

Environmental Protection Authority

Public record pursuant to s. 39 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*

Proposal title: Rottnest Island Worker Accommodation

Proposal description: The proposal is development of worker accommodation on Rottnest Island which includes 149 accommodation units for up to 336 people. The worker accommodation will be available to specific workers who are required to reside on Rottnest Island for the purpose of delivering essential services to visitors and ensuring continued operations of the island.

Proposal location Lot 10976 on Deposited Plan 216860 along Parker Point Road, Rottnest Island (Wadjemup)

APP number: APP-0027896

Date referral received: 11-03-2025

Date more information received: 1-05-2025

Referrer: The Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) **Proponent:** Rottnest Island Authority (RIA)

Potential significant effects:

There are potential for impacts on flora and vegetation from the direct clearing of up to 3.29 hectares (ha) of native vegetation that: represents the *Callitris preissii* (or *Melaleuca lanceolata*) forests and woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain (SCP30a) Threatened Ecological Community (TEC); adjoins a 3.84 ha patch of vegetation representing the SCP30a TEC which will be indirectly impacted by the proposal; and contains 3.29 ha fauna habitat for two threatened species (Quokka (*Setonix brachyurus*) and Rottnest Island Bobtail (*Tiliqua rugosa konowi*)) and potential habitat for three priority listed fauna species (shield-backed trapdoor spider (*Idiosoma sigillatum*), Perth Slider lined skink (*Lerista lineata*) and Rottnest Island Dugite (*Pseudonaja affinis exilis*). There are also potential for impacts from construction and operation of the proposal on inland waters; and social surroundings (Aboriginal cultural heritage).

Preliminary key environmental factors: flora and vegetation, terrestrial fauna, inland waters, marine environmental quality, social surroundings.

Public comment on referral information:

Do not assess:	1
Assess: a) Referral information	0
b) Environmental review - no public review	0
c) Public environmental review	15
Total submissions:	16

Decision: s. 38G(1) – Not Assess

Summary of reasons pursuant to s. 38G(1)(c)

The EPA has decided not to assess the proposal because:

- The EPA considers the likely environmental effects of the proposal are not so significant or unmitigated to warrant formal assessment under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act).
- The EPA considers that the likely environmental effects of the proposal can be mitigated by statutory decision-making processes to achieve environmental outcomes consistent with the EPA's factor objectives. The EPA also notes that the types of impacts associated with the clearing of native vegetation for the proposal,

including the offsetting of impacts, can be regulated under Part V Division 2 of the EP Act. This includes a 13.74 ha offset will be provided over three discrete areas on Rottnest Island in line with a Revegetation Management Plan and through implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP).

- Cumulative impacts to the SCP30a TEC has the potential to result in the total loss of 12.16% of SCP30a TEC on Rottnest Island and 1.40% of its occurrences in Western Australia. Rottnest Island retains 75% remnant vegetation, and the vegetation complex to be cleared is well-represented (pre-European extent remaining).
- The RIA has estimated based on monitoring of Quokkas over 10 years that the proposal is likely to impact on 0.2% of the total population of Quokkas on Rottnest. The conservation significant fauna species known to occur or that may occur within the development envelope do not rely solely on the vegetation within the development envelope, and is therefore unlikely to be critical habitat for the survival of these species.
- The EPA's decision has been made based on the RIA implementing the proposal in accordance with the:
 - Clearing permit conditions (CPS 10450/1: subject to change through appeals process);
 - Proposal Content Document;
 - Mitigation and management measures and the implementation of a Revegetation Management Plan; Weed Management Protocol; CEMP; OEMP and committed to be developed by the proponent.
- The proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on inland waters. The proposal is located approximately 175 m from coastal waters and 21 m to Bickley Swamp and 244 m to Government House Lake, both of which form part of the 'Rottnest Island Lakes' on the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (DIWA). The proposal will be connected to sewer mains, ensuring no wastewater discharge to nearby lakes or coastal waters.
- The EPA understands that the RIA will consider the development, including wastewater and site drainage, under the requirements of the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987* and *Rottnest Island Regulations 1988*; the building permit process also includes a subsequent review by the City of Cockburn. It is noted that landscaping will use native plants that do not require fertilisation or irrigation, which will reduce nutrient export. The clearing of vegetation may facilitate wind and water erosion processes which could impact on inland waters and marine environmental quality if not appropriately managed. These impacts can be regulated through clearing permit CPS 10450/1 under Part V Division 2 (Clearing) of the EP Act and through implementation of a CEMP and OEMP.
- There are no known Registered Aboriginal Heritage Sites within the development envelope, however, it is located in close proximity to a Registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Site and three Lodged Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites discovered through an Aboriginal heritage site identification and ethnographic survey by a Consultancy and seven Whadjuk Traditional Owners in 2022 and 2023. The EPA notes:

- that potential impacts to heritage values can be regulated under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and managed by a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) to be developed by the RIA; and
- that RIA will engage Whadjuk Noongar monitors to be present during all ground disturbance works.
- Other potential impacts on social surroundings including visual amenity and noise, light and dust emissions have been considered. Visual amenity impacts will be minimised through the retention of vegetation where possible within the development envelope, landscaping with native plant species, and directional design of the buildings away from public areas. The buildings will be concentrated closer to the existing trainline that has limited public interface. The buildings will be designed with a soft, natural-toned interior finishes to reflect the proposal's unique location. Directional lighting will be provided to limit light impacts to fauna and the proposal will be implemented in accordance with the CEMP, OEMP and *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997*.
- The EPA does not consider that the proposal's impacts will combine or interact in a holistic way which requires assessment by the EPA.

Public advice:

The EPA publishes the following public advice for the benefit of other decision-making authorities to ensure that their statutory decision-making processes achieve and assure environmental outcomes consistent with the EPA's environmental factor objectives:

- The types of impacts associated with the clearing of native vegetation for the proposal, including the offsetting and management of fauna, can be regulated under Part V Division 2 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. This statutory decision-making processes can achieve environmental outcomes consistent with the EPA's factor objectives.
- The Revegetation Management Plan, Weed Management Protocol, and a CEMP and OEMP (to be developed) is implemented through future stages to mitigate and manage impacts to flora and vegetation and terrestrial fauna.
- The RIA is to manage impacts to social surroundings appropriately while ensuring the proposal complies with the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987* and the *Rottnest Island Regulations 1988*. This includes:
 - developing and implementing a CHMP and ensuring Whadjuk Noongar monitors are present during all ground disturbance works
 - ensuring the development is connected to sewer mains
 - designing drainage to retain and treat water on-site
 - ensuring visual amenity is maintained through sympathetic design, strategic building placement and retention of vegetation where possible.
- The RIA should consider its obligations under sections 40 and 45C of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) for any approvals required to take or disturb threatened fauna and to modify a TEC.
- The cumulative impacts on SCP30a TEC, from this proposal and other nearby proposals, places greater importance on the need to protect other occurrences of

the TEC on Rottnest Island. In this regard the EPA supports the long-term protection of the TEC areas subject to offsets requirements in CPS 10450/1 and the proponent's inclusion of an express provision for the in-perpetuity protection of offset sites in the next version of the Rottnest Island Management Plan (a statutory document under the RIA Act).

Material information considered by the EPA in this decision

The EPA has considered the following material information in making its decision:

- Referral of a proposal under s.38 of the EP Act (11 March 2025) by CCWA (including referral form and letter)
- Proposal Content Document and attachments provided by RIA
- Clearing Permit Decision Report (Department of Water and Environmental Regulation 2024)
- EP Act s 3, s 4, Part IV, Admin Procedures, EPA factor and technical guidance

Appeals: There are no rights of appeal under the EP Act in respect of this decision.



Darren Walsh

Chair

Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority

Date: 16 May 2025