

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form



1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Shoulder widening to accommodate wind turbine transportation		
Region/Directorate:	Goldfields-Esperance Region		
Local Government:	Shire of Laverton		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	Laverton-Leonora Road (M022)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	SLK 104.55 and SLK 123.15		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D25#27498		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	D25#27538		
EOS Number:	3581		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	13 th January 2025		
Oracle Project No:	21108314	Task Code:	413.01
LISC TRIM Number:	D25#19378	HRA TRIM Number:	D25#19390

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

Widening of the existing road shoulder at the intersection of the Laverton-Leonora Road and the Laverton Bypass Road is proposed to assist in accommodating the safe transportation of wind turbine blades.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

There are no feasible alternatives to clearing as the works proposed are associated with the widening of existing roads to support the safe transportation of wind turbines. Minor widening of existing roads significantly reduces the amount of clearing that would otherwise be necessary if new roads were proposed for construction to cater for the transportation of the wind turbine blades.

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

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

- 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. Given this proposal relates to shoulder widening to allow for the safe transportation of wind turbine blades, 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):	0.05	No. Trees Cleared:	0
Species Name(s):	Native grasses and weeds		
Easting and Northing:	122.3952471 °E 28.6239558 °S		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Vegetation Association 18: Low woodland; mulga (<i>Acacia aneura</i>) Vegetation present within the proposal area consists of native grasses and introduced weeds.
Site Vegetation Condition:	Degraded – Completely Degraded
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	>99%

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) 18: Low woodland; mulga (<i>Acacia aneura</i>). VA18 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 to Completely Degraded Condition. The Clearing Area is not located within any mapped Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or Priority Ecological Communities (PECs) or buffer areas. A desktop assessment was undertaken and according to the DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora and Fauna and WA Herbarium databases, no DBCA listed conservation significant flora or fauna were identified within the Clearing Area. 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. Due to the location of the Clearing Areas on the roadside of intersections, and the Degraded condition of the vegetation consisting of only low grasses and weeds, it is unlikely that any conservation significant fauna species would rely on the Clearing Area to provide quality habitat. Based on the above, the Clearing Area does not comprise a high level of biological diversity. Based on the above, 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, no conservation significant fauna were identified within the Clearing Area. The small quantity (0.05 ha) of Degraded vegetation consisting of grasses and weeds proposed to be cleared directly adjacent to the existing roadway is unlikely to comprise significant habitat for fauna. 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, threatened flora.	A search of DBCA Threatened Flora and WA Herbarium databases did not identify the presence of any Threatened flora within or surrounding the proposal area. 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.	A search of the DBCA Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (TEC/PEC) GIS dataset indicates that the Clearing Area is not located within any mapped TEC/PECs or buffer areas. 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.	The proposed clearing areas is mapped as pre-European VA 18. This association has greater than 99% pre-European extent remaining at all levels. 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></td><td>Statewide</td><td>19,892,306.46</td><td>19,843,148.07</td><td>99.75</td><td>6.62</td></tr></table>	Pre-European Vegetation Association	Scale	Pre-European (ha)	Current Extent (ha)	% Remaining	% Remaining in DBCA reserves		Statewide	19,892,306.46	19,843,148.07	99.75	6.62
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	Statewide	19,892,306.46	19,843,148.07	99.75	6.62								

	Veg Assoc No. 18	IBRA Bioregion <i>Murchison</i>	12,403,172.30	12,363,252.47	99.68	4.96
		IBRA Sub-region <i>Eastern Murchison</i>	10,269,896.44	10,234,838.22	99.66	5.12
		Local Government Authority <i>Shire of Laverton</i>	2,878,673.28	2,867,359.23	99.61	6.47
	VA 18 retains more than the 30% threshold Statewide guideline value. The small amount of clearing proposed (0.05 ha) of grasses in Degraded condition will not significantly impact the availability of this vegetation association on a local or regional scale. 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.	A review of ArcGIS databases indicates there are no mapped watercourses or wetlands within the proposed Clearing Area. The vegetation proposed to be cleared is not growing in, or in association with an environment associated with a wetland or watercourse. 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 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 proposed small amount of clearing of up to 0.05 ha of native vegetation in Degraded condition from the roadside, will not cause appreciable land degradation. Based on the above, the proposed 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.	According to DBCA Lands and Waters layer, the proposed Clearing Area is not located within or adjacent to DBCA managed Lands or Lands of Interest. 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.	A review of ArcGIS databases indicates there are no mapped watercourses or wetlands within or adjacent to the proposed Clearing Area. The proposed Clearing Area is not located within a Proclaimed Surface Water Area, Proclaimed Groundwater Area or Public Drinking Water Source 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 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.	DPIRD mapping indicates that the proposed Clearing Area displays: • no water erosion hazard; and • no restrictions on site drainage potential. No natural drainage patterns will be altered by the proposed clearing. The removal of 0.05ha of native vegetation in Degraded condition from adjacent to the existing road network is unlikely to cause or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.
Methodology Used and References:	Main Roads GIS databases Aerial Imagery (Landgate) DPIRD mapping (https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/)

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, 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.

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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	13/01/2025	

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	14/01/2025