Clearing Desktop Report – Short Form

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS

Proposal Name:	Leonora Laverton Rd Material Pits SLK [REDACTED]		
Region/Directorate:	Goldfields Esperance Region		
Local Government:	Shire of Laverton		
Road/Bridge Name & Number:	Leonora Laverton Rd M022		
Proposal Location (SLK):	[REDACTED]		
CDR Short Form TRIM Number:	D23#1360020		
Spatial Data TRIM Number:	Proposal Area: D23#1294534 Approved Clearing Area: D23#1294389		
EOS Number:	2507		
Expected Proposal Start Date:	January 2024		
Oracle Project No:	21111593	**Task Code:**	411
LISC TRIM Number:	D23#1283615	**HRA TRIM Number:**	D23#1283684

2. PURPOSE OF CLEARING

The presence of an unmapped watercourse/creek bed is restricting truck access to a proposed Material Pit. A new gate access location is proposed to avoid environmental impact on the watercourse/creek bed and provide safe vehicular access to the proposed Material Pit.

3. ALTERNATIVES TO CLEARING

The new gate access location has been selected to minimise clearing of native vegetation. There are no entry points that provide safe access to the Material Pit that avoid the need for clearing.

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

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

- The original design of the Material Pit Access proposed clearing of native vegetation in an unmapped watercourse area. To avoid clearing of riparian vegetation and alteration of the watercourse to provide safe access for vehicles, the proposal was redesigned. The redesign also reduces the overall clearing area.
- Selection of the shortest entry point from the road to minimise the amount of clearing required, while avoiding all riparian vegetation.
- 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 access track to the Material Pit area, 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. The reduction of the speed limits to avoid clearing of native vegetation for this proposal is not applicable given speed limits are not a relevant factor to the search and extraction of materials under this scope of works.

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):	0.18	**No. Trees Cleared:**	No Mature Trees
Species Name(s):	*Acacia caesaneura; Ptilotus obovatus* var. *obovatus; Psydrax suaveolens Acacia tetragonophylla;* and *Maireana triptera.*		
Easting and Northing:	[REDACTED]		

7. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT AND SITE INFORMATION

Site Vegetation Description/Association:	At a broad scale, the vegetation in the Proposal Area has been mapped as Beard Vegetation Association 18: Mulga Acacia aneura and associated species.

	Main Roads Environment Officers utilised the Botanica (2021) mapped Vegetation Types and Vegetation Condition to extrapolate the Vegetation Type and Condition rating in areas outside the primary Survey Area. Overall, one vegetation type and vegetation condition was identified. RP-AOW2: *Acacia caesaneura* sparse woodland over *Ptilotus obovatus* var. *obovatus*, *Psydrax suaveolens* and *Acacia tetragonophylla* sparse shrubland over *Maireana triptera* low open shrubland. A similar method was used to obtain the Fauna Habitat data in determining the wider Fauna Habitat for areas outside of the primary Survey Area.
Site Vegetation Condition:	Very Good
Pre-European Extent Remaining (%):	423,608.31 ha (99.76 %)

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 total of 0.18 ha of native vegetation is proposed to be cleared for the purpose of constructing an access track for a Material Pit. **Vegetation** The Proposal Area comprises one vegetation unit: *Acacia caesaneura* sparse woodland (RP-AOW2). The Leonora Laverton biological survey and the Main Roads extrapolated data recorded a total of 15.58 ha (20 %) of the RP-AOW2 vegetation unit within the 77.56 ha Survey Area, comprising the second highest percentage of the four vegetation units mapped in the Survey Area (excluding cleared areas). The vegetation was not deemed o be riparian and is mapped as Very Good Condition (Botanica, 2021) **Flora** A search of the DBCA and WA Herbarium flora databases identified nine conservation significant flora species within the 30km Desktop Study Area. This included two Priority One species, six Priority Three species, and one Priority Four species. Botanica (2021) undertook a targeted flora survey as part of their Material Pit biological assessment. No State-listed Threatened or Priority flora species were recorded within the Survey Area and following a post-survey likelihood of occurrence assessment, Botanica (2021) concluded no conservation significant flora species were likely to occur. Therefore, the vegetation proposed to be cleared is unlikely to comprise a high level of biological diversity value with respect to conservation significant flora. **Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities** According to the desktop and biological survey by Botanica (2021), no Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities, restricted vegetation, highly disturbed vegetation, or vegetation providing important refuge or significant ecological function was identified within the Survey Area. **Fauna** A search of DBCA shapefiles indicated eleven conservation significant fauna species were identified within the 30km Desktop Study Area. This included one Critically Endangered species, two Vulnerable species, three Priority One

	species, one Priority Four species, three Migratory species and one Other Species of Significance. Based on the habitats present and recent nearby records the following species of significance may possibly occur in the wider area. **Table 1: Fauna - Likelihood of Occurrence** **Species and Information** **Malleefowl (Leipoa ocellata) - Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)** This species is occasionally recorded in the Eastern Murchison subregion. Habitat appears marginal/or unsuitable for breeding, however occasional transients could potentially occur. No evidence of Malleefowl activity (inactive or active mounds, tracks, feathers or bird observations etc.) were observed within the Survey Area. Significant impact unlikely. **Grey Falcon (Falco hypoleucos) - Vulnerable (EPBC Act and BC Act)** This species is sparsely recorded throughout inland Australia. Suitable habitat may be present but is unlikely to represent critical habitat. Significant impact unlikely. **Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus) - OS (BC Act)** This species potentially utilises some sections of the Survey Area as part of a much larger home range, though records in this area are uncommon. It is considered unlikely to breed within the Survey Area. No potential nest sites observed. Significant impact unlikely Given no significant fauna was recorded as occurring within the areas surveyed, it is unlikely these species would be present in the Proposal Area. Additionally, clearing of 0.18 ha of vegetation that is represented broadly across the survey area and that is not representative of critical habitat, would not pose a significant impact on these species. **Other Areas of Conservation Significance** There are no DBCA-managed lands within or adjacent to the Survey Area or the Desktop Study Area. There are no Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) located within or adjacent to the Survey Area or the Desktop Study Area. There are no Nationally Important or RAMSAR wetlands located within or adjacent to the Survey Area or the Desktop Study Area. The closest significant environmental features are Lake Marmion and Lake Ballard, which are categorised as ESA's and as Nationally Important Wetlands. These systems are located approximately 100km south-west of the Survey Area. Based on the above and absence of indicators of high biological diversity, 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.	The Proposal Area contains one distinct fauna habitat (*Rocky Plain:* Acacia Sparse Woodland). It is described as a Rocky plain comprising sparse Acacia woodland over mid mixed shrubs and low chenopod shrubs. The Leonora Laverton biological survey and the Main Roads extrapolated data recorded a total of 26.58 ha (34.3 %) of the *Rocky Plain:* Acacia Sparse Woodland Habitat unit within the 77.54 ha survey area, comprising the second highest percentage of the four habitat units mapped in the survey area (excluding cleared areas) (Botanica, 2021).

	A search of ArcGIS shapefiles identified eleven conservation significant fauna species within the 30 km Desktop Study Area. The likelihood of occurrence assessment undertaken by Botanica (2021) indicated these species may possibly occur, however it is unlikely impacts of clearing from this proposal would be significant. Given no significant fauna was recorded as occurring within the areas surveyed, it is unlikely these species would be present in the Proposal Area. Additionally, clearing of 0.18 ha of vegetation that is represented broadly across the survey area and not representative of significant habitat, would not pose a significant impact on or fauna indigenous to Western Australia. The proposed clearing area is not considered to comprise the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a 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.	Based on a search of ArcGIS shapefiles, there were no Threatened flora species recorded within the 30 km Desktop Study Area. Botanica (2021) undertook a targeted flora survey as part of their Material Pit biological assessment. No State-listed Threatened flora species were recorded within the Proposal Area, therefore it is unlikely that any Threatened species would occur. 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.	Botanica (2021) undertook a desktop assessment of the survey area. The assessment concluded the DBCA Threatened Ecological Communities Database search identified no Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC's) or Priority Ecological Communities (PEC's) within the Survey Area. Additionally, the biological survey identified no TEC or PEC within the Survey Area. 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 Proposal involves clearing of 0.18 ha of native vegetation, consisting of Vegetation Association 18, which retains approximately 99.76 % of it's pre-European extent statewide. The extent of Vegetation Association 18 remaining is above the national target of 30% retention of pre-European extent for biodiversity conservation (see Table *2*). **Table 2: Pre-European Vegetation Representation** **Pre-European Vegetation Association** / **Scale** / **Pre–European (ha)** / **Current Extent (ha)** / **% Remain** / **% Remaining in DBCA reserves** **Veg Assoc No. 18** / **Statewide** / 19,892,306.48 / 19,843,729.06 / 99.76 / 6.64 **IBRA Bioregion** *Murchinson* / 12,403,172.32 / 12,363,252.50 / 99.68 / 4.97 **IBRA Sub-region** *Eastern Murchinson* / 10,269,896.44 / 10,234,838.22 / 99.66 / 5.14 **Local Gov. Authority** / 2,878,673.28 / 2,867,359.23 / 99.61 / 6.50

	<table><tr><td></td><td>Shire of Laverton</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> Noting the minimal extent of clearing (0.18 ha), and the vegetation does not include significant habitat for flora, fauna or ecological communities, or forms part of a significant ecological linkage, the vegetation is not considered a significant remnant in an extensively cleared landscape. Therefore, 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 search of ArcGIS wetland layers indicates that the Proposal Area is not located within any wetland or watercourse environment (including Ramsar, Nationally Important or Geomorphic wetlands). The vegetation in the proposed Clearing Area consists of *Acacia caesaneura* sparse woodland (RP-AOW2) and is not classified as riparian vegetation (Botanica, 2021). As there are no watercourses, wetlands or riparian vegetation within or adjacent to the Proposal Area, 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.	Based on DPIRD's land degradation risk mapping, the proposed clearing area is noted as having a low risk of salinity, land instability, and wind erosion. The Laverton region, where the proposed clearing is located, receives an average rainfall of approximately 275 mm, and there are no mapped wetlands or salt lakes within or near the Proposal Area. Additionally, the creation of the access track will not remove more than one meter of topsoil. Considering the minor scale and nature of the proposal, the depth of soil being removed, and the average rainfall of the Proposal Area, it is unlikely this clearing will cause any significant land degradation. Therefore, 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.	A search of ArcGIS shapefiles indicates that the Proposal Area does not intersect any known Conservation Areas or Nature Reserves. Given that the proposed clearing is relatively minor (0.18 ha), and no clearing will occur within or in proximity to any Conservation or Nature Reserves, it is unlikely the Proposal will impact any buffers or ecological linkages and therefore, not impact on the environmental values of any Conservation Areas. 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 any Proclaimed Surface Water Areas and there are no mapped watercourses or wetlands present within or adjacent to the Proposal Area. Based on available GIS databases, there are no mapped geomorphic wetlands within or surrounding the Proposal Area. Given the direct absence of any surface water features and the minor scale of the Proposal, the proposed clearing is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface water. The Proposal Area is not located within a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA) or controlled catchment area under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*. The Proposal Area is located within the Goldfields Groundwater Area, proclaimed under the *RIWI Act 1914*. The proposed clearing is not likely to significantly alter surface water flows or drainage, therefore no impact on groundwater is expected. The proposed clearing of 0.18 ha of native vegetation is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of underground water.

	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.	There are no watercourses or wetlands within the Proposal Area. Furthermore, DPIRD's land degradation risk mapping indicates the proposed clearing area has a low risk of water logging and flooding. The proposed clearing of 0.18 ha of native vegetation is not likely to significantly alter surface water flows or drainage, therefore it is unlikely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. The proposed clearing **is not at variance** to this Principle.
Methodology Used and References:	Bibliography Botanica Consulting. (2021). *Flora, Vegetation and Fauna Assessment of the Leonora-Laverton Road Material Pits (SLK 53, 75 & 76).* Perth: Botanica Consulting. Shapefile of clearing area/trees: D23#1294389 GIS Database: - DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters - DBCA Threatened and Priority Fauna - DBCA Threatened and Priority Flora - Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia - DPIRD Risk datasets - Hydrology South - Native Vegetation Extent - Pre-European Vegetation - Public Drinking Water Source Areas - RAMSAR Wetlands - Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities - WA Herbarium

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), Hygiene Checklists *(D17#859669) and* Vehicle, Plant and Machinery Hygiene Vehicle Register Template *(D23#179551)* will be applied *(which include relevant sections of Condition 10).*
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.	**NA**	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.	**Yes**	Site will be added to Regional Vegetation Management Plan and into Environment Online System (EOS) Compliance Tab to ensure weeds growing within the cleared area are removed or killed at least once in every 12-month period for five years from the commencement of clearing. Records of annual weed control will be recorded in EOS Compliance Tab.

Completed By:	
Name	[REDACTED]
Signature	[REDACTED]
Job Title	Environmental Officer
Date	14/12/2023

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	18/12/2023

*[REDACTED]***Figure 1: Proposed Access Track Location - Proposal and Clearing Area**