



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

EPBC Referral Guidance

Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community



EPBC Referral Guidance

Could your action impact on the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community?

This guidance document contains detailed checklists to:

- help you determine whether your action may impact on Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community (Banksia Woodlands TEC)
- make it easier for you to prepare your referral
- give you certainty that your referral contains the right information.

It should be read alongside the Approved Conservation Advice for the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community, available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/communities/pubs/131-conservation-advice.pdf>

How should I use this referral guidance?

Banksia Woodlands TEC is listed as Endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). As you prepare to refer your proposed action, you will need to consider the three important questions set out below.

The colour-coded checklist tables found on the following pages can help you answer these questions. You may wish to submit the completed tables as referenced attachments to your referral. Please also attach any relevant survey reports containing supporting information and data.

1 Is there Banksia Woodlands TEC vegetation in your proposed project site, or in other off-site areas that may be impacted (for example, by changes to water flows)?

To help you answer this question, the Approved Conservation Advice contains a description and key diagnostic characteristics of Banksia Woodlands TEC, including location, structure, and composition

If the answer to **Question 1** is 'Yes', you will need to answer the following two questions:

2 What is the condition, sub-community, size and specific characteristics of the Banksia Woodlands TEC in the proposed project site and in the surrounding area?

You may be required to provide information on a neighbour's vegetation if the Banksia Woodlands TEC patch extends beyond the site of your proposed question.

Providing this information at the referral stage will assist the Department to process your referral quickly and efficiently.

3 Will your proposed action have a significant impact on Banksia Woodlands TEC?

You will need to consider whether the proposed action has a real chance or possibility of having a significant impact on Banksia Woodlands TEC. Expected impacts will need to be explained and, to the extent possible, characterised.

What if I can't fully answer these questions, or there is not enough information available?

When considering whether or not an action will have a significant impact on Banksia Woodlands TEC, the Department will consider information about the individual patch of vegetation, and other instances of Banksia Woodlands TEC in the area.

If you are unable to provide adequate information in your referral, the Department will use a precautionary approach to assess whether significant impacts are likely to affect vegetation that may be Banksia Woodlands TEC.

Question 1—Can the vegetation be characterised as Banksia Woodlands TEC?

| Key diagnostic characteristics [♦] | Information | Key diagnostic questions* (Refer to Section 2.2 of the Approved Conservation Advice for a complete explanation of these diagnostic features) | Response (yes/no/possibly) and detailed comments. Use as much space as you need to fully answer the question [#] |
|---|--|--|--|
| Location and physical environments | Bioregion | Is the proposal site within the Swan Coastal Plain IBRA bioregion (including Dandaragan plateau), or adjacent areas within the Jarrah Forest IBRA bioregion? | |
| Soils and Landform | Soil type | Is the soil type consistent with where the Banksia Woodlands TEC may occur? | |
| | Location in the landscape, topography | Is the topography/physical environment consistent with where the Banksia Woodlands TEC may occur? | |
| Structure | Tree composition, understory composition, diversity, species | Is the structure consistent with the characteristics set out in the conservation advice? | |
| Composition | Dominant tree species, emergent tree layer, understory | Is the composition consistent with the characteristics set out in the conservation advice? | |

♦ Further information on the key diagnostic characteristics is provided in the BWSCP Conservation Advice.

* The Banksia Woodlands TEC may include restored or revegetated flora. Do not exclude vegetation from being classed as the Banksia Woodlands TEC because it is a restoration or revegetation site.

Comments should include references to appropriate supporting information and data.

Question 2—What are the specific characteristics of the Banksia Woodlands TEC?

| Key diagnostic characteristics* | Information | Relevant content to be discussed in the referral (Relevant section of Approved Conservation Advice) | Detailed comments. Use as much space as you need to fully answer the question# |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Patch condition | Condition thresholds | <p>Section 2.2.2. Using the condition categories in this section, what is the patch condition?</p> <p>Note: A patch could vary in quality over the range of the patch.</p> | |
| Patch Size | Patch size in hectares | <p>Section 2.2.3. Is the patch size large enough to meet the patch size in this section*?</p> <p>Note: Patch boundaries are not limited to the proposal site.</p> | |
| | Surrounding buffer | <p>Section 2.2.3. What is the size of the surrounding buffer and vegetation type in the buffer?</p> <p>How does it connect to the surrounding vegetation?</p> <p>Note: The assessments of a patch should initially focus on the area of highest native floristic diversity and/or cover i.e. the area of the patch in the best condition. One patch could be made up of several sub-communities.</p> | |
| Location and physical environments | Regional distribution and quality | <p>Section 2.2.2. What is the quantity/quality of the vegetation community in around the site where the proposed action will occur?</p> | |

| Key diagnostic characteristics* | Information | Relevant content to be discussed in the referral (Relevant section of Approved Conservation Advice) | Detailed comments. Use as much space as you need to fully answer the question# |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Other condition considerations | Presence/absence and spread of <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> (dieback) | <p>Appendix D5. If present, how much dieback exists and is the proposed action likely to spread dieback further or increase its impact?</p> <p>If not present, can its introduction be avoided?</p> | |
| | Presence/absence weeds | Appendix D6. Does the patch contain weeds? Which species are present, in what densities, and how can they be managed? | |
| | Any other notable disturbance to the site or threatening process where relevant (i.e. fragmentation, introduction of edge effects, fire regimes, bare patches, erosion, feral animals) | <p>Appendix D7. What disturbance is present which may degrade the quality of the community?</p> <p>For any/each form of disturbance, what is the degree of the disturbance?</p> <p>Is there evidence of recruitment of key native plant species following disturbance?</p> | |
| | Patch isolation | <p>Section 2.2.4 Is the patch connected to other areas of Banksia Woodland or is it isolated?</p> <p>What are the characteristics of those connected areas?</p> | |
| | Presence of other biodiversity values | Does the site (or surrounds) contain other biodiversity values such as those discussed in Section 2.2.4. page 26? | |

| Key diagnostic characteristics* | Information | Relevant content to be discussed in the referral (Relevant section of Approved Conservation Advice) | Detailed comments. Use as much space as you need to fully answer the question [#] |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Sub-community and vegetation unit | Broad scale structural unit (Beard vegetation associations) | Appendix C1. What is the closest corresponding Beard vegetation association(s)? | |
| | Broad scale structural unit (Vegetation Complexes) | Appendix C1. What is the closest corresponding Vegetation Complex(es)? | |
| | Floristic community types (Gibson et al., 1994; Keighery et al., 2008) | Section 1.3.2. and Appendix C2. Provide the closest resemblance of floristic community type(s) against the types outlined in this section and the Appendix. Note: There is potential for multiple subcommunities within a patch. Floristic community types are not described for part of the ecological community's range. | |
| | Western Australian ecological community listing | Section 2.2.2. Is this ecological community listed in Western Australia? Note: Ecological communities which are also listed as threatened or priority ecological communities in Western Australia have higher significance than more common subtypes and should be given specific or additional protection. | |
| Surveying | Timing of the surveying | Section 2.2.2. Ideally surveys should be undertaken in spring with two sampling periods to capture early and late flowering species. When was sampling undertaken at the proposed site? If vegetation has not been identified, is there any specific reason (e.g. due to recent disturbance by fire)? Note: Section 2.2.4 of the Approved Conservation Advice has guidance on timing/protocols for surveys (e.g. after fire). | |

♦ Further information on the key diagnostic characteristics is provided in the Approved Conservation Advice.

Comments should include references to appropriate supporting information and data. The response which includes the information does not need to be presented in table form.

Question 3—Is there a real chance or possibility that the proposed action will have a significant impact on Banksia Woodlands TEC?

To answer this question, you should refer to the significant impact criteria for critically endangered and endangered ecological communities outlined in the Department's [Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 - Matters of National Environmental Significance, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013](#) (or as updated) and the Approved Conservation Advice linked in this document (particularly the other factors listed in section 2.2.4 [Step 4: Further information to assist in determining the presence of the ecological community and significant impacts](#)).

Expected impacts need to be explained and, to the extent possible, characterised. Consider representing this information in the following table:

| Significant Impact Criteria ♦ <i>An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered ecological community if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:</i> | Description of proposed action in relation to significant impact criteria | Likelihood <i>(known, likely, possible, unlikely)</i> |
|--|---|--|
| Reduce the extent of an ecological community. Note: This must include consideration of sub-community and community extent, including local and regional context. | | |
| Fragment or increase fragmentation of an ecological community, for example by clearing vegetation for roads or transmission lines. Note: Appendix D1 of the Approved Conservation Advice discusses the threat of fragmentation. | | |
| Adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of an ecological community. Note: Section 2.3 of the Approved Conservation Advice discusses habitat critical to the survival of the ecological community. | | |
| Modify or destroy abiotic (non-living) factors (such as water, nutrients, or soil) necessary for an ecological community's survival, including reduction of groundwater levels, or substantial alteration of surface water drainage patterns. Note: Section 1.3.2. of the Approved Conservation Advice discusses variability in the community, Attachment D1 addresses threats to the community. | | |

| Significant Impact Criteria ♦ <i>An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered ecological community if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:</i> | Description of proposed action in relation to significant impact criteria | Likelihood <i>(known, likely, possible, unlikely)</i> |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Cause a substantial change in the species composition of an occurrence of an ecological community, including causing a decline or loss of functionally important species, for example through regular burning or flora or fauna harvesting.</p> <p>Note: Section 2.2.1 of the Approved Conservation Advice discusses the composition of the community focusing on the diagnostic species.</p> | | |
| <p>Cause a substantial reduction in the quality or integrity of an occurrence of an ecological community, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assisting invasive species, that are harmful to the listed ecological community, to become established, or • causing regular mobilisation of fertilisers, herbicides or other chemicals or pollutants into the ecological community which kill or inhibit the growth of species in the ecological community. <p>Note: Appendix D5 and D6 of the Approved Conservation Advice discuss the impact of weeds/dieback on the ecological community.</p> | | |
| <p>Interfere with the recovery of an ecological community.</p> <p>Note: Section 5 of the Approved Conservation Advice discusses priority research and conservation actions.</p> | | |

♦ From the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1—Matters of National Environmental Significance, Commonwealth of Australia, 2013.

