

Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form



1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	M016 Goomalling Merredin Road / Allen Rd sightline clearing		
Region/Directorate:	Wheatbelt		
Local Government:	Wyalkatchem		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	M016 - Goomalling Merredin Road		
Proposal Location (SLK):	73.78 SLK		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D24#820253		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	D24#770038		
EOS Number:	3409		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	After approval to remove		
Oracle Project No:	30000921	Task Code:	741.16
LISC TRIM Number:	D24#769062	HRA TRIM Number:	D24#769072

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

The proposal involves the clearing of one native tree (0.03 ha of native vegetation) to improve intersection sightline of approaching high speed traffic for road users entering Goomalling Merredin Rd (M016) from Allen Rd.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The works are to increase safety of an existing intersection. No modifications to the road network are proposed given only minor clearing is required to achieve desired safety improvement.

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

- Vegetation to be cleared will be marked prior to clearing and the movement of machinery will be restricted to identified locations. This approach will prevent accidental over-clearing. It should be noted that no understorey and ground layer native vegetation is present in the area and consequently, only 0.03 ha of native vegetation will be impacted during clearing.
- 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 (DER, December 2014)
- Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits (DWER, October 2021)
- 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):	0.03 ha	No. Trees Cleared:	1
Species Name(s):	<i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.		
Easting and Northing:	-31.1983579, 117.5433875		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	Vegetation broadly aligns with the pre-European vegetation association number 1049, 'Wandoo and Wheatbelt Wandoo over Acacia with Salmon Gum and Gimlet Closed Forest over <i>Acacia merrallii</i> ', as mapped within the Pre-European Vegetation DPIRD-006 database.		
Site Vegetation Condition:	Recent photographs of the area to be cleared, including Google Streetview, reveals the tree proposed to be cleared is located within the road maintenance zone and in highly degraded condition with little to no native understorey present (see site photographs in Appendix 1).		
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):		Levels	% Remaining
		Statewide	6.79
		IBRA Bioregion Avon Wheatbelt	6.79
		IBRA Subregion Merredin	6.24
		Local Government Authority Shire of Wyalkatchem	6.36

8. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL AGAINST CLEARING PRINCIPLES

Is vegetation to be cleared at variance with:	Justification or Evidence:
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<p>Principle (a) – Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.</p>	<p>It is proposed to clear one <i>Eucalyptus</i> tree located within the road corridor and maintenance zone of M016 Goomalling Road and Allen Road intersection (SLK 73.78) in the central Wheatbelt region.</p> <p>The tree to be cleared is a <i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.(likely Wheatbelt Wandoo, but not confirmed), with a diameter at breast height (DBH) estimated to be of 300mm or greater, without observable hollows. The tree is in an area with little to no native understorey cover and a high coverage of weeds, as evidenced by photographs provided in Appendix 1.</p> <p>The desktop assessment did not any identify any Threatened or Priority flora species in the proposal area or within its immediate vicinity, and none are likely to occur. No impacts on flora are expected due to the localised nature of the removal of the tree.</p> <p>According to GIS datasets, the closest known threatened fauna species (<i>Calyptorhynchus latirostris</i> - Carnaby's Cockatoo – "Endangered") was sighted three times in 1975, over 6 km [REDACTED] of the Proposal Area. Based on the EPA (2019), Carnaby's Cockatoo currently breeds several hundred kilometres further south in the southern Wheatbelt. There are no mapped breeding sites within 50km, and no mapped roosting sites within 100km of the proposal area. The single tree is unlikely to support a high level of faunal diversity given it does not contain breeding hollows and is unlikely to represent critical foraging habitat given there is no evidence of breeding in the local area.</p> <p>GIS databases indicate that the proposal area lies within the Eucalypt Woodlands of the WA Wheatbelt TEC. However, the little to no native understorey cover present means the area is not likely to meet the minimum patch size and conditions thresholds outlined by the Commonwealth of Australia (2016) to be considered part of the TEC.</p> <p>A search of Main Roads GIS shapefiles layers indicates that the closest nature reserve, Class A Nembudding Nature Reserve (R 34385), is located approximately 2 km east of the proposal area. No impacts are anticipated due to the distance from the reserve, and the nature of clearing within the maintenance zone of the road reserve.</p> <p>The proposal area is not located within or adjacent to a mapped Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). The closest recorded ESA (un-named; ID # 12395) is located over 25 km north of the proposal area adjacent to Wyalkatchem-Koorda Rd. The project to clear one tree is unlikely to affect any ecological linkage that may exist.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposal area has limited biodiversity value and the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The tree proposed to be cleared is located in the central Wheatbelt region. According to EPA (2019), the eastern subpopulation of the Carnaby's Cockatoo (<i>Zanda latirostris</i>) breeds in the southern Wheatbelt region, from Kojonup to Newdegate, several hundred kilometres south of the proposal area. The closest mapped breeding site for Carnaby's Cockatoo is located over 50 km to the south-east and the closest mapped</p>

	<p>Carnaby's Cockatoo roost site is located over 100 km to the north-east. Neither Baudin's Black Cockatoo (<i>Zanda baudinii</i>) or Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (<i>Calyptorhynchus banksia naso</i>) breed or utilise habitat in the vicinity of the proposal area (DAWE, 2022). Whilst the tree to be cleared provides potential foraging habitat for Carnaby's Cockatoo, it is unlikely to represent significant habitat given it is an isolated tree without observable nesting hollows and located in an area without nearby recent records of Carnaby's Cockatoo breeding or roosting activity. Furthermore, to provide some local context, over 853 ha of DBCA-managed reserves occur within 15 km of the proposal area, which represent better quality foraging habitat for the species.</p> <p>One <i>Eucalyptus</i> tree, in a highly modified area within the maintenance zone of the road reserve, with little to no native understorey, does not represent significant habitat for any fauna species.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not 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>The proposal is to clear one Eucalypt tree within the road maintenance zone, with little to no native understorey present.</p> <p>Review of DBCA Threatened Flora and WA Herbarium databases did not identify any Threatened flora records within the proposal area. The closest known Threatened flora species (<i>Acacia caesariata</i>) is located over 2.5 km east of the proposal area. This record was located in [REDACTED].</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<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>A desktop assessment of mapped Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) within the proposal area identified the presence of TEC - Eucalypt woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt (Wheatbelt Woodlands) 'Critically Endangered'.</p> <p>However, the single tree to be cleared is in a narrow roadside strip with little to no native understorey cover remaining and a high coverage of weeds (see Appendix 1). The Commonwealth of Australia (2016) advises that roadside patches of the TEC must be a minimum of 5 metres wide and exotic plant species account for no more than 70% total vegetation understorey cover. Based on these criteria, the tree proposed for clearing is not likely part of a patch of remnant vegetation classified as the Eucalypt Woodlands of the WA Wheatbelt TEC.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be 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>The proposal area (0.03 ha) consists of vegetation association 1049, which has 56,618.34 ha (6.79%) remaining at a Statewide level and 7,345.26 ha (6.36%) remaining at a LGA level. This proposal area equates to less than 0.0004% of vegetation association 1049 at a LGA level.</p> <p>Vegetation Association 1049 (Wandoo and Wheatbelt Wandoo over Acacia with Salmon Gum and Gimlet Closed Forest over <i>Acacia merrallii</i>) has less than 30% of their pre-European extent remaining at the State, IBRA bioregion, IBRA subregion and Shire of Wyalkatchem levels. However, the <i>Eucalyptus</i> tree within the</p>

	<p>clearing area is isolated and in a highly degraded condition and does not form a significant linkage across the landscape. The tree proposed to be cleared is not a significant remnant of native vegetation in the local area.</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>Based on ArcGIS data layers, review of site photos and aerial imagery, the proposal area does not intersect any mapped watercourses or wetlands. The nearest watercourse (significant stream) is located over 2.5 km to the south-east of the proposal area. The tree proposed for clearing is not associated with any watercourse or wetland and is not representative of riparian vegetation.</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>It is unlikely that this proposal will cause appreciable land degradation due to the minor nature of the works and the fact that native vegetation is located in an area already in highly disturbed condition.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.</p>
<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>	<p>A search of Main Roads ArcGIS data layers indicates that the closest nature reserve (Class A Nembudding Nature Reserve -R 34385) is located approximately 2 km east of the proposal area. No impacts are anticipated due to the distance from the reserve, and the nature of clearing within the maintenance zone of the road reserve.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.</p>
<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>	<p>The clearing of one tree in the road maintenance zone is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.</p>
<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>	<p>The removal of one tree in a highly degraded condition within the maintenance zone of the road reserve is unlikely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. No disturbance or interruption any natural drainage and surface run-off patterns are expected.</p> <p>Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.</p>

Methodology Used and References:	<p>D24#770038 Shapefile of clearing area/trees</p> <p>Commonwealth of Australia (2016) '<i>Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt: a nationally protected ecological community</i>'. Available from: https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/guide-eucalypt-woodlands-wa-wheatbelt.pdf.</p> <p>DAWE (2022) Referral guideline for 3 WA threatened black cockatoo species: Carnaby's Cockatoo, Baudin's Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black cockatoo, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, February. Available from: Referral guideline for 3 WA threatened black cockatoo species (dcceew.gov.au)</p> <p>Environmental Protection Authority (2019) Carnaby's Cockatoo in Environmental Impact Assessment in the Perth and Peel Region, EPA, Western Australia. Available from: Carnaby's cockatoo_new FINAL.pdf (epa.wa.gov.au)</p> <p>Main Roads Site Clearing area photographs and imagery (Appendix 1)</p> <p>DBCA/DWER database review</p>
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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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has rainfall greater than 400mm; and, is South of the 26th parallel; and, 	Yes	Standard Vehicle and Plant Management Actions 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.

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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	11/06/2024	

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

DECISION ON CLEARING ASSESSMENT	
Name	[REDACTED]
Signature	[REDACTED]
Job Title	Principal Environmental Officer
Date	12/06/2024

APPENDIX 1: CLEARING AREAS



Figure 1. Map of CPS818 Approved Clearing Area

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS OF TREE TO BE REMOVED



Figure 1. Photographs: SLK 73.78 RHS – *Eucalyptus* sp. No observable hollows, no scars. Highly degraded. 0.03 ha canopy.



Figure 2. Google Imagery: SLK 73.78 RHS – *Eucalyptus* sp.