

Vegetation Preliminary Clearing Impact Assessment

Yallingup Fire Protection Zone

August 2023



Western Power

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Document Control

Document version history

Version	Date	Amendment
1	28/6/2023	Initial version
2	03/08/2023	Reviewed
3	10/8/2023	Version 2
4	07/11/2024	Version 3

1. Project Information

Assessor details		
Assessor: xxx	Email: xxx	Ph: xxx
Responsible person (Western Power (WP) Project Manager or equivalent)		
WP Project Owner: xxx	Email: xxx	Ph: xxx
WP Delegate: xxx	Email: xxx	Ph: xxx
Project Area		
Project name: Yallingup Fire Protection Zone		Contract/Work Order No: xxx
Main purpose of clearing	Permanent/Temporary	Area to disturb (ha)
Fire protection/hazard reduction around new and existing infrastructure	Permanent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0.22ha
	Temporary <input type="checkbox"/>	0ha
Proposed start date: 1/12/2023		Expected completion date: 30/06/2025
Method of clearing: Mechanical clearing		Machinery to be used: TBC
<p>Project details:</p> <p>Asset Performance Automation and Control require the establishment of a building protection zone and conduct bushfire survivability assessment (triggered by the site being within the bush fire prone area) around telecommunications assets. To pass the survivability assessment clearing and pruning of vegetation will occur within 20m of the Yallingup communication asset. The objective is to increase the bush fire survivability of the asset as an additional measure on top of the existing fire breaks.</p> <p>The clearing area comprises 20m around the telecom asset.</p>		
Guardian Permit ID reference number: PER-0000863		Permit/Exemption number: CPS 1918/11

2. Map/photos

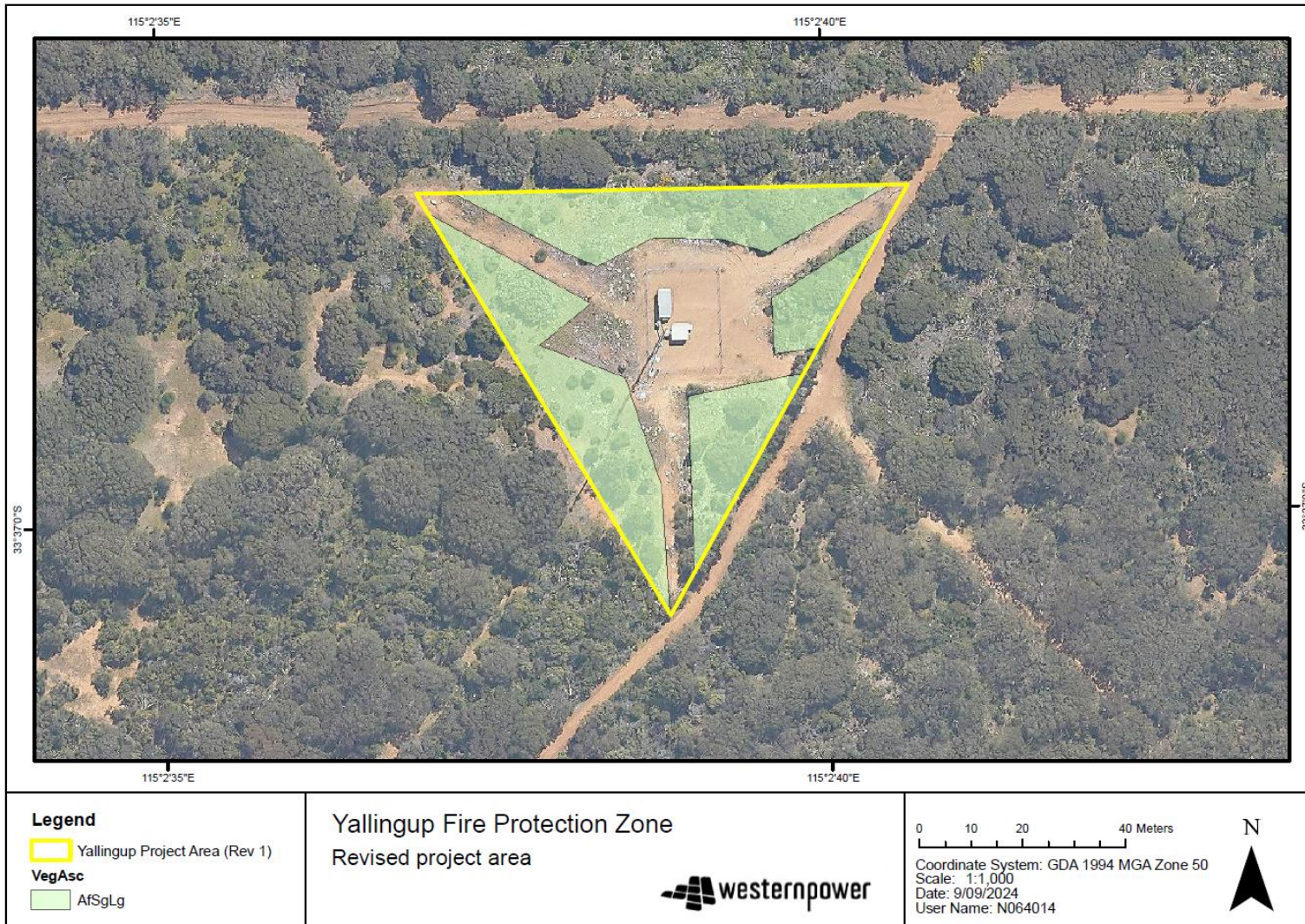
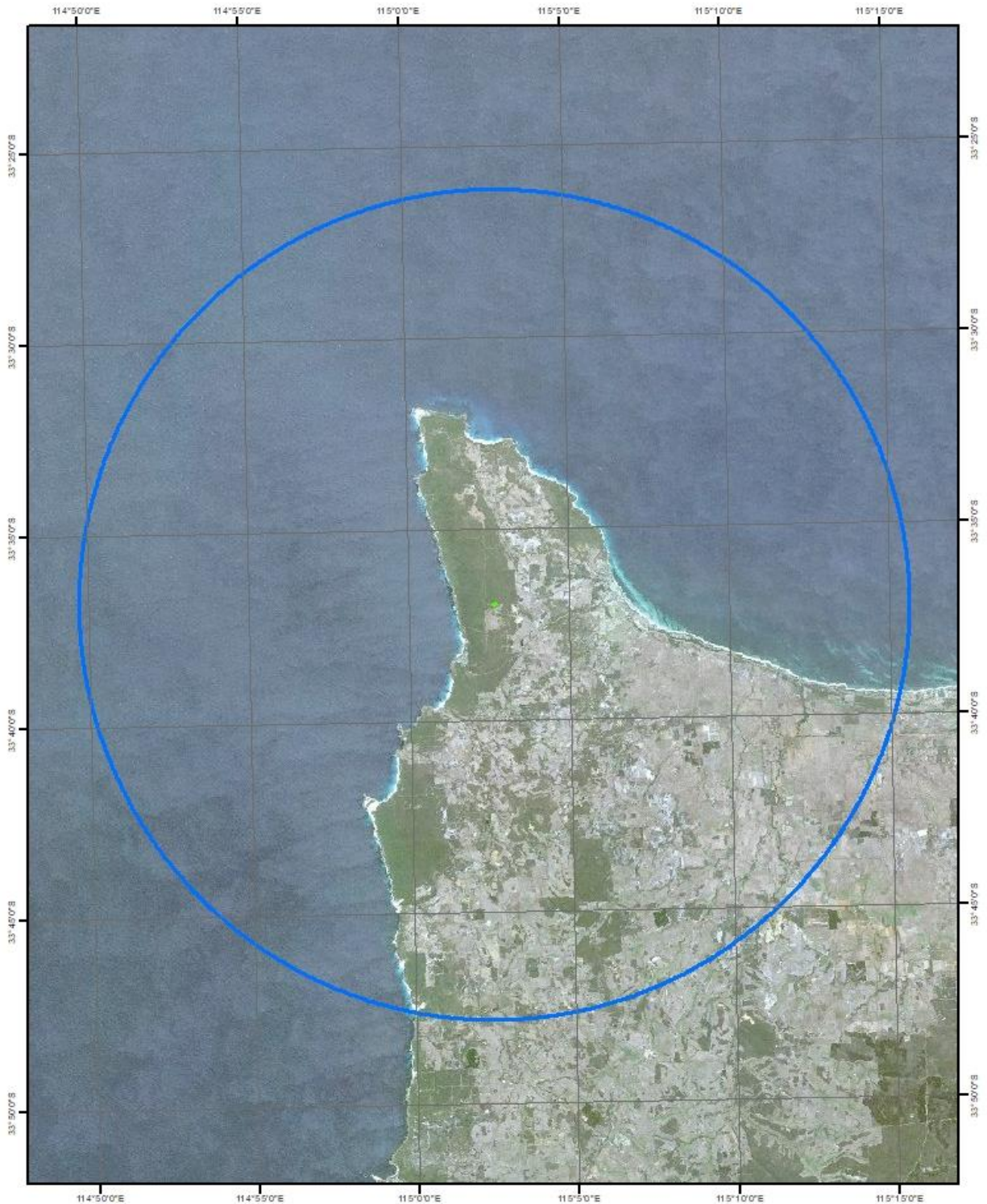


Figure 1: Revised clearing area to allow fire protection zone to be established around the Yallingup Telecom site



Legend

- Yallingup Project Area
- Yallingup Study Area

Yallingup



Figure 2: Study area (20km) Yallingup Telecom Site

Site Photos



Photo 1: Access track into the site. Does not need to be upgraded for this work.



Photo 2: Area close to the telecom site is clear with scattered grass trees.



Photo 3: Photo shows the cleared area around the stay with dense vegetation outside the existing fire protection zone.



Photo 4: Photo showing the cleared area around the stays heading back to the fire protection zone.



Photo 5: Existing cleared area with a shrubland outside the fire protection zone.



Photo 6: Photo showing the cleared area around the telecom site and the current fire maintenance zone which contains some grass trees.

3. Avoid, minimise and reduce extent and impact of clearing

Actions undertaken to avoid, minimise and reduce extent and impact of clearing include:

- using existing cleared area where possible
- unable to avoid due to existing site constraints (i.e. the building protection zone is restricted to being located around the existing asset)
- existing access track will be utilised
- clearing area was reduced to ensure no clearing was required in the adjacent National Park
- clearing area reduced from 0.46ha to 0.22ha

4. Site context

4.1 Land Tenure (Cadastral Information)

Property:

1. Western Power own the telecom asset
2. Private owner- William & Noleen Moncrief for the access track

Conservation Estates:

1. N/A

Local Government:

1. City of Busselton

Other:

1. N/A

4.2 Vegetation description

The vegetation is mapped as pre-European Vegetation Association 990 described as “Low forest: peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*)” (Government of WA, 2019a). It is also mapped as the Gracetown (Ge) vegetation complex, described as “Low woodland of *Agonis flexuosa* with some *Corymbia calophylla* on crests of calcareous dunes in hyperhumid to humid zones.” (Government of WA, 2019b).

The biological survey (AECOM, 2023) identified that the vegetation within the clearing area is “Open *Agonis flexuosa* woodland”-*Agonis flexuosa* and *Eucalyptus marginata* open woodland over *Spyridium globulosum* and *Leucopogon parviflorus* tall shrubland over *Lepidosperma gladiatum* low sedgelands. The clearing area is in Very Good (EPA, 2016) condition.

The vegetation description and condition are based on findings of the biological survey.

4.3 Summary of results of surveys

AECOM (2023) completed a flora, vegetation and fauna survey including vegetation mapping, weed survey, Threatened and Priority flora surveys, a fauna habitat assessment and a targeted black cockatoo habitat assessment. The survey was completed on 3rd October 2022. The summary of the results is outlined below:

- Thirty-six native flora species were recorded. No conservation significant flora species were identified.

- No Weeds of National Significance (WONS) were recorded, however one declared weed species was identified-Arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*).
- One vegetation community was described and mapped, AfSgLg, an Open *Agonis flexuosa* woodland in Very Good condition. This community did not represent a Threatened Ecological Community/Priority Ecological Community (TEC/PEC)
- Six fauna species were recorded. Two fauna species were of conservation significance: Baudin's cockatoo and Quenda
- One fauna habitat was defined and mapped, an Open Peppermint and Jarrah woodland.
- No potential black cockatoo breeding trees (with a DBH>500mm) were identified within the survey area
- The native vegetation was considered high quality foraging habitat for the three Threatened black cockatoo species.

Copy of the survey report available at EDM 62996799.

5. Spatial assessment (SPIDA View)

Western Power's online risk GIS database was analysed, and the following layers are indicated as having the potential for clearing impacts within a local area search radius of 1m.

DBCA managed tenure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bush Forever	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAWS Act Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Native Vegetation Clearing Regs ESAs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation listed fauna	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conservation listed flora	<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Power ESA sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Native vegetation remaining	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Threatened ecological communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Acid Sulfate Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	PDWSA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ramsar or Important Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geomorphic or other mapped wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disease Risk Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Erosion risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offset areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watercourses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Degradation	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other <input type="checkbox"/>							
Details:							

6. Assessment of vegetation clearing impacts

Clearing permit principles full assessment	
<p>a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.</p>	<p>Not likely to be at variance</p>
<p>Assessment:</p> <p>The project requires the clearing of up to 0.27ha of native vegetation. The vegetation is in Very Good (EPA, 2016) condition.</p> <p>Within the study area (20km radius) there are records of 13 Threatened flora and 40 Priority flora species. The biological survey identified that no Threatened or Priority flora occur or are likely to occur within the clearing area. Therefore this project clearing is not likely to impact any Threatened or Priority flora.</p> <p>Within the study area there are records of six State-listed Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) and twelve State-listed Priority Ecological Communities (PECs). Of these the AECOM desktop assessment deemed the Dunsborough Forest Swamp (State Priority (P)1 community located 5km to the east may occur. The biological survey determined that none of these PECs/TECs were likely to occur as the suitable habitat was unlikely to be present and this was confirmed on ground during the survey. Therefore it is unlikely that this project clearing will impact any TECs/PECs.</p> <p>The clearing area represents potential habitat for conservation significant fauna species. As the clearing area involves the removal of 0.27ha of native vegetation adjacent to the existing telecom site and that no mature habitat trees are present within the clearing area, it is unlikely that the removal will represent significant habitat for any fauna species, especially considering the contiguous habitat in the area extends into the surrounding national park which is over 2,300ha in size.</p> <p>Given the above this project clearing does not represent a higher level of biological diversity than the surrounding area. Therefore, this project clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.</p>	
<p>b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises whole or part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.</p>	<p>Is at variance</p>
<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Within the study area (20km radius) there are DBCA records of 76 conservation status fauna species. A large number of these species are marine or wetland species that will not be present in the clearing area or impacted by the project clearing as the required habitat is not present. Of the remaining species the biological survey identified that the clearing area represents potential habitat for six conservation status species. These species are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zanda baudinii</i> (Baudin's cockatoo)-State and Commonwealth Endangered • <i>Zanda latirostris</i> (Carnaby's cockatoo)-State and Commonwealth Endangered • <i>Calyptorhynchus banksii naso</i> (Forest red-tailed black cockatoo)-State and Commonwealth Vulnerable • <i>Ctenotus ora</i> (Coastal plains skink)-P3 • <i>Isodon fusciventer</i> (Quenda)-P4 • <i>Phascogale tapoatafa wambenger</i> (South-western brush-tailed phascogale)-Conservation dependant <p>During the survey foraging evidence for the Quenda was identified and a Baudin's cockatoo was heard calling in the area.</p> <p>The Carnaby's cockatoo inhabits kwongan heathland or woodland dominated by proteaceous species. The Forest red-tailed black cockatoo inhabits jarrah or marri woodland. Baudin's cockatoo inhabits eucalypt woodlands and</p>	

forest and proteaceous woodland and heath. There were no potential nesting or roosting trees in the area identified during the survey, however there is potential foraging habitat present for these species. In the nearby area there are water sources and known roosting sites, the nearest of which is 1.8km to the south of the clearing area. While the 0.27ha of native vegetation represents potential foraging habitat for these species it is unlikely that the removal of vegetation for this project will significantly impact black cockatoo species. The habitat extends into the surrounding area which would also represent suitable foraging habitat for the species. The habitat extends into the 2,300ha area of remnant vegetation in the neighbouring Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park therefore the 0.27ha represents less than 1% of the potential habitat in the immediate area.

Quenda is found in forest, woodland, heath and shrub communities. During the survey, evidence of foraging for this species was identified and it is likely that this species uses the clearing area as transitional habitat. However this clearing area is unlikely to be significant habitat for this species as the area is disturbed by access tracks and the existing infrastructure. This species will utilise the surrounding area, particularly the National Park and as such it is unlikely that the clearing required for this project will significantly impact this species.

The Coastal plains skink inhabits shrubby understorey in Jarrah and Marri woodlands. The South-western brush-tailed phascogale prefers Jarrah forests. These species have the potential to occur in the clearing area though it is unlikely to be significant habitat as both species are likely to utilise this as marginal habitat as it is disturbed by the existing land uses and is adjacent to the National Park which represents better quality habitat.

The clearing area is a relatively small area on the edge of the pre-existing telecom asset which has been previously disturbed by tracks. The removal of the vegetation will not impact fauna linkages in the area, increase fragmentation or reduce the ecological functioning in the area.

The clearing area provides potential habitat for conservation significant fauna, however the biological survey determined that none of these species are likely to be restricted to or reliant upon the habitat for their survival. The clearing area is relatively small compared with the extent of the remnant vegetation in the surrounding area, particularly in the National Park, and the clearing is around a pre-existing asset with historic disturbance. For these reasons, the proposed clearing area is not considered significant to fauna species. Nonetheless, given that the clearing will result in removal of potential black cockatoo foraging habitat, the proposed clearing is at variance to this Principle.

Given the small amount of clearing and that the surrounding area is largely comprised of a conservation area that is over 2, 300ha containing the same or better ecological values it is unlikely that this clearing will have a significant impact. As such an exemption from a clearing impact assessment (CIA), vegetation management plan (VMP), seeking submission and providing an offset will be sought from DWER for this minor impact.

c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for, the continued existence of rare flora.	Not likely to be at variance
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Assessment:

Within the study area (20km radius) there are records of 13 Threatened flora species, the closest of which occurs 1.9km to the south of the clearing area. These species are:

- *Caladenia busselliana*-State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered
- *Caladenia caesarea* subsp. *maritima*- State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered
- *Caladenia huegelii*- State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered
- *Caladenia procera*- State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Critically Endangered
- *Caladenia viridescens*- State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered
- *Eucalyptus x phylacis*- State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered
- *Gastrolobium argyrotichum*- State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Critically Endangered
- *Caladenia excelsa*- State Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered

- *Drakaea micrantha*- State Endangered, Commonwealth Vulnerable
- *Verticordia plumosa* var. *ananeotes*- State Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered
- *Banksia squarrosa* subsp. *argillacea*- State Vulnerable, Commonwealth Vulnerable
- *Daviesia elongata*- State Vulnerable, Commonwealth Vulnerable
- *Wurmbea calcicola*- State Vulnerable, Commonwealth Endangered

The biological survey did not identify any Threatened flora within the clearing area nor did the survey identify any Threatened flora species with the potential to occur in the clearing area (AECOM, 2023).

As this clearing is adjacent to the existing cleared area, no Threatened flora has been identified in the area previously and the biological survey did not identify any Threatened flora it is unlikely that any Threatened flora will be present. Therefore, this project clearing is not likely to be at variance to this 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.	Not likely to be at variance
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Assessment:

Within the study area (20km radius) there are records of six State-listed Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) and a further four TECs that are listed at the Commonwealth level. These TECs are:

- SCP10b Shrublands on southern Swan Coastal Plain Ironstones (Busselton area) (floristic community type 10b as originally described in Gibson et al. (1994)) (State Critically Endangered, Commonwealth Endangered)-located over 11.5km to the south east
- Rimstone Pools and Cave Structures Formed by Microbial Activity on Marine Shorelines (Augusta microbialites) (State Endangered)- located over 6.2km to the south west
- *Calothamnus graniticus* heaths on south-west coastal granites (State Vulnerable)-located over 5.8km to the north east
- SCP09 Dense shrublands on clay flats (floristic community type 9 as originally described in Gibson et al. (1994)) (State Vulnerable, Commonwealth Critically Endangered)-located 5.9km to the east
- SCP1b *Corymbia calophylla* woodlands on heavy soils of the southern Swan Coastal Plain (floristic community type 1b as originally described in Gibson et al. (1994)) (State Vulnerable)-located over 9.7km to the south east
- SCP3b *Corymbia calophylla* - *Eucalyptus marginata* woodlands on sandy clay soils of the southern Swan Coastal Plain (floristic community type 3b as originally described in Gibson et al. (1994))(State Vulnerable)-located over 5.4km to the east
- Claypans with mid dense shrublands of *Melaleuca lateritia* over herbs (State P1, Commonwealth Critically Endangered)-located over 10.3km to the south east
- Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain (State P3, Commonwealth Endangered)-located over 4km to the east
- Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh (State P3, Commonwealth Vulnerable)-located 7km to the east
- SCP21b Southern *Banksia attenuata* woodlands (State P3, Commonwealth Endangered)-located over 16km to the south east

The biological survey determined that none of these TECs were likely to occur as the suitable habitat and species composition was unlikely to be present and this was confirmed on ground during the survey. Therefore it is unlikely that this project clearing will impact any TECs. It is acknowledged that current DWER assessment process does not consider Commonwealth listed TECs that are not endorsed by the Western Australian Minister for Environment under this clearing principle. However, given that Government of Western Australia (2014) requires that these be assessed under principle (d), an assessment of potential impacts on Commonwealth listed TECs is included here to ensure compliance with CPS 1918/10 Condition 5(a).

Given the above this project clearing is not likely to be at variance to this 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.	Not likely to be at variance
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Assessment:

The clearing area is mapped as pre-European Vegetation Association 990 described as “Low forest: peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*)”. The area is also mapped as the Gracetown (Ge) vegetation complex described as “Low woodland of *Agonis flexuosa* with some *Corymbia calophylla* on crests of calcareous dune in hyperhumid to humid zones”.

Pre-European Vegetation Association	Scale	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Percent remaining	% Current Extent remaining in DBCA reserves (proportion of Current extent)
Vegetation Association No. 990	Statewide	18,691.48	14,417.65	77.13	56.39
	IBRA Bioregion Jarrah Forest	386.98	292.42	75.56	22.54
	IBRA Sub-region <i>Southern Jarrah Forest</i>	386.98	292.42	75.56	22.54
	Local Government Authority City of Busselton	4,225.41	1,176.78	27.85	5.04

Source: Government of Western Australia, 2019a

Hedde/Mattiske Vegetation Complex	Pre-European extent (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Percent remaining
Gracetown (Ge)	3,868.52	3,572.44	92.35

Source: Government of Western Australia, 2019b

The vegetation to be cleared is above the 30% threshold that the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001) set for biological diversity to be protected for the vegetation type at all levels but the local government level.

The clearing involves the removal of vegetation from the edge of a previously cleared area associated with the telecom site. This telecom site is located on the edge of a national park that extends for a further 2,300ha into the surrounding landscape. The removal of this vegetation will not impact any linkages, increase fragmentation or reduce the ecological functioning in the area. Particularly as the project area is already fragmented by tracks in the area and the existing telecom site. The biological survey identified that the vegetation within the clearing area represents the same ecological value as the surrounding area. No significant flora or communities were identified within the clearing area during the survey. Therefore, this clearing area does not represent vegetation that is significant as a remnant.

Given the above this project clearing is not likely to be at variance to this 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.	Not likely to be at variance
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Assessment:

Within the study area (20km) there are multiple records of wetlands and watercourses. However the nearest of these waterbodies is a minor non-perennial watercourse located over 1.2km to the south west of the clearing area. The biological survey confirmed that there are no waterbodies or riparian vegetation present within the clearing area (AECOM, 2023).

Given that no riparian vegetation was identified in the biological survey and the distance to the nearest waterbody it is considered unlikely that the native vegetation proposed to be cleared is growing in or in association with a watercourse or wetland. Therefore, this project clearing is considered not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.	Not likely to be at variance
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Assessment:

Aspect	Risk
Flooding	0% moderate to high hazard
Waterlogging	0% moderate to very high hazard
Salinity	0% moderate hazard
Water Erosion	2% very high to extreme hazard
Wind Erosion	99% high to extreme hazard

(Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), 2023)

The DPIRD mapping indicates there is generally an extremely low risk of land degradation in the area, except for the high risk of wind erosion. The clearing area is composed of brown sandy loam (AECOM, 2023), which will have a high infiltration rate so water erosion, flooding and waterlogging will be low. As there will be vegetation remaining in the surrounding area it is unlikely that the project clearing will increase erosion in the area as such a small amount (0.27ha) of vegetation will be removed.

Given the above the proposed clearing is not likely to be 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.	May be at variance
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Assessment:

Within the study area there are multiple conservation areas. These conservation areas are:

- Three un-named nature reserves-the nearest is located 7.3km to the north of the clearing area
- Haag Nature Reserve-located over 13.3km to the south east of the clearing area
- Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park-located adjacent to the clearing area
- Ngari Capes Marine Park-located over 1.8km to the west of the clearing area
- Sugar Loaf Rock Nature Reserve-located over 7.1km to the northwest of the clearing area
- Yelverton National Park-located over 11.2km to the south of the clearing area

- 23 DBCA conservation covenants-the nearest is located over 4.1km to the south east of the clearing area
- 21 DPIRD conservation covenants-the nearest is located over 7.6km to the south of the clearing area.

The clearing area is adjacent to the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. The clearing area will not directly impact this conservation area as the clearing footprint has been reduced to exclude the National Park area. Potential indirect impacts of increased edge effects that may encroach into the national park will be prevented via standard hygiene management measures (e.g. clean on entry) during clearing activities. This conservation area extends for a further 2,300ha in the surrounding area. The clearing area is adjacent to the existing telecom structure and access tracks and as such is unlikely to increase fragmentation or break any linkages in the area.

As the clearing footprint was reduced to avoid the national park, standard management actions will be implemented and the project occurs adjacent to the area previously disturbed for the telecom construction it is unlikely the clearing will impact the national park. Following assessment by DWER, the project clearing has been determined to be may be at variance to this 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.

Not likely to be at variance

Assessment:

Within the study area (20km) there are multiple records of wetlands and watercourses. However the nearest of these waterbodies is a minor non-perennial watercourse located over 1.2km to the south west of the clearing area. The clearing area is not located within any surface water management areas or public drinking water source areas.

The biological survey confirmed that there are no waterbodies present in the clearing area and it is unlikely that the relatively small amount of clearing required for this project (0.27ha) will impact water flows or quality. Due to the minor nature of the works it is unlikely that there will be any adverse impact to the water quality of this area. Given the small scale of clearing within a substantially larger remnant of vegetation, it is considered unlikely that there will be deterioration of underground water quality.

Therefore, this project clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence of flooding.

Not likely to be at variance

Assessment:

The clearing area is composed of brown sandy loam (AECOM, 2023). The soil in the area will be well draining and flooding is unlikely. The DPIRD NRInfo mapping (2023) indicates that the clearing area is mapped as having an extremely low risk of flooding and waterlogging. As the clearing will be around an existing asset and there will be a large amount of vegetation remaining in the area it is unlikely that the clearing of the relatively small area (0.27ha) will increase the chance of flooding. It is unlikely that the clearing activities will result in excessive levels of surface runoff that would increase flooding.

Given the soil properties, mapping risk and the small amount of clearing required it is unlikely that the project clearing will cause or exacerbate flooding in the area. Therefore, this project clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

7. Planning instrument or other relevant matters

This Preliminary clearing impact assessment has been undertaken with regard to Government of Western Australia (2014).

There are no approved planning strategies relevant to this area. No further approvals or licenses are required. There are no Environmental Protection Policies over the area and the land is not subject to an agreement under the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945*.

8. Clearing Permit Details

The Western Power Vegetation Clearing Permit outlining the relevant clearing conditions is available in EDM: 64149532.

As this project is at variance to clearing principle (b) and may be at variance to clearing principles (h) it is deemed to fall within the high-risk threshold. As such it will require a clearing intervention with an SEQT representative or environmental consultant present on site to observe the clearing.

9. Post assessment requirements

Post assessment	Outcome
Could the area be affected by dieback?	Yes-annual rainfall >400mm (BoM, 2023- 798mm)
Could the area be affected by other pathogens?	No
Is a Vegetation Management Plan required?	Yes-exemption being sought
Is rehabilitation/revegetation required?	No
Is a Dieback Management Plan required?	No-dry conditions only
Is an offset required?	Yes-exemption being sought

10. References

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