Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	M031 Driveway 6064 Sightline clearing		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt Region		
Local Government Authority:	Shire of York		
Road/Bridge Name and No:	Northam Cranbrook Road (M031)		
Proposal Location (SLK):	50.16 SLK		
TRIM Link to Spatial Data:	D22#125517		
EOS No:	2627		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	After approval - ASAP		
Project No:	21114026	**Task Code:**	741.16
LISC TRIM No:	D22#123576	**HRA TRIM No:**	D22#125319

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

Removal of one tree for sightline improvements and to allow safe access at driveway 6064 on to Northam Cranbrook Road.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

No alternatives have been considered as the Proposal relates to the removal of one individual tree that is currently causing a disrupted line of sight when accessing Northam Cranbrook Road from driveway 6046.

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

It is difficult to adopt measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate clearing impacts for this Proposal as the works require the removal of one individual tree only for safety reasons. Pruning of the tree could be considered but this does not alleviate the sightline issues as it is the trunk of the tree that is obstructing visibility.

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):	0.001	**No. Trees Cleared:**	One
Species Name:	*Eucalyptus loxophleba* (York Gum)		
Easting and Northing:	-32.0124457, 116.8020509 (shapefile of Proposal location at D22#125517).		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION	
Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Beard's vegetation mapping indicates the Proposal area occurs within the pre-European Vegetation Association 352, described as *Medium woodland; York gum*. The vegetation unit at the Proposal area site is described as *Eucalyptus loxophleba* subsp. *loxophleba* mid woodland over *Acacia acuminata* tall open shrubland over *Neurachne alopecuroidea*, **Avena Barbara* and **Ehrharta longiflora* low grassland (Ecoscape, 2020). The individual tree to be removed is a single *Eucalyptus loxophleba* (York Gum) with a degraded grassy understorey. The tree occurs on the edge of the roadside drainage culvert.
Site Vegetation Condition:	The condition is described as degraded. The individual tree to be removed is located approximately 2 m from the edge of seal on Northam Cranbrook Road.
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	Western Australia: 19.61% IBRA biogeographic region (Avon Wheatbelt): 17.27% IBRA biogeographic sub-region (Katanning): 10.74% LGA (Shire of York): 9.54%

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.	The Proposal is not at variance with this Principle. The Proposal requires the removal of one individual tree (*E. loxophleba*) from the roadside. The tree occurs in a degraded area with no understorey

	present except grassy weeds. No surrounding vegetation will be impacted as the works will be undertaken using an elevated work platform, truck and chipper, only. The 2021 biological survey undertaken by Ecoscape did not record any significant flora species in the vicinity of the Proposal. The nearest significant flora record to the Proposal is *Eremophila glabra subsp. York* (Priority 1) and is situated approximately 6.5 kms from the proposed tree removal. Similarly, Ecoscape did not record any significant fauna species near the vicinity of the Proposal area, during this survey. The 0.001 ha to be cleared (one tree), with a lack of understorey present, is unlikely to comprise significant habitat for any fauna species. Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed single tree removal does not represent an area with a high level of biological diversity and is not considered to be at variance with 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.	The Proposal is not likely to be at variance with this Principle. The Proposal area is located within the mapped fauna habitat area 'York Gum woodland' (Ecoscape, 2021) which describes this area as: *'Dominate woodland generally disturbed and in poor fauna habitat quality. The habitat type provides habitat for the locally common suite of fauna species and connectivity to better quality vegetation.'* The 2021 biological survey undertaken by Ecoscape did not record any fauna species in the vicinity of the Proposal as the survey area possesses limited habitat values for the threatened and priority fauna species identified through the desktop assessment. The nearest Threatened fauna record to the Proposal is *Hydromys chrysogaster* (Water Rat) situated approximately 2.5 kms away. The tree for removal has a DBH of 158 mm with no hollows present. The nearest Black Cockatoo record is *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* (Carnaby's Cockatoo) located approximately 6.7 kms from the Proposal area. Ecoscape (2021) determined the breeding and foraging habitat within the 2021 survey area (which covers the Proposal area) was of poor to moderate quality due to the evidence of frequent fire events and proximity to a busy road (Northam Cranbrook Rd). Whilst the York Gum Woodland (which the Proposal occurs in) is considered to provide medium to poor foraging habitat for Carnaby's Cockatoos, the removal of one *E. loxophleba* is not likely to be considered a significant impact to the Black Cockatoo species. There are two confirmed Carnaby's Black Cockatoo roost sites approximately 15 kms to the north of the Proposal site (north of the York townsite) and 11 kms to the west of the Proposal site. The individual tree for removal may potentially provide some opportunistic foraging habitat for breeding Black Cockatoos, however, in the context of the surrounding habitat within the region this clearing would be considered negligible. Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed single tree removal is not likely to be at variance with this Principle.
Principle (c) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.	The Proposal is not likely to be at variance with this Principle. A desktop assessment indicates the nearest Rare flora species occurs approximately 12 km to the east of the Proposal area (*Thomasia montana* [T]). The 2021 Ecoscape survey did not identify any naturally occurring Commonwealth EPBC Act or Western Australian BC Act-listed Threatened flora species.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Given the limited clearing required for this Proposal with a lack of understorey, clearing is considered unlikely to be at variance with this Principle.</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>The Proposal is not likely to be at variance with this Principle.
The Proposal area occurs within the mapped boundaries of the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt Threatened Ecological Community (Critically Endangered TEC, Priority PEC 3). The survey undertaken by Ecoscape (2021) identified the Proposal area as being within cleared roadside and did not consider the tree to be removed, as native vegetation. The area adjacent to the Proposal is also classified as being in a degraded condition and accordingly excluded from consideration of the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.
Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed single tree removal is not likely to be at variance with this Principle.</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>The Proposal is not likely to be at variance with this Principle.
The Proposal area is mapped as Vegetation Association 352, described as Medium woodland; York gum.

<table>
<tr><th>Pre-European Vegetation Association</th><th>Scale</th><th>Original Extent (ha)</th><th>Current Extent (ha)</th><th>% Remaining</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Veg Assoc No. 352</td><td>Statewide</td><td>724,268.73</td><td>142,012.22</td><td>19.61</td></tr>
<tr><td>IBRA Bioregion Avon Wheatbelt</td><td>630,577.61</td><td>108,887.52</td><td>17.27</td></tr>
<tr><td>LGA: Shire of York</td><td>89,947.53</td><td>8,583.13</td><td>9.54</td></tr>
</table>
Whilst the figures above do not meet the EPA objectives of retaining at least 30% of pre-clearing extents, the Proposal requires the removal of one individual tree in a degraded and highly fragmented environment (roadside in an agricultural area). This individual tree does not represent an intact native remnant or form part of an ecological linkage and does not comprise a high level of biological diversity. Therefore, taking this context into consideration, the clearing is considered unlikely to be at variance with this Principle.</td></tr>
<tr><td>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.</td><td>The Proposal is not at variance with this Principle.
The individual tree to be removed is not growing in association with a watercourse or wetland. The vegetation type mapped for the Proposal area (Eucalyptus loxophleba subsp. loxophleba mid woodland over Acacia acuminata tall open shrubland over Neurachne alopecuroidea, *Avena Barbara and *Ehrharta longiflora low grassland) by Ecoscape (2020) is not dominated by any species that correspond with drainage lines in the area. Taking the above into consideration, the clearing is considered not at variance with this Principle.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Principle (g) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.</td><td>The Proposal is not at variance with this clearing Principle.
The removal of one tree on the Northam Cranbrook roadside at a driveway intersection, will not result in appreciable land degradation. Therefore, the clearing is not considered to be at variance to this Principle.</td></tr>
<tr><td>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</td><td>The Proposal is not at variance with this clearing Principle.
No conservation areas, nature reserves or areas with significant environmental value occur within or adjacent to the Proposal area. The nearest reserves or areas with conservation value are:</td></tr>
</table>

any adjacent or nearby conservation area.	1) an un-named conservation reserve (for the purpose of conserving flora and fauna) 14 kms to the north west of the Proposal area; and 2) Wandoo National Park 13.8 kms to the west of the Proposal area. No impacts to these conservation areas are expected to occur as part of this Proposal and as such, clearing is not considered to be at variance with this clearing 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 is not likely to be at variance with this clearing Principle. The Proposal occurs within the proclaimed Avon River Catchment area but does not occur within any proclaimed Groundwater areas or Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA's) under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RIWI Act). The nearest surface water body is the Avon River which is a major non-perennial watercourse, situated approximately 250 m to the east of the Proposal. The removal of one individual tree is not expected to result in any significant (if any) alteration in salinity, pH or levels of nutrients in the Avon River and discharge water. CSIRO Acid Sulfate Soil (ASS) mapping indicates the Proposal area is within a low probability of occurrence. The water regimes in the area will not be impacted by the Proposal. As such, the clearing is not considered likely to be at variance with this clearing 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 Proposal is not at variance with this clearing Principle. The removal of one individual tree adjacent to the roadside will not increase the frequency or intensity of flooding. Interrogation of the Natural Resource Information mapping system (DPIRD, 2022) indicates that the Proposal area has a 0% risk of flooding. The soil landscape system is described as the Avon Flats System, consisting of Alluvial flats with brown loamy earth, grey non-cracking clay and deep brown sand. This would likely assist with higher infiltration rates resulting in lower risk of flooding in the area. Taking the above into consideration, the clearing is not considered at variance with this clearing Principle.
Methodology Used and References:	Photographs of tree for removal (D22#134925) Shapefile of clearing area/trees (D22#125517) Ecoscape (2021) M031 Northam Cranbrook Rd Upgrade Stages 1 & 2 Biological Survey. Unpublished report for Main Roads WA. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), (2022). Natural Resource Information System. Available online from https://maps.agric.wa.gov.au/nrm-info/. Accessed 11/02/2022

Completed By:	
Name	
Signature	
Job Title	Environment Officer
Date	11/02/2022

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

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT		
Clearing Assessment	**ENDORSED ☒**	**REFUSED ☐**
Comments		

Name	
Signature	
Job Title	Senior Environment Officer
Date	21/02/2022