# ATTACHMENT 1

## BACKGROUND

### *Proposal background*

The City of Busselton received advice from Arbor Guy Vegetation Management Solutions that a Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) tree Tall Tree Crescent road verge, Reinscourt (0.06 SLK left-hand side), poses a significant threat to public safety, and requires immediate removal. The tree is located approximately 15.5 km east-northeast of Vasse, within the City of Busselton, as shown in Attachment 2.

The proposed action involves the removal of the single Tuart tree, which has an approximate canopy area of 0.006 ha. The tree and its canopy extent are herein referred to as the Study Area.

The Study Area occurs within a mapped Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA), triggered by the presence of a place formerly listed on the (former) Register of the National Estate. Consequently, the clearing exemptions under Regulation 5 of the *Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004* could not be applied, despite the Register no longer having statutory effect.

Vegetation within the Study Area is consistent with characteristics of the Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain Priority 3 Ecological Community (State listing). A Referral Application was therefore not able to be applied. Correspondence with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) confirmed that a Clearing Permit would be required under Section 51E of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

SW Environmental undertook a site visit on the 30th of July 2026. A preliminary assessment of the proposed clearing against the 10 Clearing Principles is provided below, together with a summary of the site visit findings.

### *Summary of biodiversity values*

Key biodiversity values of the proposed clearing area are listed below:

- The Study Area comprises one Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) tree over both native and weedy herbland in Degraded – Completely Degraded condition (EPA, 2016; Keighery, 1994), and an area of paved road.
- The single tree was of a 124 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), containing no evidence of Black Cockatoo[1] breeding or roosting.
- One small hollow (unsuitable for Black Cockatoos) was observed on the southern facing side of the tree, currently being utilised by Galah (*Eolophus roseicapilla*).
- Tuart trees are considered to be of foraging value for Black Cockatoos (Primary foraging species for Carnaby's Cockatoo; Secondary foraging species for FRTBC).
- The tree may provide general habitat for Threatened Western Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*) (Critically Endangered – BC Act & federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity*

[1] Black Cockatoos collectively refer to:

- Forest Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (FRTBC) (*Calyptorhynchus banksii* subsp. *naso*) (Vulnerable – BC & EPBC Acts),
- Baudin's Cockatoo (*Zanda baudinii*) (Endangered – BC & EPBC Acts), and
- Carnaby's Cockatoo (*Zanda latirostris*) (Endangered – BC & EPBC Acts)

*Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), however no possums or dreys were observed. An authorised fauna spotter will supervise the tree removal, to mitigate the risk of possum injury or mortality.

- The Study Area represents the Tuart woodlands and forests of the Swan Coastal Plain Priority 3 Ecological Community (State listing), listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act.
- No Threatened, or otherwise conservation significant flora taxa were observed within the Study Area, although specific searches for this purpose were not undertaken, due to the limited disturbance footprint proposed.
- Overall, the Study Area does not provide connection between two otherwise separated areas of a Tuart ecological community patch or habitat areas. It is, however, connected to adjacent habitat through the tree canopy extent, and is likely to support multiple fauna taxa that may utilise the tree as part of a wider range.
- Photos 1 – 4 depict the tree proposed for removal.




**Photo 1 Removal tree facing north**




**Photo 2 Removal tree facing south**




**Photo 3 Termites at removal tree base**




**Photo 4 Removal tree leaning at base**

# PRELIMINARY CLEARING ASSESSMENT

### *Measures to avoid, minimise, mitigate and manage proposed clearing impacts*

To protect and enhance the remaining environmental values within the site, the following measures would be applied to avoid or minimise the impact to native vegetation and fauna:

- Clearly demarcate the single tree required for removal to avoid unnecessary or accidental vegetation impacts.
- Engage an authorised fauna spotter to supervise the clearing.
- Conduct a toolbox talk with the contractor prior to clearing commencement, communicating environmental management requirements.
- Cleared branches and vegetation material will be piled in existing cleared areas prior to removal, as opposed to creating a large stockpile in areas containing native vegetation.
- Machinery will be clean on entry.
- Fauna management protocols and actions should be implemented prior to and during clearing activities.

## *Preliminary assessment of clearing impacts against the 10 clearing principles*

In assessing whether the project is likely to have a significant impact on the environment, the area under application (0.006 ha) was assessed against the ten clearing principles (EP Act 1986, Schedule 5). The project **may be at variance to Principles a), and b)** and is not at, or not likely to be at variance to the remaining Principles.

Due to the limited extent of clearing (0.006 ha) and minimal expected impact to local biodiversity values, **formal offsets are not proposed**.

**Table 1 Brief assessment against the 10 clearing principles**

| Clearing principle | Preliminary Assessment | Variance |
|---|---|---|
| (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity. | The 0.006 ha Study Area supports one mature Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) over a mixed native and introduced herbland and a section of paved road. The tree occurs within an area of Tuart open forest – woodland, considered representative of the Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the Swan Coastal Plain (SCP) ecological community, listed as Priority 3 at the State level and Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act.<br>When considered in the context of the surrounding vegetation, the Study Area meets the following diagnostic criteria identified in the approved conservation advice for the ecological community (DAWE, 2019):<br>• Occurrence within the SCP.<br>• Occurrence on Spearwood sands.<br>• Presence of more than two living, established Tuarts with a gap of <60 m between outer edges of adjacent canopies.<br>• Generally consistent vegetation structure and associated species.<br>• Evidence of native fauna species commonly associated with the ecological community.<br>Vegetation within the Study Area was Degraded – Completely Degraded. The tree is surrounded by historically and currently disturbed areas, including partially cleared land and paved road.<br>A comprehensive vascular flora inventory and targeted survey for conservation-significant flora were not undertaken during the brief site visit. No conservation-significant flora were observed; however, their absence from the Study Area cannot be conclusively established from the assessment undertaken. | **May be at variance** |

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|---|---|---|
| | A comprehensive fauna inventory was also not undertaken. Several bird species typical of the locality were observed opportunistically, and a Galah was recorded using a small south-facing hollow within the tree.<br>Although the proposed clearing is limited to a single tree with a canopy area of approximately 0.006 ha, the tree forms part of a patch representative of a conservation-significant Priority Ecological Community (PEC) and provides habitat for native fauna. These values are well represented within surrounding vegetation, including Tuart Forest National Park and Sabina River Nature Reserve, located approximately 120 m and 230 m from the Study Area, respectively (DBCA, 2025a). The Study Area itself is degraded and does not appear to support unusually high flora or fauna diversity relative to the surrounding landscape.<br>The small clearing extent, degraded condition and extensive representation of similar habitat nearby are expected to substantially limit the level of impact, however given the PEC status of the tree Study Area and broader vegetation patch, the clearing may be at variance to this principle.<br>**The proposed clearing may be at variance to this 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. | No Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) (2026c) database searches were undertaken due to the minor extent of proposed clearing and limited anticipated impact on surrounding biodiversity values. Conservation significant fauna expected to occur locally include:<br>• FRTBC – Vulnerable (BC & EPBC Acts)<br>• Baudin's Cockatoo – Endangered (BC & EPBC Acts)<br>• Carnaby's Cockatoo – Endangered (BC & EPBC Acts)<br>• *Phascogale tapoatafa wambenger* (South-western Brush-tailed Phascogale) – Conservation Dependent (BC Act)<br>• *Isoodon fusciventer* (Quenda) – Priority 4 (State Listing)<br>DBCA's (2026a) Dandjoo database returned records of 209 predominantly terrestrial vertebrate fauna taxa within 5 km of the Study Area, comrpising six amphibians, 175 birds, 17 mammals and 11 reptiles. Forty-nine taxa were listed at the State level, including 14 Threatened, ten Priority-listed taxa, one Conservation Dependent, one Other Specially Protected and 25 Migratory taxa, of which two were also Priority-listed. Four conservation significant invertebrates were also returned, including one Threatened Bivalve, one Priority-listed Gastropod, one presumed Extinct gastropod, and one Arthropod (DBCA, 2026a).<br>The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) (2026) Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) returned 34 terrestrial fauna taxa listed as Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). These comprised two Threatened mammals and 32 Threatened birds, of which twenty were Migratory. One Threatened fish was also returned.<br>The South West Regional Ecological Linkages (SWREL) project (Molloy et al., 2009) identifies the Study Area as intersecting vegetation mapped as linkage category 1b, comprising vegetation with an edge touching, or located within 100 m of, a natural area selected as category 1a. Vegetation at the site has good canopy connectivity to the north, northeast and northwest. General fauna habitat quality within the Study Area was assessed as low.<br>The Tuart proposed for removal had a DBH of 124 cm and was therefore of sufficient size to develop hollows potentially suitable for black cockatoo breeding. One small, south-facing hollow was observed, occupied by Galahs. The hollow was not considered currently suitable for black cockatoo breeding, but may provide shelter for smaller fauna, including WRP. No active black cockatoo breeding hollows or evidence of roosting were recorded within the Study Area.<br>Black cockatoo foraging residue was not observed; however, a targeted fauna survey and comprehensive search for foraging evidence were not undertaken. Tuart provide Primary foraging resources for Carnaby's Cockatoo and Secondary foraging resources for FRTBC FRTBC (DoEE, 2017; Groom, 2011; Johnstone et al., 2010b, 2010a, 2010c; SEWPaC, 2012; Valentine & Stock, 2008). The Study Area provides ~0.006 ha of potential black cockatoo foraging habitat, being most likely to be utilised by Carnaby's Cockatoo, and to a lesser degree FRTBC.<br>Of conservation significant fauna expected to occur locally, the Study Area may provide a component of suitable core habitat for WRP and Carnaby's Cockatoo, and supporting habitat for FRTBC, Baudin's Cockatoo, South-western Brush-tailed Phascogale and Quenda.<br>No WRP were recorded during the site visit, although there is potential that individuals may be inhabiting the hollow or tree canopy during the time of clearing. Impacts to WRP are most likely to be associated with direct actions, such as killing individuals during construction if they were to occur within the clearing area. A fauna spotter would be present during clearing to manage this risk. Overall, 0.006 ha of potential WRP habitat will be cleared. Indirect impacts such as habitat loss are less likely to significantly effect WRP.<br>Overall, the proposed clearing is minor and is not expected to have a significant impact on local fauna. The clearing will, however, result in the loss of ~0.006 ha of habitat that may be used, or have the potential to be used, by both general and conservation significant fauna. The Study Area | **May be at variance** |

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>is connected to larger habitat areas available within the nearby reserve areas, and local fauna are not likely to rely on the 0.006 ha clearing area as a significant habitat patch. The direct impact to wildlife will be managed by the presence of a fauna spotter.<br>The proposed clearing may be at variance to this principle.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.</td><td>No DBCA (2026d) database searches were undertaken for the assessment, due to the minor extent of clearing required and minimal proposed impact to surrounding biodiversity values. The DBCA (2026a) Dandjoo database identified 62 conservation significant flora taxa with the potential to occur within 5 km of the Study Area, including 15 Threatened taxa and 47 Priority-listed taxa. The DCCEEW (2026) PMST returned 21 Threatened flora taxa from a 5 km search area, of which seven were orchids.<br>Targeted flora surveys were not undertaken within the Study Area, however due to the highly modified and Degraded nature of the site, it is unlikely that rare flora would occur. The clearing area is minimal, and no vegetation of Good or better condition will be impacted. The presence or absence of conservation significant flora within the Study Area cannot be fully determined.<br>The proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.</td><td>Not likely to be at variance</td></tr>
<tr><td>(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>Within the surrounding context, vegetation within the Study Area was considered consistent with diagnostic criteria for the Tuart Woodlands and Forests of the SCP ecological community, listed as Priority 3 at a State level and Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act (DAWE, 2019) (see Principle a). The mature Tuart would form a broader patch of the ecological community.<br>No DBCA (2026b) database searches were undertaken for the assessment, due to the minor extent of proposed clearing and its limited anticipated impact on surrounding biodiversity values. The DCCEEW (2026) PMST returned five Threatened Ecological Communities from a 5 km search area, inclusive of the Tuart Woodlands and Forests ecological community.<br>Based on the vegetation structure, floristic composition, landform and soil characteristics observed during the brief site visit, no other Threatened Ecological Communities are expected to occur within the Study Area.<br>The Study Area does not form part of a State listed Threatened Ecological Community; therefore, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle. The proposed clearing is not likely be at variance to this principle.</td><td>Not likely to be at variance</td></tr>
<tr><td>(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 EPA’s biodiversity conservation objectives seek to retain at least 30% of the pre-European extent of each ecological community and to secure at least 10% of its pre-European extent within conservation reserves (EPA, 2000).<br>The Study Area intersects Vegetation Association 2 and the Spearwood Vegetation System, mapped as part of pre-European vegetation mapping by DPIRD (2019). Vegetation Association 2 retains more than 30 % of its pre-European extent at Statewide, IBRA Region/Subregion and Local Government Area (LGA) scales (Table 2). More than 10 % of its pre-European extent is also reserved for conservation at each scale (Table 2).<br>Table 2 Pre-European vegetation representation (Government of Western Australia, 2019)
<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>% Current Extent Protected (IUCN I - IV) for Conservation (proportion of Pre-European Extent)</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Veg Assoc No. 2</td><td>Statewide</td><td>3,148.85</td><td>1,856.43</td><td>58.96</td><td>46.77</td></tr>
<tr><td>IBRA Region<br>Swan Coastal Plain</td><td>3,141.60</td><td>1,854.72</td><td>59.04</td><td>45.52</td></tr>
<tr><td>IBRA Subregion<br>Perth SWA02</td><td>3,141.60</td><td>1,854.72</td><td>59.04</td><td>45.52</td></tr>
</table></td><td>Not likely to be at variance</td></tr>
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| LGA<br>City of Busselton | 1,188.03 | 695.58 | 58.55 | 45.42 | |

Vegetation complexes characteristic of various combinations of landforms, soils and rainfall along the Swan Coastal Plain south of Lancelin have been mapped at 1:250,000 (DBCA, 2018a; Heddle et al., 1980). The Study Area occurs within the Karrakatta Complex – Central and South (49), which is described as predominantly open forest of Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) - Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) – Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*) and woodland of Jarrah - *Banksia* species. Peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*) is co-dominant south of the Capel River (DBCA, 2018b).

The Karrakatta Complex – Central and South retains 23.49 % of its pre-European extent (Table 3), falling below the 30 % threshold commonly referenced in relation to biodiversity retention objectives. The complex is therefore considered regionally depleted. Within the City of Busselton, 44.63 % of the Complex's pre-European extent remains (Table 3). The complex does not currently meet South West Biodiversity Project criteria for classification as a Locally Significant Natural Area (DBCA, 2019a; Molloy et al., 2007).

**Table 3 Vegetation complex representation (DBCA, 2019b)**

| Vegetation Complex | Pre-European Extent (ha)* | Current Extent (ha)* | % Remaining* | City of Busselton, % Remaining |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Karrakatta Complex – Central and South** | 53,080.99 | 12,467.20 | 23.49 | 44.63 |

*CAR Report SCP Forest
**LGA SCP Forest Report

As the proposed clearing occurs within a vegetation complex that retains less than 30% of its regional pre-European extent, the proposal may be at variance with this Principle. However, the proposed clearing is limited to one tree with an approximate canopy area of 0.006 ha and would have a negligible effect on the remaining extent of the vegetation complex.

The tree canopy is only partially captured by the DPIRD (2023) Native Vegetation Remaining dataset. The tree, being in a Degraded to Completely Degraded (managed) condition, is no longer representative as a significant remnant of native vegetation.

**The proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this principle.**

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| (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland. | The Study Area does not intersect any mapped geomorphic wetlands. The nearest mapped geomorphic wetland is a palusplain flat reserved for conservation, located ~250 m west of the Study Area within Sabina Nature Reserve. A second palusplain flat, categorised as multiple use, occurs ~850 m southeast of the Study Area (DBCA, 2025b). Wetland-associated vegetation was not observed within the Study Area.<br>The closest mapped drainage line is Sabina River, located ~330 m west of the Study Area. No areas of water inundation were observed within the Study Area during the site visit.<br>The clearing proposed is not considered likely to cause any deterioration of surface or underground water.<br>**The proposed clearing is not at variance to this principle.** | Not at variance |
| (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable | Acid Sulfate Soils (ASS) generally occur in low-lying, waterlogged or groundwater-dependent environments and in areas with a shallow groundwater table. The project area occurs in Risk Class 2 (2i, p2) mapped area, with a moderate to low risk of ASS occurring (DWER, 2017). Impacts to ASS will be low due to low volumes of excavation with no dewatering proposed.<br>Contractors will ensure their equipment is clean before entering the site and wash down as required to minimize the spread of weeds, dieback (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) or other pathogens if present. Construction management will ensure that the project will not cause appreciable land degradation. | Not at variance |

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| land degradation. | **The proposed clearing is not at variance to this 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. | The nearest DBCA (2025a) legislated lands include Tuart Forest National Park, located ~124 m southeast and Sabina Nature Reserve, located ~240 m west.<br>Given the separation distances and the localised nature of the proposed clearing, the proposal is not expected to directly or indirectly affect the environmental values of these areas or disrupt their ecological function.<br>**The proposed clearing is not at variance to this principle.** | Not at variance |
| (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 Study Area does not intersect any mapped geomorphic wetlands or drainage lines. No seasonally inundated areas were observed during the site visit, occurring in winter. No excavation or ground disturbance will occur near any watercourse, and the minor scale of the proposed clearing is not expected to result in deterioration of surface water or groundwater quality.<br>**The proposed clearing is not at variance to this principle.** | Not at variance |
| (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding. | The Study Area does not intersect any mapped geomorphic wetlands, seasonally inundated areas or drainage lines. The proposed clearing is limited to the removal of a single mature Tuart tree and is not expected to materially alter local drainage patterns, surface-water runoff or flood-storage capacity.<br>**The proposed clearing is not at variance to this principle.** | Not at variance |

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