



Ms Sarah Brown
Senior Environmental Scientist
Golder Associates Pty Ltd
3/1 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Attention: Ms Jaclyn Ennis John

Dear Ms Brown

APPLICATION TO CLEAR NATIVE VEGETATION UNDER THE *ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1986*

I refer to Alkina Holdings Pty Ltd's application to clear 2.243 hectares of native vegetation within Great Southern Highway Road reserve (PIN 11408616), Inkpen, Lot 29259 on Plan 21496 (road reserve), and Lot 4869 on Deposited Plan 224502, St Ronans, for the purpose of upgrading an intersection and access road, and for the construction of the Great Southern Landfill facility. This application was received on 15 December 2017.

I advise that a preliminary assessment of the vegetation against the clearing principles contained in Schedule 5 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) has been conducted, taking into account information you have provided and information the Department of Water Environmental Regulation (DWER) has obtained through consultation. Attached is a Preliminary Assessment Report, which provides detail on the assessment of this application.

Please note, based on the preliminary assessment, it is likely that if granted a clearing permit will contain a fauna management condition. The fauna management condition will require hollows within habitat trees to be checked for the presence of black cockatoos prior to clearing within breeding season.

In considering a clearing matter, the Chief Executive Officer (or Delegated Officer) shall have regard to any planning instrument or other matter considered relevant, in accordance with section 51O(4) of the EP Act. I am of the view that Works Approval and surface water licences from DWER, and an amended development approval from the Shire of York are relevant considerations. Therefore I will defer the decision on this application until you are able to provide a copy of the Works Approval, water licences and amended development approval.

Please ensure these approvals are provided within three months from the date of this letter. I advise that the Delegated Officer intends to make a decision on the application based on the information available in three months from the date of this letter. In the absence of receiving the above request approvals, it is possible that the application for a clearing permit may be refused, in accordance with section 51E(5)(b) of the EP Act.

If you have any queries regarding the progress of this application, please contact Senior Clearing Regulation Officer Ms Abbie Crawford on 6364 7126.

Yours sincerely



James Widenbar
MANAGER
CLEARING REGULATION

*Officer delegated under Section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*

31 January 2018

Attached: CPS 7656/1 Preliminary Assessment Report



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7656/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Applicant details

Applicant's name: Alkina Holdings Pty Ltd
Application received date: 15 December 2017

1.3. Property details

Property: GREAT SOUTHERN HIGHWAY ROAD RESERVE (PIN 11408616)
LOT 29259 ON PLAN 21496
LOT 4869 ON DEPOSITED PLAN 224502
Local Government Authority: SHIRE OF YORK
Localities: INKPEN AND ST RONANS

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	Purpose category:
2.243		Mechanical Removal	Waste disposal/management

2. Site Information

Clearing Description The applicant proposes to clear 2.243 hectares of native vegetation, within a footprint area of 22.8 hectares, within Great Southern Highway Road reserve (PIN 11408616), Inkpen, Lot 29259 on Plan 21496 (road reserve), and Lot 4869 on Deposited Plan 224502, St Ronans, for the purpose of upgrading an intersection and access road, and for the construction of the Great Southern Landfill facility.

Vegetation Description The application area associated with landfill site consists predominately of *Eucalyptus wandoo* and *Corymbia calophylla* as well as a small number of flooded gum, associated with the watercourse (ENV Environmental Pty Ltd, 2012).

The north side of the Great Southern Highway road reserved has been mapped as 'Low Woodland of *Allocasuarina huegeliana* over *Kunzea glabrescens*, *Adenanthos cygnorum*, *Caustis dioica*, *Podolepis canescens* and *Gompholobium tomentosum* with scattered *Eucalyptus wandoo*' (ENV Environmental Pty Ltd, 2013).

The south side of the Great Southern Highway road reserved has been mapped as 'Tall open Scrub of *Kunzea glabrescens* with *Allocasuarina humilis*, *Adenanthos cygnorum* and *Xanthorrhoea preissii* with scattered *Corymbia calophylla* and *Eucalyptus wandoo*' (ENV Environmental Pty Ltd, 2013).

Mattiske Coolakin Ck vegetation complex (Sothern area of pit): Woodland of *Eucalyptus wandoo* with mixtures of *Eucalyptus patens*, *Eucalyptus marginata* subsp. *thalassica* and *Corymbia calophylla* on the valley slopes in arid and perarid zones (Government of Western Australia, 2017).

Mattiske Yalanbee Y6 vegetation complex (Northern area of pit): Woodland of *Eucalyptus wandoo*-*Eucalyptus accedens*, less consistently open forest of *Eucalyptus marginata* subsp. *thalassica*-*Corymbia calophylla* on lateritic uplands and breakaway landscapes in arid and perarid zones (Government of Western Australia, 2017).

Mattiske Michibin Mi vegetation complex (Great Southern Hwy and access track): Open woodland of *Eucalyptus wandoo* over *Acacia acuminata* with some *Eucalyptus loxophleba* on valley slopes, with low woodland of *Allocasuarina huegeliana* on or near shallow granite outcrops in arid and perarid zones (Government of Western Australia, 2017).

Vegetation Condition Very Good (within road reserve); Vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994).

To

Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery, 1994).

Soil type

Sheahan Subsystem (Great Southern Hwy) Deep pale sand, pale sands over gravels, with clay at depth.

Leaver Subsystem (Landfill site) Gravelly yellow and red duplexes, gravelly deep clayey sands and sandy loams over laterite and clay.



Fig 1: Access Road



Figure 2: Landfill Site

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles, planning instruments and other relevant matters

The applicant proposes to clear 2.243 hectares of native vegetation, within a footprint area of 22.8 hectares, within Great Southern Highway Road reserve (PIN 11408616), Inkpen, Lot 29259 on Plan 21496 (road reserve), and Lot 4869 on Deposited Plan 224502, St Ronans, for the purpose of upgrading an intersection and access road, and for the construction of the Great Southern Landfill facility.

Seventeen priority flora have been recorded within the local area (10 kilometre radius). In October 2012 ENV Australia Pty Ltd undertook a vegetation and fauna assessment of the application area within the Great Southern Highway. No priority flora was recorded during the survey (ENV Environmental Pty Ltd, 2013). The remainder of the application area consists of scattered trees over pasture grass and is therefore unlikely to support priority flora.

One rare flora species has been recorded within the local area and the area within Great Northern Highway provides suitable habitat for this species. No rare flora was identified in this area during the survey (ENV Australia Pty Ltd, 2013). The rare flora species identified in the local area is an ascending shrub. The remainder of the application area consists of scattered trees (predominately Wandoo) over pasture grass and therefore is not suitable habitat for this shrub.

The application area falls within the modelled distribution of Carnaby's cockatoo. Carnaby's cockatoo is listed as specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1986* (EP Act) and as endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The application area may also provide habitat for Baudin's cockatoo which is specially protected under the EP Act and vulnerable under the EPBC Act. These species breed in large hollow-bearing trees, generally within woodlands or forests or in isolated trees (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). These species nest in hollows in live or dead trees of karri, marri, wandoo, tuart, salmon gum, jarrah, flooded gum, York gum, powder bark, bullich and blackbutt (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012).

Fourteen trees with a DBH of 500 millimetres or greater were recorded during a black cockatoo assessment of the application area within the Great Southern Highway road reserve (ENV Australia Pty Ltd, 2012). Officers of the former Department of Environment Regulation undertook a site inspection of this area in 2015 and did not identify any hollows (DER, 2015). Approximately four trees with suitable hollows were recorded within the landfill area, however no evidence of use was observed (ENV Australia Pty Ltd, 2013). Given that the application area contains approximately four potential breeding trees the application area may contain significant habitat for black cockatoos. The requirement to check identified hollows and not clear these trees within black cockatoo breeding season will ensure that black cockatoos are not directly impacted by the proposed clearing.

Black cockatoos have a preference for foraging habitat that includes jarrah and marri woodlands and forest heathland and woodland dominated by proteaceous plant species such as *Banksia* sp., *Hakea* sp. and *Grevillea* sp. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Foraging evidence, in the form of chewed nuts were observed within Great Southern Highway (ENV Environmental Pty Ltd, 2012). The application area contains suitable foraging habitat for black cockatoos, however given that the local area retains approximately 45 per cent vegetation and a number of large remnants (Wandoo National Park, St Ronans Nature Reserve and Wambyn Nature Reserve) are located within the vicinity of the application area, the application area is not likely contain significant foraging habitat for black cockatoos.

The 'Eucalypt woodlands of the Western Australian Wheatbelt' is mapped as priority 3 ecological community by the State and as a critically endangered ecological community under the EPBC Act. Numerous occurrences of this ecological community have been recorded within the local area (east of the application area) however the application area is not within the modelled distribution of this community.

The application area is mapped as Mattiske vegetation complexes Mi, Ck and Y6 which retain approximately 26, 39 and 47 per cent of their pre-European extent, respectively (Government of Western Australia, 2017). The local area retains approximately 45 per cent native vegetation (approximately 18,389 hectares). The National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 include a target to have clearing controls in place that prevent clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30 per cent of that present pre-1750 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001). Given the predominately completely degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition of the application area it is unlikely to be a significant remnant in an extensively cleared area.

As part of the landfill facility two dams are proposed to be constructed on a minor, non-perennial watercourse. Scattered trees growing in association with this watercourse are proposed to be cleared. The proposed clearing within this area may lead to increased sedimentation to the watercourse. This impact will however be minor and short term during the clearing process.

Given that the majority of the application area is in a completely degraded (Keighery, 1994) condition, consisting predominately of scattered trees, the proposed clearing is not likely cause appreciable land degradation or increase the incidence of flooding.

Three conservation areas have been located within the local area. Wandoo National Park is located approximately 500 metres west, St Ronans Nature Reserve is 800 metres north east and Wambyn Nature Reserve is approximately 2.4 kilometres east. The vegetation under application which Great Southern Highway road reserve supports a linkage between Wandoo National Park and St Ronans Nature Reserve however all the vegetation within the road reserve is not proposed to be cleared and therefore this linkage will not be severed.

Given the above, the proposed clearing is at variance to principle (f), may be at variance to principles (b) and (i), and is not likely to be at variance to the remaining clearing principles.

Planning instruments and other relevant matters.

The application area falls within the Avon River System Surface Water Area which is a proclaimed area under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* (RIWI Act). A permit to 'interfere with bed and banks' and a licence to take groundwater are required for this project. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) is currently assessing applications made under the RIWI Act.

The applicant has applied to DWERs Industry Regulation for Works Approval. This application is currently under assessment.

Remnant vegetation in the north of Lot 4869 on Deposited Plan 224502, St Ronans, is the subject of an agreement to reserve under the *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945* and clearing can only occur in this area with written approval of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation (Commissioner). In accordance with this, the applicant has provided an email from the Commissioner advising that he has no objection to the removal of vegetation of scattered trees to facilitate the upgrading of the access road (Commissioner, 2018).

The Shire of York has advised that the clearing permit relates to a previous approval for a landfill on the property. The previous approval was issued in 2015 with a condition stating that the development had to be substantially commenced within a two-year period. The Shire of York has received an application to extend this period and it is currently being assessed (Shire of York, 2018).

Disclaimer: This document is DWER's preliminary assessment based on information available as at 31 January 2018. This document is not a final report and does not constitute a decision on the application to clear native vegetation

Approximately 80 metres of the proposed access track is mapped with the Helena River Aboriginal sites of significance. The applicant will be notified of its obligations under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

The clearing permit application was advertised on the DWER website on 05 January 2018 with a 21 day submission period. No public submissions have been received in relation to this application.

4. References

- Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation (2018) Email proving approval to clear native vegetation within covenant area (DWER Ref: A1581890).
- Commonwealth of Australia (2001) National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005, Canberra.
- Commonwealth of Australia (2012) EPBC Act referral guidelines for three threatened black cockatoo species. Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities, Canberra.
- Department of Environment Regulation (DER) (2015) Site Inspection Report for CPS 6618/1. Department of Environment Regulation. Western Australia. (DER Ref: A964417)
- ENV Australia Pty Ltd (2012) Allawuna Landfill Vegetation and Fauna Assessment. Perth, Western Australia. (DER Ref: A1581890)
- ENV Australia Pty Ltd (2013) Flora, Vegetation and Fauna Assessment, Allawuna Roadside. Perth, Western Australia. (DER Ref: A943202)
- Government of Western Australia (2017) 2016 South West Vegetation Complex Statistics. Current as of December 2016. WA Department of Parks and Wildlife, Perth.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Shire of York (2018) Planning advice for Clearing Permit Application CPS 7656/1. Received on 19 January 2018 (DWER Ref: A1598106).