Clearing Assessment Report

Synergy King Rocks Windfarm - Kondinin Substation Fire Protection and Access Clearing

November 2025

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Document Control

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Version	Date	Amendment
Rev 0	13/12/2024	Initial version
Rev 1	17/01/2025	Final version
Rev 2	4/11/2025	Published version – Minor edits for publishing, adoption of DWER assessment

1. Project Information

Project Area		
Project name: Synergy King Rocks Windfarm - Kondinin Substation Fire Protection and Access Clearing		**Contract/Work Order No:** 60733430
Main purpose of clearing	**Permanent/Temporary**	**Clearing area (ha)**
Native vegetation clearing for the purposes of upgrading any of the above activities where such activities are not exempt from requiring a clearing permit	Permanent ☒ Temporary ☐	**0.18 ha**
Proposed start date: 1/11/2025		**Expected completion date: 28/04/2026**
Method of clearing: Mechanical		**Machinery to be used:** TBD
Project details: Synergy (the Customer) is developing the King Rocks Wind Farm (KRW) in Western Power's East Country load area. In order to meet the required energy supply for the windfarm, the Kondinin substation needs to be upgraded with a new transformer on the west side of the substation. The proposed clearing is required for crane access and fire protection zone for the new transformer. This Clearing Assessment Report (CAR) assesses the clearing requirements required for the works associated with Kondinin Substation upgrade (the project). The project is located within a 0.32 ha Development Envelope (Figure 1) and requires clearing of up to 0.18 ha of native vegetation.		
Guardian Permit ID reference number: PER-0001095		**Permit/Exemption number:** CPS 1918/11

1. Map

Figure 1 Project location and Survey Area

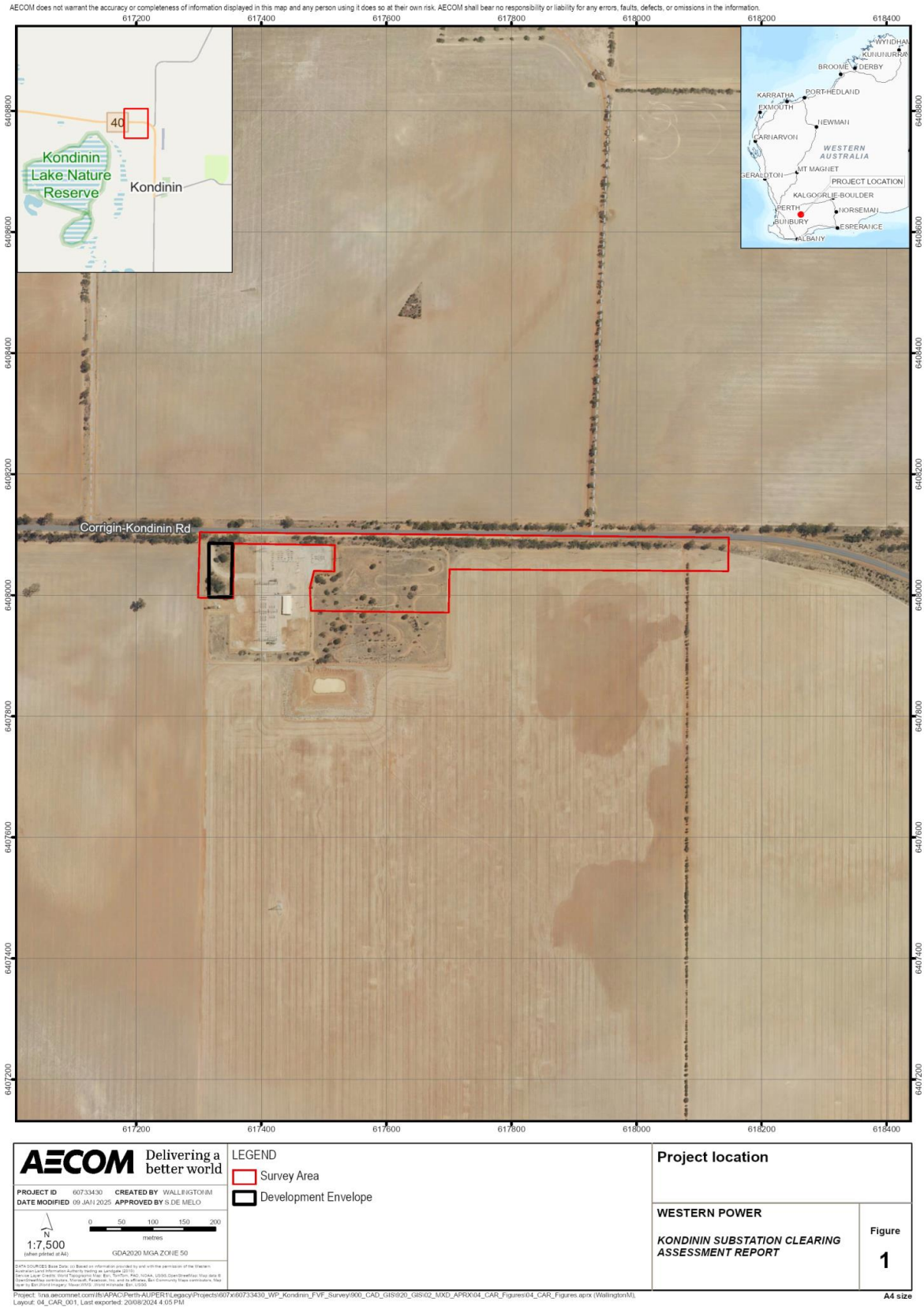

Figure 2 Development Envelope

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

Alternatives to clearing considered during the development of this project are outlined in Table 1:

Alternative to Clearing	Applicable	Discussion
Directional drilling of underground cables instead of open trenching	No	Installation of new cables is not part of the proposed works.
Existing tracks are utilised where possible	Yes	Existing cleared areas and access tracks will be used to minimise the overall clearing area where possible.
Utilising previously cleared areas where possible	Yes	The transformer is being positioned in a previously cleared area.
Consideration of alternative engineering and design options	Yes	The area east of the Development Envelope was considered. However, due to greater clearing impacts, the western side was selected. A firewall was considered to be located adjacent to the fence. However, this reduces security of the asset/property.
Other	No	

3. Site context

3.1 Land Tenure (Cadastral Information)

The project is located on Brookton Highway in the Shire of Kondinin, approximately 3.5 kilometres (km) north of the Township of Kondinin and approximately 233 km east of Perth Central Business District (CBD).

Property:

1. Freehold Land: Electricity Networks Corporation (Lot 3, 4194 CORRIGIN-KONDININ RD, KONDININ)
2. Freehold Land: Biglin, G and T (Lot 4 CORRIGIN-KONDININ RD, KONDININ).

Conservation Estates:

1. N/A

Local Government:

1. Shire of Kondinin

Other:

1. N/A

3.2 Vegetation description

Beard et al. (2013) mapping is used to compare the current extent of remnant vegetation to the pre-European vegetation extent. The Development Envelope falls within pre-European Vegetation Association 1023, characterised as medium woodland of *Eucalyptus loxophleba* (York gum), *Eucalyptus wandoo* (Wandoo), and *Eucalyptus salmonophloia* (Salmon gum).

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) conducted an ecological survey of the Development Envelope on 9 July 2024. The survey area (6.02 ha) was traversed on foot and data collected from observations. The primary focus was on areas supporting native vegetation, and verification of the presence of significant environmental values such as Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) and Threatened and Priority flora and fauna species. A summary of the survey results is described below.

3.3 Summary of survey results

3.3.1 Vegetation

AECOM (2024) undertook an ecological assessment of a 6.02 ha survey area, which included the 0.32 ha project Development Envelope (as shown in Figure 1). This included a comprehensive desktop assessment, flora and vegetation assessment, fauna habitat assessment and targeted Black Cockatoo survey.

Through the desktop assessment, AECOM (2024) identified one DBCA Priority Ecological Community (PEC) with potential to occur in the survey area, the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt (Eucalypt Woodlands). The community is listed as Critically Endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and as Priority 3 by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

AECOM (2024) recorded two vegetation types during the field survey, Eucalypt Woodland (1.35 ha) in 'Good' to 'Completely Degraded' condition, and the heavily modified community 'Trees' (0.35 ha) in 'Completely Degraded' condition. Native vegetation comprised 1.71 ha total, with the majority of the vegetation classified as 'Good' (1.15 ha, 67.3%), followed by 'Completely Degraded' (0.47 ha, 27.5%) and 'Very Good' (0.09 ha, 5.2%). The remaining 4.31 ha of the survey area was mapped as Cleared.

The Eucalypt Woodland vegetation type recorded was representative of the Eucalypt Woodland of the Western Australian Wheatbelt PEC, occupying 0.09 ha within the survey area, representing a part of a larger 0.25 ha Patch. The community was described as *Eucalyptus loxophleba* subsp. *supralaevis, Eucalyptus myridena* and *Eucalyptus salubris* mid to low mallee to open mallee woodlands over *Leptospermum erubescens, Acacia acuminata* and *Hibbertia glaucophylla* tall to low shrubland over *Avena barbata, Austrostipa elegantissima* and *Enteropogon ramosus* tall tussock grassland. This community was recorded on red-brown sandy clay loam with laterite gravel on the surface. AECOM (2024) classified the condition of the community as ranging from Good to Completely Degraded. Factors contributing to the decline in vegetation condition included historical clearing for recreational activities, weed invasion and edge effects. The Eucalypt Woodlands PEC does not occur within the Development Envelope.

The development envelope consists of the heavily modified community 'Trees' (0.35 ha), represented by scattered mid isolated native trees (*Eucalyptus myriadena, Eucalytpus salubris, Eucalytpu longicornis, Eucalytpu kongininensis*) over paddock grasses.

3.3.2 Flora

Twenty-eight (28) Threatened flora species and 101 Priority species, were identified during the desktop assessment. Of these, four Priority species were assessed as 'high' and seven were 'moderate' likelihood to

occur in the survey area. The remaining species had a 'low' or negligible likelihood. No Threatened flora were considered 'highly' or 'moderately' likely to occur.

The following flora species had a 'high' likelihood to occur:

- *Acacia deflexa* (P3)
- *Acacia inophloia* (P3)
- *Chamelaucium* sp. Parker Range (B.H. Smith 1255) (P1)
- *Hibbertia* sp. Bendering (J.W. Horn 4101) (P1).

AECOM (2024) recorded 46 flora species comprising 35 native and nine weed species during the field survey. The most prolific families recorded were *Myrtaceae* (ten species), *Fabaceae* (seven species), *Chenopodiaceae* and *Poaceae* (six species each).

No Threatened or Priority flora were identified in the survey, and none were anticipated to occur in the post-survey assessment. Two species recorded represent range extensions (*Allocasuarina helmsii* and *Eucalyptus loxophleba* subsp. *supralaevis)*. No weed species recorded were listed as Declared Pests under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007* (BAM Act).

3.3.3 Fauna

Thirty-five (35) Threatened, Priority and Migratory fauna species were identified in the desktop assessment. This included 22 bird, 10 mammal and three invertebrate species. Of these species, four species were evaluated as having a 'high' likelihood of occurrence, two species were considered to have a 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence, and the remaining 29 species were assessed as low or negligible likelihood of occurrence.

The species with a 'high' or 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Significant fauna species with High to Moderate Likelihood

Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation status	
		BC Act / DBCA[1]	EPBC Act[2]
High			
Phascogale calura	Red-tailed Phascogale	EN	V
Zanda latirostris	Carnaby's Cockatoo	EN	E
Leipoa ocellata	Malleefowl	VU	V
Platycercus icterotis xanthogenys	Western Rosella	P4	
Moderate			
Notamacropus irma	Western Brush Wallaby	P4	
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine Falcon	OS	

During the field survey, AECOM (2024) recorded 19 fauna species, including 16 birds, two mammals and one reptile. No direct or indirect evidence for any Threatened or Priority fauna was recorded during the field survey.

Four fauna habitats were defined and mapped for the survey area. This included two modified and two native fauna habitats. The native fauna habitats were, Eucalyptus Woodland (0.09 ha, 1.48%) and Mallee Woodland (1.28 ha, 20.42%), while the modified habitats were Paddock (1.90 ha, 30.35%) and Modified Woodland (2.46 ha, 39.31%). All four habitats were considered potential marginal habitats for the Carnaby's Cockatoo, Peregrine Falcon, and Western Rosella.

Cleared areas (0.53 ha, 8.44%) were also mapped within the survey area but were not considered suitable fauna habitat, due to their lack of vegetation and the presence of infrastructure (substation). Cleared areas were hardstand tracks and roads, or highly modified or degraded vegetation with no biological benefit. The substation may be utilised by native fauna for shelter but is unlikely to provide habitat for any significant fauna listed in Table 1.

AECOM (2024) conducted a Black Cockatoo assessment using a combination of the DAWE (2022) foraging scoring tool and the Bamford (2020) foraging methodology. The DAWE foraging habitat assessment resulted in a score of 7, considered 'high quality native foraging' for all four fauna habitat types within the survey area (5.73 ha). Two attributes were identified that reduced the functionality of foraging habitat for Carnaby's Cockatoo, with no evidence of feeding observed and no confirmed roosting sites within 20 km of the survey area.

The Bamford (2020) refined foraging habitat value considers known breeding and roosting sites, and the characteristics associated with each fauna habitat type. The Eucalyptus Woodland, Mallee Woodland and Modified Woodland habitat types (3.83 ha total) were assessed as '2' (low quality) and the Paddock (1.90 ha) was assessed as '1' (negligible).

Nine potential nesting trees with a suitable Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) (diameter greater than 500 mm) were identified within the survey area, of which none occur in the Development Envelope. No known roosting sites were observed.

4. 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 5 km.

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

5. Assessment of vegetation clearing impacts

Clearing of native vegetation is regulated by Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) that administers the clearing provision under Part V Division 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). Clearing of native vegetation requires a clearing permit under Part V of the EP Act, except when a proposal is assessed under Schedule 6 of the Act or is prescribed by regulation in the Environmental Protection (Clearing Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004.

The proposed native vegetation clearing has been assessed against each of the 10 Clearing Principles listed under Schedule 5 of the EP Act in accordance with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation guideline "*A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation under Part V Division 2 of the Environment Protection Act 1986"* (DER, 2014).

The assessment is detailed in Table 2.-

Table 2-- Clearing permit principles assessment

Clearing permit principles full assessment	
a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.	**May be at variance**
Assessment: The project requires the clearing of up to 0.18 ha of native vegetation (clearing area) within a 0.32 ha Development Envelope (Figure 1). In July 2024, AECOM conducted an ecological assessment of a 6.02 ha survey area, which included the 0.32 ha project Development Envelope. The assessment included a comprehensive desktop review, flora and vegetation survey, fauna habitat assessment and targeted Black Cockatoo survey (AECOM, 2024). The desktop assessment utilised data from the DBCA flora, fauna and communities' database within 50 km of the survey area, the Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) within 50 km, and Western Power Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESAs). The project is located within the Western Mallee IBRA bioregion (MAL-02) (DCCEEW, 2012). Although the survey was conducted outside the ideal season for flora and vegetation, as per the EPA Technical Guide (EPA, 2016), this was not considered a significant limitation. Based on the condition of the survey area, an out-of-season survey should not affect the ability to detect and map significant vegetation communities. Additionally, the targeted significant flora species were perennial shrubs and would have been present at the time of the survey (AECOM, 2024). **Vegetation:** One Beard et. al. (2013) pre-European vegetation association is mapped within the clearing area, MAL 1023: Medium woodland; York gum (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*), Wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) and Salmon gum (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*). Through the desktop assessment, AECOM (2024) identified one PEC with potential to occur in the survey area, the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt (Eucalypt Woodlands) (P3, DBCA). The community is also listed as Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act. AECOM (2024) mapped one vegetation type within the clearing area, the heavily modified community 'Trees', in a Completely Degraded (EPA, 2016) condition. The community is described as scattered mid isolated native trees (*Eucalyptus myriadena*, *Eucalytpu salubris*, *Eucalytpu longicornis*, *Eucalytpu kongininensis*) over paddock grasses. AECOM (2024) also recorded the Priority 3 Eucalypt Woodlands community (0.09 ha) within the survey area; however, the PEC is located outside the Development Envelope. The proposed clearing will not impact this PEC. **Flora:** Through the desktop assessment, AECOM identified 28 Threatened flora and 101 Priority flora known to occur in the study area. Of these, four Priority species had a 'high' likelihood of occurrence within the survey area, and seven Priority species had a 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence. The remaining species had a 'low' or negligible likelihood of occurrence.	

No Threatened flora are considered highly or moderately likely to occur within the survey area.

The Priority flora species identified as potentially occurring within the survey area are listed in the table below.

Taxon	Cons. Status DBCA
High	
Acacia deflexa	P3
Acacia inophloia	P3
Chamelaucium sp. Parker Range (B.H. Smith 1255)	P1
Hibbertia sp. Bendering (J.W. Horn 4101)	P1
Moderate	
Acacia arcuatilis	P2
Acacia sclerophylla var. *teretiuscula*	P1
Eucalyptus ornata	P3
Melaleuca grieveana	P1
Styphelia sp. Dumbleyung (A.J.G. Wilson 146) PN	P3
Styphelia subglauca	P3
Synaphea constricta	P3

AECOM (2024) recorded 46 flora species comprising 35 native and nine weed species in the survey area. The most prolific families were *Myrtaceae* (ten species), *Fabaceae* (seven species), *Chenopodiaceae* and *Poaceae* (six species each).

No Threatened or Priority flora were identified in the survey area, and none were assessed as likely to occur in the post-survey assessment. Two of the native species (*Allocasuarina helmsii* and *Eucalyptus loxophleba* subsp. *supralaevis)*, recorded were considered to represent a range extension. Neither of these species were recorded inside the Development Envelope.

No weed species recorded were listed as Declared Pests under the BAM Act.

Fauna:

Through the desktop assessment, AECOM (2024) identified 35 Threatened, Priority and Migratory fauna within a 50 km buffer from the survey area. Of these, four species were considered as having a 'high' likelihood of occurrence within the survey area, two with a 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence, and the remaining 29 species were considered as low or negligible likelihood of occurrence. The species with a 'high' or 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence are shown in the table below:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Conservation status	
		BC Act / DBCA[1]	EPBC Act[2]
High			
Phascogale calura	Red-tailed Phascogale	EN	V
Zanda latirostris	Carnaby's Cockatoo	EN	E
Leipoa ocellata	Malleefowl	VU	V
Platycercus icterotis xanthogenys	Western Rosella	P4	
Moderate			

Notamacropus irma	Western Brush Wallaby	P4	
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine Falcon	OS	

1. BC Conservation status codes: EN Endangered, VU Vulnerable, OS Other specially protected, P1-4 Priority Species.
2. EPBC Conservation status codes: E Endangered, V Vulnerable.

A total of 18 native fauna species were recorded during the field survey and one introduced species (sheep, deceased). No direct or indirect evidence for any significant fauna species was recorded in the field survey (AECOM, 2024).

AECOM (2024) mapped one fauna habitat within the Development Envelope, Modified Woodland, consisting of scattered Native Eucalyptus in Paddock (0.18 ha, 56.25%). It was determined that this habitat could be potentially utilised by three significant fauna species as listed below:

- Carnaby's Cockatoo (*Zanda latirostris*)
- Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)
- Western Rosella (*Platycercus icterotis xanthogenys*).

AECOM (2024) completed a Black Cockatoo assessment as part of the ecological survey. Utilising the Bamford (2020) refined scoring tool, the Modified Woodland habitat was scored as '2' (low quality foraging habitat). Nine potential nesting trees with a suitable DBH were identified within the survey area, of which none are located in the Development Envelope. No known roosting sites were observed.

The project involves the removal of up to 0.18 ha of sparse regrowth native vegetation within a 0.32 ha Development Envelope. No significant vegetation or flora, or critical fauna habitat was recorded within the clearing area. Additionally, the Development Envelope has been subject to historical clearing and modification.

The clearing area does not comprise a high level of biological diversity and represents vegetation in a Completely Degraded condition.

Based on the above information, DWER have considered that the proposed clearing may be at variance with this Principle.

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.	**Not likely to be at variance**

Assessment:

AECOM (2024) identified 35 significant fauna species that potentially occur in the study area in the desktop assessment. This included 22 bird, ten mammal and three invertebrate species. Of the 35 species, four were evaluated as having 'high' likelihood of occurrence due to the presence of recent records in proximity to the survey area. Two species were considered to have a 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence, and the remaining 29 species considered to have a low or negligible likelihood of occurrence due to the lack of suitable habitat, old or distant records. The six species with a 'high' and 'moderate' likelihood of occurrence are listed below:

- *Phascogale calura* (Red-tailed Phascogale) – Vulnerable
- *Leipoa ocellata* (Malleefowl) – Vulnerable
- *Zanda latirostris* (Carnaby's Cockatoo) – Endangered
- *Falco peregrinus* (Peregrine Falcon) (Other specially protected)
- *Notamcropus irma* (Western Brush Wallaby) – Priority 4
- *Platycercus icterotis xanthogenys* (Western Rosella) – Priority 4

No direct or indirect evidence for any significant fauna species was recorded during the field survey (AECOM, 2024).

AECOM (2024) recorded one fauna habitat type within the Development Envelope, Modified Woodland, consisting of scattered native *Eucalyptus* in paddock (0.18 ha, 56.25%). Three of the species listed above, the Red-tailed Phascogale, Western Brush Wallaby and Malleefowl, were evaluated as unlikely to occur within the survey area in the post-survey assessment, due to the lack of suitable habitat available (AECOM, 2024).

The remaining three species, Carnaby's Cockatoo, Peregrine Falcon and the Western Rosella, were considered to potentially use or fly over the Modified Woodland habitat.

The Peregrine Falcon is found in a range of habitats including coastal and inland cliffs or open woodlands near water (BirdLife Australia, 2024), this species may overfly the Development Envelope.

The Western Rosella occupies open Eucalypt forests and timbered areas, including orchards and cultivated land. The *xanthogenys* subspecies is found in drier woodland, with a heath understorey (BirdLife Australia, 2024). This species may overfly the Development Envelope.

The Development Envelope is located within the mapped distribution of the Carnaby's Cockatoo, which is most commonly found in semi-arid parts of the south-west and occurs in uncleared and remnant areas of woodland, shrubland and kwongan heath dominated by proteaceous species (DPaW, 2017). Nine potential Black Cockatoo breeding trees were recorded within the survey area, of which none are located in the clearing area.

AECOM (2024) conducted a Black Cockatoo assessment of the survey area. Utilising the Bamford (2020) refined scoring tool, the Modified Woodland habitat was scored as '2' (low quality foraging). No evidence of foraging was recorded during the survey.

No known roosting sites were observed within the survey area, with the closest confirmed roost area from Birdlife data provided by DBCA being 106 km north of the survey area. The survey area occurs in the mapped breeding range of this species but is outside of the EPA (2019) current distribution.

The Development Envelope is a relatively small area adjacent to the Kondinin substation and along an existing power line corridor. The removal of up to 0.18 ha of Completely Degraded vegetation will not impact fauna linkages in the area as it is already fragmented, and the vegetation proposed to be cleared is sparse and devoid of any key habitat values such as hollows or fallen logs.

The vegetation within the clearing area is unlikely to represent significant habitat for native fauna, particularly as there is an adjacent corridor of vegetation remaining along Corrigin-Kondinin Road.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on any significant fauna habitat, and therefore is not likely to be at variance with this Principle.

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

Assessment:

AECOM identified 28 Threatened flora through the desktop assessment. Of these, eight were assessed as having a low likelihood of occurring within the survey area and the remaining 20 species were assessed as negligible, due to a lack of suitable habitat. No Threatened flora were considered highly or moderately likely to occur.

No Threatened flora were recorded during the field survey. In the post-survey assessment, the likelihood was reduced to negligible for all Threatened flora identified in the desktop assessment. This was due to the lack of suitable habitat and the disturbed vegetation present in the survey area.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance with 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.	**May be at variance**

Assessment:

Through the desktop assessment, one PEC was identified as occurring within the Development Envelope, the Eucalypt Woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt, classified as a Priority 3 by DBCA. This community is listed under the EPBC Act as a Critically Endangered TEC, and is therefore considered under this principle to comply with CPS 1918/11 Condition 5(a).

AECOM (2024), recorded 0.09 ha of Eucalypt Woodlands TEC within the survey area, of which none occurs within the Development Envelope. The proposed clearing will not impact this TEC.

The project does not require clearing of any vegetation associated with a TEC, however the DWER have determined that the proposed clearing may 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.	**Is at variance**

Assessment:

One vegetation type was recorded within the clearing area, the heavily modified community 'Trees'. Described as scattered mid isolated native trees (*Eucalyptus myriadena*, *Eucalytpu salubris*, *Eucalytpu longicornis*, *Eucalytpu kongininensis*) over paddock grasses. The vegetation is in Completely Degraded (EPA, 2016) condition.

There is one pre-European vegetation association mapped across the clearing area, vegetation association 1023; Medium woodland, York gum (*Eucalyptus loxophelba*), wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) and Salmon gum (*Eucalyptus salmonophloia*).

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. 1023	**Statewide**	1,601,605.76	172,875.16	10.79	10.95
	IBRA Bioregion Mallee (MAL)	63,990.29	4,654.38	7.27	7.56
	IBRA Sub-region Western Mallee (MAL-02)	63,990.29	4,654.38	7.27	7.56
	Local Government Authority Shire of Kondinin	25,884.03	1,846.19	7.13	1.23

*IBRA = Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia

The National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation set the threshold for biological diversity to be protected as 30%. The association 1023 has been subject to extensive clearing with less than the 30% threshold remaining across State, IBRA and local Shire scales.

The clearing required is relatively small, up to 0.18 ha within a 0.32 ha Development Envelope. This area is mainly within pastoral land that has a high level of weed invasion and lacks mid and overstorey strata. The clearing will be confined to highly disturbed land and Completely Degraded vegetation. The vegetation does not comprise any significant habitat for flora or fauna. The proposed clearing will not remove any ecological linkages across the landscape as native vegetation will be retained in the Corrigin-Kondinin Rd road reserve.

The vegetation surrounding the Development Envelope (in Very Good condition) will not be impacted by the project.

While the vegetation is not considered a significant remnant, as the project requires clearing native vegetation within an area that has been extensively cleared, the project is at variance to this principle. However, the impact of clearing is not likely to be significant on remnant native vegetation.

Given the proposed clearing is at variance to this Principle, revegetation of an area of similar size will be undertaken on the property as per the Vegetation Management Plan, Appendix B.

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 at variance**

Assessment:

No mapped surface water bodies or riparian vegetation occur within the clearing area.

Within the desktop study area there is a large basin located 2.5 km southwest of the Kondinin substation, the Kondinin Lake. The lake is connected to a mosaic of basins located 14 km south of Kondinin substation associated with Lockhart River, which flows northwest. The Lockhart River has a very low gradient, with significant discharges unlikely except in extreme rainfall events.

Vegetation within the Development Envelope is highly degraded, is in historically cleared pastoral land, therefore is not representative of riparian vegetation.

The vegetation within the clearing area is not considered to be growing in association with a watercourse or wetland. Therefore, this clearing is not considered to be at variance with 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**

Assessment:

The Development Envelope is mapped within the Corrigin landscape system (259Co) within the South-western Zone of Ancient Drainage (259) of the Avon Province (25). This zone is characterised by an ancient plain of low relief on weathered granites with sluggish drainage systems and uplands dominated by sands and gravels. Lateritic uplands dominated by grey sandy gravel plain predominately with Proteaceous species (DPIRD, 2015).

The system is characterised by gently undulating rises to undulating low hills in the southern wheatbelt, with laterite, sandy and loamy gravels, duplexes, loamy earths and clays over mixed mafic rock (DPIRD, 2022). Vegetation consists of heath, Mallee and Salmon Gum.

The Development Envelope occurs across two soil types, the Corrigin 2a phase and the Corrigin 3 undifferentiated phase. Corrigin 2a phase is described as smooth undulating slopes blanketed by aeolian deposits over various substrates, with soils that are predominantly composed of clay and are calcareous with morel vegetation (DPIRD, 2019). Corrigin 3 undifferentiated phase is described as colluvial and residual mantle, gently undulating slopes, with acid to neutral duplexes under mallee on upper to mid slopes (DPIRD, 2019). Mallee, Gimlet and Salmon gum vegetation on neutral to alkaline duplexes and clays in lower positions.

The climate of the Development Envelope is characterised as a Mediterranean to semi-arid climate defined as wet winters and dry summer months (BoM, 2023).

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD, 2019) mapping indicates that there is a moderate risk of land degradation (wind erosion) in the area. The Development Envelope consists of smoothly undulating slopes covered by aeolian deposits over various substrates. The calcareous soils have a high infiltration rate, making waterlogging unlikely. Consequently, water erosion and flooding are unlikely to pose significant risks. The project requires minimal clearing of native vegetation in completely degraded condition, therefore a moderate risk of wind erosion will not significantly impact the area.

The project involves the removal of 0.18 ha of sparse vegetation and any re-growth vegetation within the Development Envelope will not be re-cleared for this project. The flat terrain and vegetation remaining in the

surrounding area will minimise the risk or erosion in the area which will reduce the risk of appreciable land degradation.

Given the above, the project is not likely to be at variance with 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.	**Not at variance**

Assessment:

Within the study area (20 km radius), there are four nature reserves, the closest of which is located 2 km southwest of the Development Envelope. There are 10 DPIRD conservation covenants, the closest of which is located 10 km southwest of the Development Envelope.

The project requires clearing of up to 0.18 ha of vegetation, mapped as a heavily modified community, 'Trees', in 'Completely Degraded' condition.

Given no conservation areas occur within or within close proximity to the Development Envelope and the small scale of clearing required, the project is not at variance with 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 at variance**

Assessment:

Within the study area (20 km radius), there are two watercourses, the Kondinin Lake and the Lockhart River system. The Lockhart River lies within a zone of ancient drainage and is characterised by a landscape of very low relief with sluggish drainage through salt lake systems in broad valley floors. The river does not flow as one linked system except in extreme rainfall events (DoW, 2008).

The Development Envelope does not intersect either the Kondinin Lake or Lockhart River or any underground water courses. Additionally, the area is not located within any *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* areas or Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA). There are no known aquatic or terrestrial Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) located within the Development Envelope.

No disturbance to any surface water or groundwater is anticipated for the project. Given the minor nature of the works, it is unlikely the project will impact the water quality of this area.

Given the above, the project is not at variance with this Principle.

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

Assessment:

The mean annual rainfall in the area of the Development Envelope is 316.3 mm (BoM, 2023).

The Development Envelope is composed of smoothly undulating slopes covered by aeolian deposits over various substrates (DPIRD, 2019). Soils are mainly calcareous and clayey. The DPIRD NRInfo (2022) mapping indicates that the project envelope is mapped as having an extremely low risk of flooding (i.e. 0%).

The clearing area comprises Completely Degraded vegetation and is located adjacent to existing infrastructure in areas that have been historically cleared. The vegetation to be removed is sparse and therefore it is unlikely that the clearing will exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

The project is not at variance with this Principle.

6. Planning instrument or other relevant matters

The project is within a Rural zone, within the Shire of Kondinin. There are no approved planning strategies relevant to this area. No further approvals or licences 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.*

The proposed clearing (0.18 ha) is unlikely to have a significant social and or environmental impact or generate significant public interest due to the small scale of the work. Therefore, referral to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is not required.

No historic heritage sites, Aboriginal heritage sites, or land subject to native title are located within the works so no additional approvals are required.

The associated effect on the environment is consistent with the approved Environmental Protection Policies.

The clearing assessment has been undertaken in accordance with *A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation* (Government of Western Australia, 2014).

7. Clearing Permit Details

Western Power manages impacts of clearing through the implementation of an internal Vegetation Clearing Permit. The Western Power Vegetation Clearing Permit outlining the relevant clearing conditions is available in CPS 1918/11. CPS 1918-11 - Purpose Permit and Decision Report.pdf

8. Post assessment requirements

Post assessment	Outcome	Justification / Further Action Required
Are submissions required?	Yes	Project clearing is required to be advertised on the Western Power website for comment, Submissions will also be sought from interested parties as per Condition 7 of CPS 1918/11.
Could the area be affected by dieback?	No	Annual rainfall <400 mm.
Could the area be affected by other pathogens?	No	No other pathogens were identified within the survey area.
Is a Vegetation Management Plan required?	Yes	Appendix A
Is rehabilitation/revegetation required?	Yes	DWER recommended rehabilitation of an adjacent area to a similar size and condition as the proposed clearing.
Is a Dieback Management Plan required?	No	
Is an offset required?	No	As the project is at variance with Principle e, submissions and an offset proposal are required. Exemption granted by DWER based on rehabilitation condition in the Vegetation Management Plan (Table 1, Appendix B).

What is the clearing risk rating?	Medium	As the project is at variance with Principle e, the project is a medium risk and requires a clearing intervention by Contract Compliance Specialist (CCS).

9. References

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Environmental Protection Authority. (2016). *Technical Guide – Terrestrial Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (eds. K Freeman, G Stack, S Thomas and N Woolfrey). Perth, Western Australia.

Government of Western Australia (2014). *A Guide to the Assessment of Applications to Clear Native Vegetation Under Part V Division 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Department of Environment Regulation.

Appendix A Stakeholder consultation

In accordance with Condition 7 of CPS 1918/11, Western Power has published the Clearing Assessment Report on its website and invited submissions from the public. Responses to public submissions will be published on the website.

Western Power has identified the following parties as having an interest in aspects of the proposed clearing that are at variance or may be at variance to the clearing principles.

Stakeholders	Invited to make submissions?	Date sent
Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation within Department of Primary Industries and Regional Department (DPIRD)	Yes ☐ Not required ☒	N/A
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Drainage and Waterways Branch	Yes ☐ Not required ☒	N/A
Conservation Council of WA	Yes ☐ Not required ☒	N/A
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Yes ☐ Not required ☒	N/A
Local Government where the clearing is proposed	Yes ☒ Not required ☐	TBC
Owner or occupier of the land on which clearing is proposed	Yes ☐ Not required ☒	N/A
Any other party that may have an interest	Yes ☐ Not required ☒	N/A

Appendix B Vegetation Management Plan

1.1 Introduction

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) has assessed the proposed native vegetation clearing by Western Power, as part of the Synergy King Rocks Windfarm - Kondinin Substation Fire Protection and Access Clearing (the Project). This assessment was conducted against the 10 Clearing Principles outlined in Schedule 5 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act), following the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) guidelines "*A guide to the assessment of applications to clear native vegetation under Part V Division 2 of the Environment Protection Act 1986*" (DER 2014).

The proposed clearing area (the Proposal) includes native vegetation within an area mapped as vegetation type 1023, which has less than 30% remaining. Thus, the clearing is at variance with Clearing 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.

This Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) has been prepared in compliance with condition 6 (j) of Clearing Permit CPS 1918/11.

1.2 Scope of the Project Activities

Synergy (the Customer) is developing the King Rocks Wind Farm (KRW) in Western Power's East Country load area. In order to meet the required energy supply for the windfarm, the Kondinin substation needs to be upgraded with a new transformer on the west side of the substation.

The proposed clearing of 0.18 ha is required for crane access and fire protection zone for the new transformer.

This clearing is at variance with Clearing Principle (e), which requires a VMP to comply with condition 6 (j) of Clearing Permit CPS 1918/11.

1.3 Scope of the Vegetation Management Plan

The VMP highlights the project management issues and provides actions required to be undertaken before, during and following project completion. The aim of this VMP is to provide management actions to avoid, mitigate and/or manage clearing impacts to the local environment, to allocate areas of responsibility required for the implementation of management actions identified and to provide timeframes for completion and monitoring actions.

1.4 Non-Compliance

All non-compliances related to this VMP will follow Western Power's incident management procedure and will be logged in Guardian.

Table 2: Non-Compliance and Management Actions

Project Component	Management Action	Evidence Action completed	Responsible Person	Completion Timeframe
Standard Actions				
Clearing	At the pre-start meeting provide clear maps indicating the areas approved to be cleared to the crew undertaking the works	Record sheet to be signed at pre-start meeting by all personnel.	Site Supervisor	Prior to clearing commencing
	All access and laydown areas will be clearly delineated on plans	Plans to be captured in EDM/Volt.	Site Supervisor	Prior to clearing commencing
	Have a copy (electronic or hard copy) of the VMP on site during the clearing activities	One compliance inspection will occur prior to clearing.	Site Supervisor	Once clearing has been completed
	Clearing of vegetation shall not exceed the approved limits of clearing. All vegetation to be cleared will be demarcated on site prior to the commencement of project activities	One compliance inspection will occur prior to clearing. Representative photos will be taken.	Site Supervisor	Prior to clearing commencing
	Any vegetation cleared beyond the extent of approvals shall be rehabilitated to the pre-clearing condition	Clearing incident reported	Site Supervisor	Within 24 months
Specific Actions A				
Principle e	Where possible avoid and limit the amount of clearing on site.	One compliance inspection will occur prior to clearing.	Site Supervisor	Prior to clearing activities.

Revegetation	Undertake revegetation of an area to the size of 0.17 ha within the proposed revegetation area (Figure 3), of mostly bare ground, from completely degraded to a good condition to mitigate the impacts of the proposed clearing. Planting will be undertaken in Autumn 2026 or 2027 utilising the species listed in the biological survey (AECOM 2024), based on availability and suitability to the local area. Western Power will engage a consultant to write a revegetation management plan and undertake the revegetation. The following completion criteria will be captured in the revegetation management plan: • Weed cover – Per cent of weed cover to be no greater than 30%. • Declared weeds – Absence of declared weed. • Native species cover – At least 60% of that observed in the biological survey in the proposed clearing area. • Vegetation condition – To be in good condition. • Vegetation diversity – Native species richness of the vegetation to be equal to at least 60% of that observed in the biological survey. Remedial actions – If annual monitoring indicates the completion criteria have not been met, Western Power will undertake remedial actions including infill planting and weed control, until the completion criteria have been met and maintained for two years	Evidence of planting and monitoring results to be submitted to Environment team, captured in Volt and provided to DWER on an annual basis.	Site Supervisor	Planting to be undertaken Autumn 2026 or 2027. Annual monitoring to be undertaken until completion criteria are met and maintained for two years.
Standard Record Keeping				
Record Keeping-Clearing	Maintain the following records for the cleared area: • Location of clearing area as a shapefile • Size of clearing (ha) • Date(s) on which clearing was done	Clearing data via CPS 1918/11 Condition 12a submitted to Environment team.	WP Project Owner	Data to be submitted within 30 days of project clearing activities being completed

Record Keeping - Clearing	Copies of all Vehicle Environmental Inspection Registers used to check that clearing machinery is free of soil and vegetative material must be maintained	Copies of completed registers submitted to WP Project Owner	Site Supervisor	Copies of completed registers are to be submitted within 30 days of project clearing activities being completed
Record Keeping- Other	Maintain the other records in accordance with Condition 12b (VMP), Condition 12c (revegetation), 12d (dieback/pathogen/weeds) and 12e (offsets)	Data via CPS 1918/10 Condition 12b, 12c, 12d and 12e managed by Environment team.	SHE	Data to be submitted within 30 days of project activities being completed.

Figure 3 Proposed Revegetation Area

Appendix C Biological Survey

Executive Summary

Western Power is proposing to expand the existing Kondinin substation to develop the Greater King Rocks Windfarm (the Project). The Project is located on Brookton Highway, approximately 3.5 kilometres (km) north of the Township of Kondinin and approximately 233 km east of Perth Central Business District (CBD).

Western Power engaged AECOM Australia Pty Ltd to undertake an ecological investigation of potential areas that may be cleared for the Project (the survey area). The investigation included a comprehensive desktop study, a single-phase detailed flora and vegetation, a targeted black cockatoo assessment and a basic fauna assessment.

A summary of results is presented below:

- One pre-European vegetation association is mapped in the survey area. Vegetation association 1023 has 10.79% remaining in WA and 7.13% remaining in the Shire or Kondinin.
- One significant community, the Eucalypt Woodland of the Western Australian Wheatbelt (Eucalypt Woodland) Threatened Ecological Community (TEC), mapped as Eucalypt Woodland ElsLeAb, was recorded in the survey area. The community is listed as Critically Endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and as Priority 3 by the Department Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).
- No significant flora species listed under the EPBC Act, the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) or as Priority by DBCA were recorded in the survey area. One Priority species, *Chamelaucium sp*. Parker Range (P1) was considered to have a low likelihood of occurring in the post-survey assessment.
- No significant fauna species were identified during the survey. A total of 19 fauna species were recorded during the field survey. This included 16 birds, two mammals and one reptile.
- Four fauna habitats were mapped within the survey area, this included two native fauna habitats 'Eucalyptus Woodland' and 'Mallee Woodland', and two modified habitats, 'Paddock' and 'Modified Woodland'. Eucalyptus Woodland, Mallee Woodland and Modified Woodland are considered potential marginal habitat for:
  - Carnaby's Cockatoo (*Zanda latirostris*) listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act and the BC Act
  - Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) Listed 'OS' BC Act
  - Western Rosella (*Platycercus icterotis*) Listed Priority 4 Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).
- There were nine 'potential nesting trees' with a suitable DBH (>500 mm). None of the potential nesting trees had suitable hollows for nesting.
- The site is within the known distribution range for Carnaby's Cockatoo. Two foraging habitat assessments were conducted, results below:
  - The entire survey area was assessed as '7, high quality native foraging' using the Commonwealth's foraging habitat tool (DAWE 2022).
  - Using the Bamford (2020) scoring tool, 3.74 ha of the survey area was scored as '2 low foraging value'. The remaining 2.28 ha was either negligible or none.

The survey was undertaken out of season (winter). This was not considered significant as all targeted significant flora species with a moderate to high likelihood of occurring were perennial shrubs that would have been present at the time of the survey. The survey was successfully undertaken, and level of effort is considered suitable for assessing the significant environmental values of the survey area.

Conclusions

A vegetation and flora survey, targeted flora survey, and basic fauna and targeted black cockatoo habitat survey was undertaken was undertaken for the Kondinin survey area following a desktop assessment. The survey area was traversed on foot by two people during July 2024. A summary of the results is presented below:

- One pre-European vegetation association is mapped in the survey area. Vegetation association 1023 has 10.79% remaining in WA and 7.13% remaining in the Shire or Kondinin.
- The survey area comprises 6.02 ha of which 1.71 ha represents native vegetation and comprised two vegetation communities, one of which represent a TEC (ElsLeAb):
  - ElsLeAb: Eucalypt Woodland TEC
  - Trees: Scattered native Eucalyptus in paddock
- Vegetation in the survey area was considered to be mostly Good condition (1.15 ha, 67%)
- No flora or fauna species listed under the EPBC Act and BC Act were recorded within the survey area.
- A total of 46 flora species were recorded during the field survey, including two species, *Allocasuarina helmsii* and *Eucalyptus loxophleba* subsp. *supralaevis* that represented a range extension.
- No significant flora species are considered to have a 'high' likelihood of occurrence post-survey.
- The survey area scored a Black Cockatoo foraging habitat score of '7' for Carnaby's Cockatoo in accordance with the DAWE (2022) guidelines. A score of '7' is considered high-quality native foraging habitat'. The Eucalyptus Woodland, Mallee Woodland and the Modified Woodland habitat scored a '2' according to the Bamford (2020) scoring tool.
- There were nine 'potential nesting trees' with a suitable DBH (>500 mm). None of the potential nesting trees had suitable hollows for nesting.
- Nineteen fauna species were recorded during the field survey. This included 16 birds, two mammals and one reptile.
- Four fauna habitats were mapped including two native fauna habitats, Eucalyptus Woodland (0.09 ha, 1.48%) and Mallee Woodland (1.28 ha, 20.42%), and two modified habitats, Paddock (1.90 ha, 30.35%) and Modified Woodland (2.46 ha, 39.31%). All identified habitats, excluding 'Paddock' represents potential habitat for:
  - Carnaby's Cockatoo (*Zanda latirostris*) listed as Endangered under the EPBC and BC Acts. The cockatoo may utilise the habitat for foraging and/or roosting.
  - Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), listed as OS under the BC Act. This species may utilise the areas as fly over habitat.
  - and the Western Rosella (*Platycercus icterotis xanthogenys*), listed as Priority 4 by DBCA. This species may use the habitat intermittently only.

No significant limitations of the survey were identified that may influence the results presented and level of effort is considered suitable for assessing the significant environmental values of the survey area.