing area displays: • No water erosion hazard; • No wind erosion hazard; • No restrictions on site drainage potential; • No salinity hazard; and																																																

	No acid sulphate soil hazard. The removal of up to 0.0075 ha of native vegetation will no cause appreciable land degradation in areas directly adjacent to the existing road network. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
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 review of DBCA GIS datasets indicates that the proposal area is adjacent to the Boorabbin National Park and the Yellowdine Nature Reserve. All proposed clearing is located within the Road Reserve and will not have any impact on the identified reserves. One of the proposed locations is within a mapped Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), being a "Register of National Estate". The small amount of clearing (0.0075 ha) directly adjacent to the existing road network and maintenance zone will not impact on the values of the ESA which is ~50,000 ha in size. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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.	A review of ArcGIS database indicates there are no mapped watercourses or wetlands within or adjacent to the proposed clearing area. The proposed clearing area is not within a Proclaimed Surface Water Area or Public Drinking Water Source Area. Whilst the proposed clearing area is located within a Proclaimed Groundwater Area (Goldfields Groundwater Area), the minimal clearing proposed will not alter natural drainage patterns or cause deterioration in the quality of surface or groundwater. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation 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 0.0075ha of native vegetation adjacent to the existing road network is unlikely to cause or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. The function of existing road network drainage structures will not be impacted by the proposed clearing and natural drainage patterns will not be altered. DPIRD mapping indicates that the area has: - No flood hazard; and - No waterlogging and inundation risk. Based on the above, the proposed native vegetation clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Methodology Used and References:	Biological Surveys: - Botanica Consulting (2024) Great Eastern Highway – Boondi and Benari Sections (SLK 4362-491.2 & 491.2-511.5) Biological Survey. Unpublished report prepared for Main Roads Western Australia. - Botanica Consulting (2021) Memorandum: Great Eastern Highway Ghooli, Karalee & Quardanoologin Flora/Fauna Assessment. Unpublished report prepared for Main Roads Western Australia. Shapefile of clearing area/trees: <insert TRIM Ref>

9. REHABILITATION, REVEGETATION AND OFFSETS

Offset Proposal:	No offset proposal is required as the proposed clearing will not result in significant residual impacts to 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 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: - 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), <u>Hygiene Checklists</u> , <u>Vehicle, Plant and Machinery Hygiene Vehicle Register Template</u> 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.	No	No further action required.

Completed By:

Name	[REDACTED]
Signature	[REDACTED]
Job Title	Environment Officer
Date	09/10/2024

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT

Name	[REDACTED]
Signature	[REDACTED]
Job Title	Senior Environment Officer

Date	14/10/2024
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