Government of Western Australia
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1 Application details and outcome

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	CPS 11396/1
Permit type:	Purpose permit
Applicant name:	Lauren Margaret Mackintosh
Application received:	12 December 2025
Application area:	0.096 hectares of native vegetation
Purpose of clearing:	Western power connection
Method of clearing:	Mechanical removal
Property:	Lot 814 on Deposited Plan 411881 Great Southern Highway Road Reserve (PIN 1323371)
Location (LGA area/s):	Shire of Narrogin
Localities (suburb/s):	Hillside

1.2. Description of clearing activities

The vegetation proposed to be cleared is contained within a single contiguous area (see Figure 1, Section 1.5).

The application is to install a Western Power cable, which will result in direct and indirect impacts to surrounding native vegetation.

1.3. Decision on application

Decision:	Refused
Decision date:	22 October 2026
Decision area:	0.096 hectares of native vegetation

1.4. Reasons for decision

This clearing permit application was submitted, accepted, assessed and determined in accordance with sections 51E and 51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) advertised the application for 21 days and no submissions were received.

In making this decision, the Delegated Officer had regard for the site characteristics (see Appendix A), relevant datasets (see Appendix E.1), photographs provided by the applicant, the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act (see Appendix B), relevant planning instruments and any other matters considered relevant to the assessment (see Section 3). The applicant has confirmed that three trees will be directly cleared, however the rest of the application area is subject to possible indirect impacts of the proposed western power works.

The assessment identified that the proposed clearing will result in:

- the potential introduction and spread of weeds into adjacent vegetation, which could impact on the quality of the adjacent vegetation and its habitat values
- The loss of 0.096 hectares of black cockatoo foraging habitat
- The loss of 0.096 hectares of significant remnant native vegetation within an extensively cleared landscape
- The loss of 0.096 hectares of native vegetation mapped as the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt (Wheatbelt Woodlands) Threatened Ecological Community (TEC).

After consideration of the above information, the Delegated Officer determined that the proposed clearing is likely to result in unacceptable impacts to environmental values. The applicant has not suitably demonstrated avoidance and minimisation measures and has not provided a revegetation measure to mitigate the significant residual impacts of the proposed clearing.

The Delegated Officer determined that the resulting environmental impacts from the proposed clearing, in the absence of an appropriate revegetation measure, is unacceptable, and it would not be appropriate to grant a clearing permit. Accordingly, the Delegated Officer refused the application.

1.5. Site map



Figure 1 Map of the application area

2 Legislative context

The clearing of native vegetation in Western Australia is regulated under the 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 1.4), the Delegated Officer has also had regard to the objects and principles under section 4A of the EP Act, particularly:

- the precautionary principle
- the principle of intergenerational equity
- the polluter pays principle
- the principle of the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity.

Relevant policies considered during the assessment include:

- *Environmental Offsets Policy* (2011)

The key guidance documents which inform this assessment are:

- *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (DER, December 2013)
- *Procedure: Native vegetation clearing permits* (DWER, October 2019)
- *Environmental Offsets Guidelines* (August 2014)

3 Detailed assessment of application

3.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

The applicant advised that avoidance and minimisation measures were as instructed by Western Power (Applicant, 2025).

In accordance with the Government of Western Australia's *Environmental Offsets Policy* and *Environmental Offsets Guidelines,* it was determined that revegetation to counterbalance the significant residual impacts was necessary. The applicant did not propose revegetation or an offset that would adequately address the identified significant residual impacts. The applicant had not demonstrated sufficient avoidance, minimisation or mitigation measures to address the significant residual impacts associated with the proposal.

3.2. Assessment of impacts on environmental values

In assessing the application, the Delegated Officer has had regard for the site characteristics (see Appendix A) and the extent to which the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to biological, conservation, or land and water resource values.

The assessment against the clearing principles (see Appendix B) identified that the impacts of the proposed clearing present a risk to significant environmental values, including fauna, ecological communities and significant remnant vegetation. The consideration of these impacts, and the extent to which they can be managed through conditions applied in line with sections 51H and 51I of the EP Act, is set out below.

3.2.1. Fauna habitat - Clearing Principle (b)

Black cockatoos
The application area is mapped within the distribution of the forest red-tailed black-cockatoo and Carnaby's cockatoo (Black cockatoo species). A total of 27 records of black cockatoo species are recorded within a 10-kilometre radius of the application area. Black cockatoo species are known to forage on *Allocasuarina* and eucalypt tree species and utilise eucalypt trees for breeding and roosting (DBCA, 2013). The nearest breeding site is located 18 kilometres from the application area. There are 5 roost sites recorded within 3 kilometres of the application area.

Three trees proposed to be directly cleared are likely to provide foraging habitat for black cockatoo species. Any large trees which may be indirectly cleared within the application area are also likely provide foraging habitat. Given these trees may possibly be indirectly cleared, the assessment has considered the entire application area (0.096 hectares) as potentially impacted black cockatoo foraging habitat due to the risk of indirect clearing impacts. Based on the images provided, the trees are mature and large enough to provide foraging habitat, however, they do not appear to be a suitable size to contain hollows suitable for breeding. Given the close distance from recorded roosting habitat, it is likely the trees are utilised for foraging by black cockatoo species.

Red-tailed phascogale, kenngoor
The red-tailed phascogale is a small, arboreal, carnivorous marsupial with ash-grey fur above and cream fur below. The red-tailed phascogale occurs in remnant vegetation in the southern wheatbelt of Western Australia, within less than one percent of its former range. It occurs within the Avon Wheatbelt, Jarrah Forest, Mallee and Esperance Plains IBRA Bioregions and the Avon, Northern Agricultural, Rangelands, South Coast, South West and Swan Natural Resource Management Regions. It is an opportunistic feeder, taking a wide range of insects and spiders as well as small birds and mammals. Their habitat has been extensively cleared for agriculture and remaining bushland is highly fragmented. The species utilises hollows within a range of native trees including eucalypt species, however has also been recorded utilising shrublands and shrub-heath.

According to available data, there are 14 records of the red-tailed phascogale within a 10 kilometre radius, with the nearest record located approximately 1 kilometre from the application area. Clearing of the application area will not significantly impact linkage value or nesting habitat for the species, given the remaining vegetation around the application area, and the lack of hollows within the trees. However, clearing of the application area may reduce the availability of habitat for the species.

Conclusion
For the reasons outlined above, the proposed clearing of 0.096 hectares is considered likely to result in a significant residual impact to black cockatoo and red-tailed phascogale habitat. The applicant did not provide sufficient avoidance and mitigation or revegetation efforts. Given this, the delegated officer determined that the loss of 0.096 hectares of native vegetation represents an unacceptable impact to black cockatoo and red-tailed phascogale.

3.2.2. Threatened ecological communities - Clearing Principle (d)

The application area is mapped as the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC. The Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC is listed as Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act, and is a state listed priority ecological community (Priority 3).

Key threats to this TEC include (DotE, 2015):

- clearing of native vegetation;
- fragmentation;
- loss of habitat for native species; and
- increased salinity and waterlogging associated with landscape modification (DotE, 2015).

Areas critical to the survival of the community include all patches meeting diagnostic and condition thresholds, as well as surrounding buffers, particularly where they comprise native vegetation. This reflects the highly cleared and fragmented nature of the Wheatbelt landscape (DotE, 2015). Available datasets indicate that about 939,000 hectares of the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC is mapped across Western Australia; however, this remains indicative mapping requiring validation.

In the absence of biological surveys and based on the photographs of the application area, and noting the area is part of a larger mapped occurrence of the TEC, the precautionary principle has been applied and the assessment has concluded that the application area is representative of the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.

While the proposed clearing represents a small overall impact to the mapped extent of the community, the Delegated Officer considers the clearing of 0.096 hectares of this community to be significant, given the threat of ongoing clearing of representative patches in the Wheatbelt. The residual impact aligns with the definition of significant residual impact under the WA Environmental Offset Guidelines, which includes areas defined as being critically impacted in a cumulative context (Government of Western Australia, 2014).

Conclusion
For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing on Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC should be managed by revegetating 0.6 hectares of native vegetation representative of the TEC. To date, the applicant has not demonstrated an adequate revegetation proposal to address the significant residual impact to the TEC. Given this, the delegated officer determined that the loss of 0.096 hectares of native vegetation represents an unacceptable impact to the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.

3.2.3. Significant remnant vegetation - Clearing Principle (e)

Assessment

The national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia has a target to prevent clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30 per cent of that present pre-1750, below which species loss appears

to accelerate exponentially at an ecosystem level (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). Noting that the current vegetation extent for the mapped vegetation complexes within the application area (Narrogin Complex) and vegetation extent within the local area, are below the 30 per cent threshold (see Appendix A.2), the application area is considered to occur within an extensively cleared landscape. Due to the presence of foraging habitat for conservation significant fauna and the occurrence of the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC, the application area is considered to be a significant remnant of native vegetation in an extensively cleared landscape.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed clearing on significant remnant vegetation should be managed by revegetating 0.29 hectares of native vegetation. The applicant has not demonstrated an appropriate mitigation strategy capable of adequately addressing the loss of significant remnant vegetation. Given this, the delegated officer determined that the loss of 0.096 hectares of native vegetation represents an unacceptable impact to significant remnant vegetation.

3.3. Relevant planning instruments and other matters

The Shire of Narrogin advised DWER that local government approvals are not required, and that the proposed clearing is consistent with the Shire's Local Planning Scheme. The Shire did not have any objections to the proposed clearing (Shire of Narrogin, 2026).

No Aboriginal sites of significance have been mapped within the application area. It remains the applicant's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* (WA).

End

Appendix A. Site characteristics

The information provided below describes the key characteristics of the area proposed to be cleared and is based on the best information available to DWER at the time of this assessment. This information was used to inform the assessment of the clearing against the Clearing Principles, contained in Appendix B.

A.1. Site characteristics

Characteristic	Details
Local context	The area proposed to be cleared is a 0.096 hectare isolated patch of native vegetation in the intensive land use zone of Western Australia. It is adjacent to other native vegetation and housing developments. The proposed clearing area is a small remnant in a highly cleared landscape. Spatial data indicates that the local area (10-kilometre radius from the centre of the application area) retains approximately 17.6 per cent of its original native vegetation cover.
Ecological linkage	The application area is not mapped within an ecological linkage, and does not form part of an informal ecological linkage.
Conservation areas	The nearest conservation area is DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters Parklands, located 2km south-west of the application area.
Vegetation description	Photographs supplied by the applicant indicate the vegetation within the proposed clearing area consists of understory shrubs and grasses, and Eucalypt and *Allocasuarina* trees within the overstory, with areas void of vegetation. Representative photos are available in Appendix D. This is somewhat consistent with the mapped vegetation type: • NARROGIN_1023, which is described as Wheatbelt; York gum, salmon gum etc. *Eucalyptus loxophleba*, *E. salmonophloia*. Goldfields; gimlet, redwood etc. *E. salubris*, *E. oleosa*. Riverine; rivergum *E. camaldulensis*. The mapped vegetation types retains approximately 18.5 per cent of the original extent (Government of Western Australia, 2019).
Vegetation condition	Photographs supplied by the applicant indicate the vegetation within the proposed clearing area is in Good to Very Good (Keighery, 1994) condition. The full Keighery (1994) condition rating scale is provided in Appendix C. Representative photos are available in Appendix D.
Climate and landform	Data from the Narrogin weather station shows an average annual rainfall of 488.6 mm, with an average maximum temperature of 31.1°C in January and an average minimum temperature of 5°C in August. The topography of the land is relatively flat.
Soil description	The soil is mapped as Corrigin land resources survey described as Colluvial and residual irregularly undulating surfaces within the Binneringie dolerite dyke system at the headwaters of the Hotham, Blackwood and Avon rivers. Soils are red and brown loams, clays, sandy and loamy duplexes.
Land degradation risk	The application area has a high subsurface acidification risk or is presently acid.
Waterbodies	The application area does not intersect any mapped waterbodies. The nearest waterbody is located 889m from the application area.
Hydrogeography	The desktop assessment and aerial imagery indicated that the nearest mapped wetland feature is a Wheatbelt Wetland Channel non-perennial waterline located approximately 33 metres north of the application area.

Characteristic	Details
Flora	According to available data, there are 22 flora records in the local area, with the nearest record located 638m from the application area.
Ecological communities	The application area is mapped within the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.
Fauna	According to available datasets, there are 11 fauna records in the local area. The nearest record is located 0.4 kilometres from the application area.

A.2. Vegetation extent

	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Extent remaining (%)	Current extent in all DBCA managed land (ha)	Current proportion (%) of pre-European extent in all DBCA managed land
IBRA bioregion*					
Avon Wheatbelt	9,517,109.95	1,761,187.42	18.51	174,980.68	9.94
Vegetation complex					
Narrogin 1023	365.75	67.77	18.53	57.63	85.04
Local area					
10km radius	5,556.46	31,572.87	17.6	-	-

*Government of Western Australia (2019a)

**Government of Western Australia (2019b)

A.3. Fauna analysis table

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable habitat features? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records (total)
Phascogale calura (red-tailed phascogale, kenngoor)	CD	Y	Y	1.1	14
Zanda latirostris (carnaby's cockatoo)	EN	Y	Y	0.4	19
Calyptorhynchus banksii naso (forest red-tailed black cockatoo)	VU	Y	Y	1	8

C.1. Flora analysis table

Species name	Conservation status	Suitable soil type? [Y/N]	Suitable vegetation type? [Y/N]	Distance of closest record to application area (km)	Number of known records (total)
Acacia brachypoda	T	N	Y	2.4	1
Andersonia bifida	P2		Y	0.65	1
Babingtonia maleyae	P2		Y	1.2	1
Xanthorrhoea brevistyla	P4		Y	1.5	6

Appendix B. Assessment against the clearing principles

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
Environmental value: biological values		
Principle (a): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biodiversity."* Assessment: The area proposed to be cleared provides habitat to fauna and contains vegetation representative of a Threatened Ecological Community, however is not likely to provide habitat for or contain priority flora, and does not form an ecological linkage.	May be at variance	*No*
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."* Assessment: The area proposed to be cleared contains habitat for conservation significant fauna, namely black cockatoo species and red-tailed phascogale.	At variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.1, above.*
Principle (c): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened flora."* Assessment: The area proposed to be cleared is unlikely to contain habitat for Threatened flora species.	Not likely to be at variance	No
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."* Assessment: The application area is mapped as the Wheatbelt Woodlands TEC.	At variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.2, above.*
Environmental value: significant remnant vegetation and conservation areas		
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."* Assessment: The extent of the mapped vegetation type and native vegetation in the local area is inconsistent with the national objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation in Australia. The vegetation proposed to be cleared is not part of a significant ecological linkage in the local area.	At variance	Yes *Refer to Section 3.2.3, above.*
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."* Assessment: Given the extent of the clearing and the distance to the nearest conservation area, the proposed clearing is not likely to have an impact on the environmental values of conservation areas.	Not at variance	No
Environmental value: land and water resources		

Assessment against the clearing principles	Variance level	Is further consideration required?
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."* Assessment: Given no perennial water courses or wetlands are recorded within 400 metres of the application area, the proposed clearing is not growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.	Not likely to be at variance	No
Principle (g): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation."* Assessment: The surveyed soils are susceptible to subsurface acidification risk. Noting the extent of the application area and the condition of the vegetation, the proposed clearing is not likely to have an appreciable impact on land degradation or subsurface acidification.	Not likely to be at variance	No
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."* Assessment: Given no perennial water courses or wetlands are recorded within 400 metres of the application area, and the extent of the clearing, the proposed clearing is unlikely to impact surface or ground water quality.	Not likely to be at variance	No
Principle (j): *"Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding."* Assessment: The mapped soils and topographic contours in the surrounding area do not indicate the proposed clearing is likely to contribute to increased incidence or intensity of flooding. Given no water courses or wetlands are recorded within the application area, the proposed clearing is unlikely to contribute to waterlogging.	Not likely to be at variance	No

Appendix C. Vegetation condition rating scale

Vegetation condition is a rating given to a defined area of vegetation to categorise and rank disturbance related to human activities. The rating refers to the degree of change in the vegetation structure, density and species present in relation to undisturbed vegetation of the same type. The degree of disturbance impacts upon the vegetation's ability to regenerate. Disturbance at a site can be a cumulative effect from a number of interacting disturbance types.

Considering its location, the scale below was used to measure the condition of the vegetation proposed to be cleared. This scale has been extracted from Keighery, B.J. (1994) *Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community*. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

Measuring vegetation condition for the South West and Interzone Botanical Province (Keighery, 1994)

Condition	Description
Pristine	Pristine or nearly so, no obvious signs of disturbance.
Excellent	Vegetation structure intact, with disturbance affecting individual species; weeds are non-aggressive species.

Condition	Description
Very good	Vegetation structure altered, with obvious signs of disturbance. For example, disturbance to vegetation structure caused by repeated fires, the presence of some more aggressive weeds, dieback, logging and/or grazing.
Good	Vegetation structure significantly altered by very obvious signs of multiple disturbances. Retains basic vegetation structure or ability to regenerate it. For example, disturbance to vegetation structure caused by very frequent fires, the presence of some very aggressive weeds at high density, partial clearing, dieback and/or grazing.
Degraded	Basic vegetation structure severely impacted by disturbance. Scope for regeneration but not to a state approaching good condition without intensive management. For example, disturbance to vegetation structure caused by very frequent fires, the presence of very aggressive weeds, partial clearing, dieback and/or grazing.
Completely degraded	The structure of the vegetation is no longer intact and the area is completely or almost completely without native species. These areas are often described as ‘parkland cleared’ with the flora comprising weed or crop species with isolated native trees or shrubs.

Appendix D. Photographs of the vegetation (Applicant, 2025)



Figure 2 - image of application area



Figure 3 - image of application area



Figure 4 - image of application area



Figure 5 - image of application area

Appendix E. Sources of information

E.1. GIS databases

Publicly available GIS Databases used (sourced from www.data.wa.gov.au):

- 10 Metre Contours (DPIRD-073)
- Aboriginal Heritage Places (DPLH-001)
- Aboriginal Heritage Places (DPLH-001)
- Cadastre (LGATE-218)
- Cadastre Address (LGATE-002)
- Contours (DPIRD-073)
- DBCA – Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia – Western Australia (DBCA-045)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Flood Risk (DPIRD-007)
- Groundwater Salinity Statewide (DWER-026)
- Hydrography – Inland Waters – Waterlines
- Hydrological Zones of Western Australia (DPIRD-069)
- IBRA Vegetation Statistics
- Imagery
- Local Planning Scheme – Zones and Reserves (DPLH-071)
- Native Title (ILUA) (LGATE-067)
- Offsets Register – Offsets (DWER-078)
- Pre-European Vegetation Statistics
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas (DWER-033)
- Ramsar Sites (DBCA-010)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)
- Remnant Vegetation, All Areas
- RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas (DWER-034)
- RIWI Act, Surface Water Areas and Irrigation Districts (DWER-037)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Flood Risk (DPIRD-007)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Phosphorus Export Risk (DPIRD-010)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Subsurface Acidification Risk (DPIRD-011)

- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Water Erosion Risk (DPIRD-013)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Water Repellence Risk (DPIRD-014)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Waterlogging Risk (DPIRD-015)
- Soil Landscape Land Quality – Wind Erosion Risk (DPIRD-016)
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Best Available
- Soil Landscape Mapping – Systems
- Wheatbelt Wetlands Stage 1 (DBCA-021)

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- ICMS (Incident Complaints Management System) – Points and Polygons
- Threatened Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened Fauna
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

E.2. References

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