

**QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(78) Program 4.2: Onshore Detention Network**

Senator Back (L&CA 74) asked:

Provide the environmental assessment that was undertaken at the Curtin detention facility under the EPBC Act.

*Answer:*

The Department of Defence undertook the environmental assessments. The assessments are attached.



### Environmental Clearance Certificate DS-WA Region

**Section A – Proposed action (To be completed by proponent)**

Service or group DSG (on behalf of Dept of Immigration & Citizenship)	Unit DS-CW	File Reference ECC WA 10/11 009
Contact officer's name Peter Majdandzic (DIAC)	Phone number 0410 139 061 Tel: (02) 6264 3491	Email address Peter.Majdandzic@immi.gov.au
Title Clearing of Vegetation RAAF Base Curtin 2010		Location of proposal (include coords and attach map as applicable) RAAF Base Curtin
Description of the proposed action (including dates/ time frame)  Clear vegetation within the facility zone of RAAF Base Curtin around Camp 1 and Camp 2 accommodation facilities as shown on Attachment A. A detailed layout of the Facility is available in the RAAF Base Curtin Environmental Review and Risk Assessment, SKM 2006, Map B Facility Layout Map. The clearance is necessary in order to extend the Camp facilities. Clearing will be performed during the period July – September 2010.  This ECC only addresses the footprint impact issues. Separate assessment and approval may be required before construction proceeds (subject to siting approval) to take account of potential impacts from the construction activity and the proposed facility and its operation including sustainability considerations.		
Potential Environmental impacts from proposed actions  1) Loss of biodiversity/habitat		Proposed mitigation measures  1) Vegetation removal will be minimised to the extent practical but noting that risk from bushfire must be mitigated in accordance with the requirements for Building Protection Zones and Hazard Separation Zones of 'Planning for Bushfire Protection' (WA Planning Commission/FESA 200).

**Section B – Assessment (To be completed by a DS-WA Environment Officer)**

- The proposal has been assessed and is considered not likely to cause any significant environmental impacts on the environment, in particular under the EPBC Act with respect to matters of national environmental significance and Sections 26 - 28 relating to actions by Commonwealth agencies and impacting on Commonwealth land.
- Clearance for the proposal to proceed is recommended subject to the conditions set out below.

The following assessment is based on 'RAAF Base Curtin Environmental Review and Risk Assessment' (SKM 2006).

Reduction in biodiversity

RAAF CIN is located approximately 35km to the south-west of the township of Derby, in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. It is one of three bare bases dedicated to the defence of Australia's north. The RAAF CIN site comprises approximately 250km<sup>2</sup> of land, including a central zone of 25km<sup>2</sup> containing the main base facilities. The site is bounded by Derby Highway to the west, Great Northern Highway to the south. Adjacent landholders are Yeeda pastoral station to the west, south and east, and Mowanjum pastoral station to the north. Since commissioning in 1987, the base has been used for a number of exercises involving the deployment of military aircraft and personnel. As of 1995, all civil aircraft use Derby airport and the civil terminal at the base remains unused. The Base has also been used intermittently by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMIA) as a processing centre for refugees, commencing in 1995 and finishing in 2002. This latter use is to recommence and the proposed clearance relates to expanding and upgrading the facilities.

RAAF CIN is located on relatively flat sandy plains between an elevation of 40m and 100m AHD, draining in a west-north-westerly direction towards King Sound. The includes four land systems but is dominated by one vegetation community, the Pindan woodland of the Yeeda Land System, which accounts for approximately 80% of the base. The fenced central facility area and borefield are located on this Yeeda landform and it is an area of 8 ha of its Pindan vegetation system that is proposed for clearing. Pindan woodlands represent an extensive vegetation community, covering the majority of the land area within the Dampierland Bioregion. A search of the WA Department of Conservation and Land Management's (now DEC) Threatened Ecological Communities database in January 2006 found no recorded threatened ecological communities within RAAF Base Curtin. A search for rare flora in the vicinity of RAAF CIN found no records in the Threatened (Declared Rare) Flora database or the Western Australian Herbarium specimen database. However there were five species found on the CALM Declared Rare and

Priority Flora list. All are defined as poorly known and in need of further survey and all are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora'. The code 1 species are only known from a few populations, which are under immediate threat, and thus are in more urgent need of surveying; the code 2 species are known from a few populations, some of which are not under immediate threat; the code 3 species are known from several populations which are not under immediate threat.

From what is known about the vegetation of the base and the proposed clearing site, impacts will be insignificant in terms of area cleared and proportion of that area to the total vegetation on the base. Furthermore the vegetation type is extensive on the base and in the region and the likelihood of significant impact on potentially occurring priority plant species is minimal. Similarly, populations of fauna that might occur in this vegetation will not be significantly reduced by the action.

Disturbance

The site is probably already degraded given that RAAF CIN was previously pastoral land and had introduced pasture species including Buffel Grass. Birdwood Grass and Buffel Grass were also introduced to stabilise the cleared airfield corridors and have spread into the adjacent Pindan woodland. Buffel Grass has been known to outcompete native grasses and intensify fire regimes, with a consequent loss of native shrubs and trees. However, best practice clearing practices should be applied since earthworks for new facilities present a particularly high risk of introducing and spreading weeds and plant pathogens.

Conditions

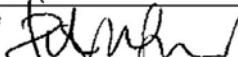
Removal of vegetation as shown in Attachment A is approved subject to:

1. All plant and equipment to be free of soil and vegetation prior to entering the site to avoid the introduction of weeds and plant pathogens.
2. Disturbance to the vegetation surrounding the area identified to be cleared is strictly forbidden.
3. Spill kits must be available in the event of a fuel or oil leak from plant and equipment.
4. Measures to be in place to ensure earthworks do not cause soil erosion including from heavy rainfall events.
5. Vegetation and any surplus soil to be stockpiled in the green waste and construction spoil areas respectively.

The following General Conditions also apply:

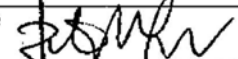
1. It is the responsibility of the proponent to ensure that all personnel planning, managing and undertaking this activity are aware of this ECC and the conditions within.
2. Should the planned activities be altered in any way, this ECC shall be rendered void and invalid. Any change to the Concept of Operations should be notified to the Environment Officer-Pearce.
3. Any environmental incidents are to be reported using the Environmental Incident and Improvement Form provided as Attachment B.
4. A post activity report is required for this activity. The report is to provide information about the greenwaste and spoil disposal areas and whether these areas are likely to become problematic due to the quantity of wastes.

3. The proposal requires a post activity report(s) to be completed and forwarded to the Environment Officer:  
Not Required  On completion of the project  On a regular reporting basis  Specify term:

Signature 	Printed Name Peter Gell	Rank or title EO-PEA	Date 23 July 2010
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**Section C – Clearance** (to be completed by Senior Manager or Commanding Officer)

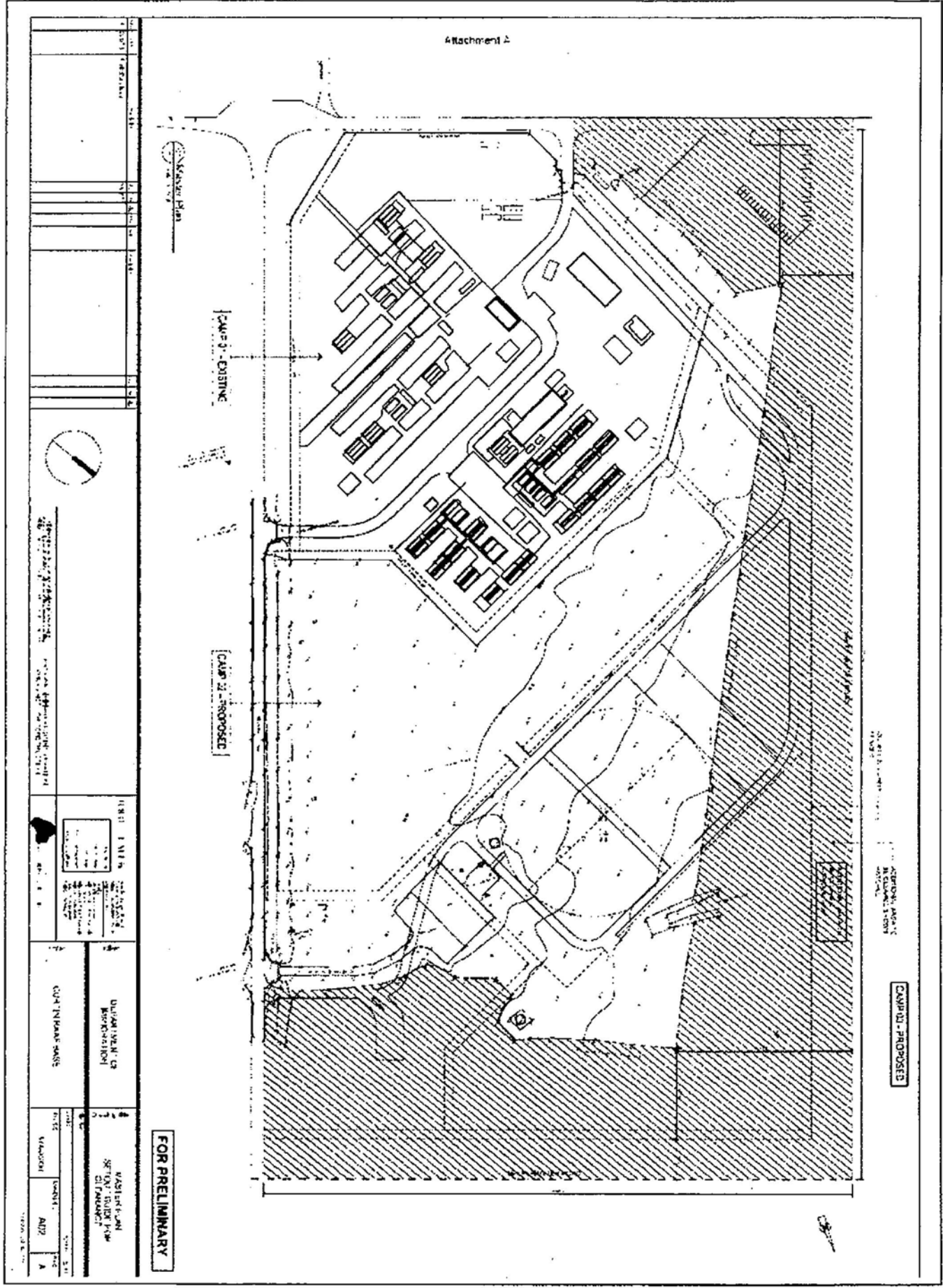
1. This certificate applies only to the proposed action and time frame as described in Section A.
2. The Proposal may proceed subject to conditions set out in Section B.

Signature 	Printed Name Lyle Tucker	Rank or title BSM Pearce	Date 23 July 2010
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**Section D – Commitment to comply** (To be completed by Action Authority)

I have read and I understand the conditions and will ensure full compliance.

Signature 	Printed Name Chris Basler	Rank or title Mr	Appointment Director Facilities Mgt	Date 23/7/10
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## ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENT AND IMPROVEMENT NOTIFICATION FORM (PEA-EMS-EF1)

**Statement of Purpose:**

In order to meet its statutory obligations as a Commonwealth Agency and good neighbour, Defence is required to actively record and manage environmental incidents which occur on Commonwealth land, or which occur as a result of the actions of Defence personnel, contractors and consultants who have been engaged to undertake activities on their behalf and tenants leasing Defence-controlled land. The purpose of this form is to provide a formal reporting mechanism for environmental incidents and improvement opportunities at RAAF Base Curtin. The term 'environment' is defined here in the broadest sense, to include natural, heritage and local community aspects. The incident and improvement system at RAAF Curtin operates under a 'No Blame' policy to encourage comprehensive reporting.

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Given Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Source of Incident/Near miss or Improvement Opportunity (please tick as appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Incident	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal complaint	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal audit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site inspection
<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential Incident*	<input type="checkbox"/>	External complaint	<input type="checkbox"/>	External audit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management review
<input type="checkbox"/>	Near Miss*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvement suggestion	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

Title of any attached documents:

**1. Incident/Near Miss/Improvement Opportunity Details** (please complete with as much detail as possible)

**2. Immediate Action/Improvement Taken:** (Describe any actions taken immediately)

**3. Proposed Action/Improvement**

	Actions	<u>Responsible Person</u>
1		
2		
3		
4		

**Copy of form has been forwarded to:**

- EO - Pearce, ph 9571 7524, fax 9571 7648 (DS-PEA, Building 124)
- Commanding Officer/Base Manager - Pearce
- cc to Commanding Officer/Senior Manager of Uni/Organisation

**Please lodge a copy of the form with the Environment Officer (EO) or the Base Manager and always cc to the CO/Senior Manager in own chain of command**



## Environmental Clearance Certificate DS-WA Region

### Instructions for completion

#### General

The Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) system provides a positive audit check and a mechanism for identifying mitigation measures and setting environmental conditions on Defence actions that will remove the likelihood of a significant environmental impact, particularly under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Defence actions include such projects as: a development; an activity or a series of activities, or an alteration of any of these things. The environment includes ecosystems and their constituent parts including people and communities, natural and physical resources, the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas and the social, economic and cultural aspects of the above.

The ECC is an internal document and may be tailored to meet unique requirements as they arise, in consultation with the Environment Officer. For example, where an activity has already been approved under the EPBC Act, through the referral process, an ECC can be issued to ensure the conditions of approval are met. In some cases, the ECC is modified to enforce conditions and responsibilities in Range Standing Orders or Management Plans for major activities.

#### Compiling Certificate

This certificate should be completed by the Action Authority, in consultation with the Environment Officer and others such as the Range Manager where appropriate, to ensure that environmental impacts and mitigation measures are identified for the proposed activity. Upon completion of Sections A and B, the Environment Officer and Senior Manager will determine whether Clearance is approved, agree on the mitigation measures and conditions of approval, and sign that only the proposed action described in the certificate is to take place.

#### Section A - Proposed Action

##### File Reference

The Environment Officer issues a File Reference relating to the DS-WA ECC register; other references can also be inserted here by the Action Authority.

##### Location

Provide descriptive information on where the proposal will occur, including coordinates and an attached map as applicable.

##### Description of proposed action

Provide information on the dates/ time frame and details of the proposed action, including an account of the activities to be conducted, details of associated infrastructure and equipment used. Details of quantities, for example, of m<sup>3</sup> of earth excavated, m<sup>2</sup> of land cleared, or number of trees affected by the proposed action should also be provided.

##### Potential environmental impacts from proposed actions

Provide preliminary information on likely impacts to the environment that may occur as a result of the proposed actions. Such information may be sourced from a number of references. See **Attachment A**. Further information may be sourced from an Environmental Aspects and Impacts register, environmental management plans and consultation with environmental staff, stakeholders and site industry practitioners.

##### Proposed mitigation measures

Provide preliminary information on the safeguards or damage control methods that will be used to reduce the risk of environmental impacts associated with the proposed action. See **Attachment A**. Further information may be sourced from a number of references including standing operating procedures, standing orders, industry codes of practice and environment management plans.

#### Section B – Assessment

This section is to be completed and signed by the Environment Officer. The Officer will assess the risks to environmental values particularly with respect to the EPBC Act's obligations to address matters of National Environmental Significance, and to comply with Sections 26 - 28 relating to actions by Commonwealth agencies and impacting on Commonwealth land.

The mitigation measures proposed by the proponent in Section A will be reviewed and any further measures identified as conditions to approving the proposal. These will include time constraints, requirements for monitoring, Post Activity Reporting and reporting and incidents (see Environmental Incident and Improvement Form, **Attachment B**).

#### Section C – Clearance

Clearance is to be approved by the Senior Manager. The Senior Manager can be the Commanding Officer or Manager Base Services, the DS-WA Regional Manager, or the Range Manager. For further guidance on delegates, contact the regional environmental staff. In some cases, more than one Senior Manager may choose to provide clearance, eg to approve joint service activities.



## Environmental Clearance Certificate DS-WA Region

### Section A – Proposed action (To be completed by proponent)

Service or group	Unit DS-C&W	File Reference
DSG		ECC WA 09/10 60
Contact officer's name	Phone number	Email address
Title Clearing of Vegetation RAAF Base Curtin 2010		Location of proposal (include coords and attach map as applicable) RAAF Base Curtin
Description of the proposed action (including dates/ time frame)		
<p>Clear approximately 8ha of vegetation within the facility zone of RAAF Base Curtin between Camp 1 and Camp 2 accommodation facilities as shown on Attachment 1 (Aerial Photograph "New area to be cleared between Camp 1 and Camp 2"). A detailed layout of the Facility is available in the RAAF Base Curtin Environmental Review and Risk Assessment, SKM 2006, Map B Facility Layout Map. along fence line to allow for the installation of and access to 6m gate (Figure 1) and approximately 3 m<sup>2</sup> of vegetation along fence line to all personal access gate (Figure 2). The clearance is necessary in order to extend the Camp facilities.</p> <p>This ECC only addresses the footprint impact issues. Separate assessment and approval is necessary before any construction is to proceed, to take account of potential impacts from the construction activity and the proposed facility and its operation including sustainability considerations.</p>		
Potential Environmental impacts from proposed actions		Proposed mitigation measures
1) Loss of biodiversity/habitat		1) Vegetation removal will be minimised to the extent practical but noting that risk from bushfire must be mitigated in accordance with the requirements for Building Protection Zones and Hazard Separation Zones of 'Planning for Bushfire Protection' (WA Planning Commission/FESA 200) .

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