



## WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (Inc)

1 November 2021

Ms Amber-Jade Sanderson  
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Commerce  
Level 5  
Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

By email: [Minister.Sanderson@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Sanderson@dpc.wa.gov.au)

Dear Minister Sanderson

The Wildflower Society of Western Australia (WSWA) has observed a general decline in the number of clearing applications from Local Government Authorities (LGAs) over the last 12 months, but its members have observed that many LGAs are still carrying out capital works on roads that we consider go beyond the exemption in the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 (“the Regulations”) for clearing of vegetation for road maintenance purposes. We have also observed similar issues with works conducted by Main Roads Western Australia (MRWA) in recent times. Some examples of these works are attached at the end of this letter.

With the trend away from sheep and an increased focus on crop production, our members also report a trend for farmers to remove fences and crop to their property boundary (and beyond in some instances) and to remove tree lines around paddocks, as permitted within the exemptions in the Regulations.

WSWA is also aware that a number of agencies have Statewide Clearing Permits for certain actions associated with their service delivery, and some LGAs have Strategic Purpose Permits for the implementation of their annual works program.

It is unclear to WSWA how much clearing can be attributed to the exemptions within the Regulations and the special purpose permits issued by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), as they are not specifically identified in reports provided on the Department’s web site or other publications.

WSWA is concerned that the interpretation of the scope of activities allowed under these provisions is often much wider than intended and is seeking to understand what portion of clearing that occurs, particularly in the Wheatbelt, is carried out within these provisions.

To assess this, the WSWA requests from your office a summary of areas cleared annually from 2015 – 2020 in the categories of:

- the area cleared through exemptions provided in the Regulations under Schedule 6, by specific exemption;
- prescribed clearing as described in Regulation 5 of the Regulations;
- the area cleared through permits issued by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety under delegation from DWER;
- the area cleared through the provision of Statewide Clearing Permits;
- the area cleared through the provision of Strategic Purpose Permits;
- the areas cleared under a Permit to Clear; and
- the area known to have been illegally cleared.

We look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

President, Wildflower Society of Western Australia



Photograph 1: Clearing outside the drainage requirements and lateral clearance requirements destabilising the backslope of the drain



Photograph 2: Road widening carried out without a clearing permit which has removed all understorey.



Photograph 3: An area adjacent to that in Photograph 2 being prepared for road widening for which a Permit to Clear has not been requested.



Photograph 4: Vegetation removed to allow road drainage to be formed and road resheeted without a Permit to Clear. Vegetation in the background on the right was also cleared after this photo was taken.

