

Spotter Catcher Report – 2271 – Park Lake Adare, Stages 4 & 5

27th August – 17th September



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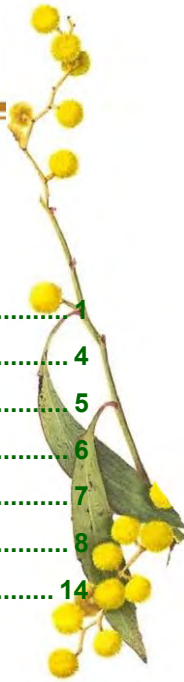
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I.0 Glossary

Term	Definition
Biodiversity	<p>The biological diversity of life is commonly regarded as being made up of the following three components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genetic diversity – the variety of genes (or units of heredity) in any population; ▪ Species diversity – the variety of species; and ▪ Ecosystem diversity – the variety of communities or ecosystems.
Ecological Community	An assemblage of species occupying a particular area.
Endangered	Designated as Endangered under the EPBC Act, NC Act and/or VM Act. Refer to definitions of EPBC Act conservation status, NC Act conservation status and VM Act conservation status for meaning of Endangered under each Act.
<p><i>Environmental Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999 Conservation Status</i></p>	<p>Under the Federal EPBC Act 1999, listed threatened species and ecological communities are assigned a conservation status of Extinct in the Wild, 'Critically Endangered', Endangered or Vulnerable. Definitions of these terms under the EPBC Act are as follows:</p> <p><u>Extinct in the wild</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; or ▪ It has not been recorded in its known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite exhaustive surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form. <p><u>Critically Endangered</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria. <p><u>Endangered</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is not critically Endangered; and ▪ It is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria. <p><u>Vulnerable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is not Critically Endangered or Endangered; and ▪ It is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
Essential Habitat	Vegetation in which a species that is Endangered, 'Vulnerable', or Near threatened under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (NCA) has been known to occur, and has been mapped as essential habitat by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP).
Habitat	An area or areas permanently, periodically or occasionally occupied by a species, population or ecological community, including any and all biotic and abiotic features of the area or areas occupied.
<p><i>Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NC Act) Conservation Status</i></p>	<p>Under the State NC Act 1992, protected species are assigned a conservation status of Extinct in the Wild, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near threatened, or Least Concern. Definitions of these terms under the NC Act are as follows:</p> <p><u>Extinct in the wild</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There have been thorough searches conducted for the wildlife; and ▪ It has not been seen in the wild over a period that is appropriate for the life cycle or form of the wildlife. <p><u>Endangered</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There have not been thorough searches conducted for the wildlife and the



Term	Definition
	<p>wildlife has not been seen in the wild over a period that is appropriate for the life cycle or form of the wildlife;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The habitat or distribution of the wildlife has been reduced to an extent that the wildlife may be in danger of extinction; ▪ The population size of the wildlife has declined, or is likely to decline, to an extent that the wildlife may be in danger of extinction; or ▪ The survival of the wildlife in the wild is unlikely if a threatening process continues. <p><u>Vulnerable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Its population is decreasing because of threatening processes; ▪ Its population has been seriously depleted and its protection is not secured; ▪ Its population, while abundant, is at risk because of threatening processes; or ▪ Its population is low or localised or depends on limited habitat that is at risk because of threatening processes. <p><u>Near threatened</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The population size or distribution of the wildlife is small and may become smaller; or ▪ The population size of the wildlife has declined, or is likely to decline, at a rate higher than the usual rate for population changes for the wildlife; or ▪ The survival of the wildlife in the wild is affected to an extent that the wildlife is in danger of becoming Vulnerable. <p><u>Least Concern</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The wildlife is common or abundant and is likely to survive in the wild. ▪ Native wildlife may be prescribed as Least Concern wildlife even if: ▪ The wildlife is the subject of a threatening process; ▪ The population size or distribution of the wildlife has declined; or ▪ There is insufficient information about the wildlife to conclude whether the wildlife is common or abundant or likely to survive in the wild.
Near threatened	Designated as Near threatened under the NC Act. Refer to definition of NC Act conservation status for meaning of Near threatened under the NC Act
Regional Ecosystem (RE)	<p>A vegetation community, within a bioregion, that is consistently associated with a particular combination of geology, landform and soil.</p> <p>Regional Ecosystem may be classified under schedules 1–3 of the Vegetation Management regulation as Endangered, Of Concern or Not Of Concern. Refer to VM Act conservation status for meaning of Endangered, Of Concern or Not Of Concern under the VM Act.</p>
Threatened	A term used with reference to ecological communities, REs or species of that are Endangered, Vulnerable or Of Concern as listed under the NC Act, the VM Act or the EPBC Act (refer to NC Act conservation significance, the VM Act conservation significance and EPBC Act conservation significance for more details).
Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VM Act) Conservation Status	<p>Under the State VM Act, REs may be classified as Endangered, Of Concern or Least Concern. Definitions of these terms under the VM Act are provided below.</p> <p><u>Endangered</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 10% of pre-clearing extent of remnant vegetation (see following definition) exists in the bioregion, or 10 to 30 % of pre-clearing extent remains and the remnant vegetation is less than 10 000 hectares. <p>In addition, for biodiversity planning purposes the DEHP also classifies a regional ecosystem as Endangered if:</p>



Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less than 10% of its pre-clearing extent remains unaffected by severe degradation and/or biodiversity loss; or ▪ 10-30% of its pre-clearing extent remains unaffected by severe degradation and/or biodiversity loss and the remnant vegetation is less than 10,000 hectares; or it is a rare regional ecosystem subject to a threatening process. <p><u>Of Concern</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 to 30% of pre-clearing extent of remnant vegetation exists in the bioregion, or more than 30% of pre-clearing extent remains and the remnant vegetation is less than 10 000 hectares. ▪ In addition, for biodiversity planning purposes the DEHP also classifies a regional ecosystem as Of Concern if: ▪ 10-30% of its pre-clearing extent remains unaffected by moderate degradation and/or biodiversity loss. <p><u>Least Concern</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 30% of pre-clearing extent of remnant vegetation exists in the bioregion, and it is greater than 10, 000 hectares. <p>In addition, for biodiversity planning purposes the DEHP also classifies a regional ecosystem as Not Of Concern if the degradation criteria listed above for Endangered or Of Concern regional ecosystems are not met.</p>
Vulnerable	Designated as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act and/or NC Act. Refer to definitions of 'EPBC Act conservation status' and 'NC Act conservation status' for meaning of Vulnerable under these Acts.



2.0 Acronyms

Acronyms	Definition
DoR	Department of Resources
DES	Department of Environment and Science
DEWR	Department of the Environment and Water Resources
DESI	Department of Environment, Science & Innovation
DoE	Department of Environment
EA	Environmental Authority as issued under the EP Act
EPBC Act	Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
FSC	Fauna Spotter Catcher
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
MNES	Matters National Environmental Significance
MSES	Matters State Environmental Significance
NC Act	Queensland <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
NC Regulation	Queensland Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006
RE	Regional Ecosystem
SQEP	Suitably Qualified Environmental Person
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
TMR	Transport and Main Roads
VM Act	Queensland <i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>



3.0 Survey Background

Newlands Group engaged *Crossroads Rural & Environment Pty Ltd*, to conduct spotter catcher actions during tree felling operations at Park Lake Adare, Stages 4 & 5 (Lots 900 SP 328402) between the 27th August – 17th September 2024.

Under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992, a person may not catch, remove or disturb any native animal unless that person has been issued relevant authority to do so by the Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES). Steve Cupitt, Principal Environmental Scientist with *Crossroads Rural & Environment* operates under the rehabilitation / spotter/catcher permit number WA0011591. Under this permit DES requires the permit holder/licensee to submit all activity record and fauna records. Copies of data from this report will be provided to DES.

The primary goal of the FSC is to mitigate the effects to wildlife by taking all reasonable measures to prevent suffering, injury, displacement and death to animals prior to, and during, clearing activities.

Under the *Queensland Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006*, it is illegal to tamper with an animal/fauna breeding place without an authority. Tamper means to damage, destroy, mark, move or dig up a breeding place. A breeding place is defined as a bower, burrow, cave, hollow, nest or other thing that is commonly used by any fauna to incubate or rear the animals' offspring.

Newlands Group actively seek to comply with all requirements pertaining to protection of wildlife; as a result, a fauna spotter catcher was on site directing operations and mitigating wildlife impacts while ever tree felling / habitat disturbance was in progress.

On site Spotter Catcher activities were conducted under ***Rehabilitation Permit Spotter Catcher WA0011591*** issued to Steve Cupitt, Crossroads Rural & Environment Pty Ltd.



4.0 Safety

Safety Protocol

On arrival, the primary objective is safety protocol re keeping safe around machinery (excavator) and keeping harm to wildlife minimized or zeroed. Upon arrival, a copy of the Rehabilitation Permit for the clearing contractor was provided along with a copy of the safety protocol and procedure document.

As spotter catching involves working near heavy machinery, the safety protocol and instruction included the following advice;

- At no time, walk in close to the excavator (or machinery) until all moving parts are on the ground, the motor has been idled back and you have direct eye contact with the operator.
- Give each other the thumbs up or thumbs down....the operator must return your signal or give you some clear indication he has seen you and understands you.
- Do not rush in to grab wildlife until machinery is shut down or is clearly not operating and the operator knows exactly where you are. Discuss all this with the operator at the very start. If he's not complying, pull him up and have a talk with him.
- Have a 5-watt UHF radio (channel 69) so there is direct communication between the spotter catcher and the machine operator.
- Be always aware where vegetation may fall or impact those in close proximity. Don't be under it. Never turn your back on the tree. Also be aware that sometimes when trees hit the ground, branches can whip up and travel considerable distance.
- Keep your mind on the job, eyes wide open all the time and your wits about you.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- *High vis clothes,*
- *Trousers (loose....not tight fitting),*
- *Long sleeve shirt,*
- *Have leather gloves ready for handling bats, possums etc,*
- *Sturdy boots,*
- *Hard hat.*

Equipment

- *Leather gloves*
- *5-watt handheld UHF radio*
- *Very strong bright torch*
- *Camera with lens on extendable arm*
- *5 or 6 small bags for securing wildlife in along with a couple of zip ties to secure top of bag*
- *Snake handling rod*
- *Boxes for containing wildlife*
- *A document with phone number and details of the nearest wildlife carer.*

5.0 Procedure for Disturbing Potential Habitat

When using heavy machinery and clearing vegetation, irrespective of how careful operator and spotter / catcher are, injuries and/or deaths are extremely difficult to mitigate entirely.

As is standard procedure, in the event of death or injury to wildlife, the costs for rehab / vet costs are covered by the client and/or the contractor.

Repercussions of wildlife injuries (i.e. dealing with DES / PALM) fall back to Crossroads Rural and Environment. For these reasons, we work very closely together to ensure there are no wildlife injuries or deaths.

The procedure is;

- Check out potential habitat very thoroughly for wildlife, active bird nests etc.....walk around the site a number of times.
- Ask the operator to hit stags or habitat area 3 times with the blade or bucket or excavator arm and watch closely for vacating or present wildlife. The preferred method of removing older stags is with a chainsaw with small sections carefully cut from the stag.
- Ensure the operator disturbs habitat very gently to avoid impact injury to wildlife.
- After the vegetation is removed, make clear contact with the operator and get them to drop blade/bucket/arm down, idle the motor down and open the cabin door to make eye contact with you. Only then does the spotter catcher move forward to check hollows, branches, stump hole etc.
- Sometimes snakes are turned up from around the tree's roots. If uninjured, do not attempt to catch or relocate. Let them find their own way off site or gently guide them with the snake handling rod.
- The spotter catcher permit does not have authority to relocate Koala. If one is found in a tree, ask the operator to carefully strip all branches off below the Koala, then leave that tree overnight. Any tree with an overhanging canopy of the Koala tree must remain undisturbed. In most cases, the Koala will usually vacate that tree and move out of the area of their own accord. If the Koala has to be moved or relocated, a Koala certified handler must be called. The name and address of Koala handler, wildlife carer and local vet must be kept on the spotter catcher's person.
- Use a strong torch, a camera with an extendable lens and a flexible mirror to check hollows.
- All habitats must be left insitu for 72hrs to allow wildlife to vacate before they are pushed up and/or removed.

Figure 1: Search Equipment

Camera probe, LED torch, extendable angle mirror





6.0 Results

As the proposed clearing area is on mixed Category B Least Concern vegetation (12.9-10.2/12.9-10.5), is surrounded by mapped Koala habitat and Essential Habitat, it was assumed these issues were addressed prior to the clearing / spotter catcher activity occurring by New Group Consultants.

During all tree felling and habitat disturbance activities, a certified spotter / catcher was in attendance to search trees, assess for wildlife, discuss felling options with the tree felling contractor, resource wildlife and if required, transport any injured wildlife to a wildlife carer.

Results - Fauna Spotter Catcher – Newlands – Adare Stage 4 & 5

27/8/24

- Habitat tree identified.
- Joey glider escaped hollow upon impact; captured and inspected with no injuries found.
- Mother glider with second joey on her back fled to a nearby tree and then glided to another tree, which was not identified to contain any hollows.
- Tree was not felled until the following week.
- Second adult glider escaped and climbed another tree; this tree also did not contain hollows and was felled the following week.
- Joey glider released into the tree where the mother glider was last seen at the end of the workday at dusk.

28/8/24

- Two large, bearded dragons seen on and near trees to be felled; caught and relocated to non-clearing areas.
- Large tree felled in dense canopy area, falling towards smaller trees.
- Koala observed on ground and climbing a small tree. Unclear if koala was in the felled tree or knocked out of a smaller tree.
- Small tree flagged and left overnight for koala to vacate.

29/8/24

- Inspected koala-marked tree; koala had vacated.

3/9/24

- A stag was found to have been felled while no FSC was on site.
- Requested closest machine operator to turn stage so FSC could inspect suspected hollow; hollow was 40 cm deep and contained no signs of inhabitants.



4/9/24

- Two large stags identified with wildlife hollows; and recorded sightings of wildlife included antechinus, pale-headed rosellas, and crested pigeons.
- Contacted Anthony to discuss tree felling and ensure wildlife safety; matter taken to the client.
- Nest of noisy minor chicks found in *Cassinia laevis* bush; pink flagged for visibility. Surrounding trees felled away from the nest.
- After client consultation it was decided a chainsaw would be used for stag felling.
- Brushtail possum fled and hid in fallen tree piles. Joey found near hollow branch that was oily and polished from possum fur.
- Joey kept in a cotton sack and kept warm through the day and released into the hollow at the end of the workday at dusk.
- Fallen stags were left overnight for any remaining critters to vacate.

5/9/24

- Possum joey no longer in hollow after inspection; presumed collected by mother possum.

13/9/24

- Large, bearded dragon seen on the roadway; encouraged away from the worksite.

17/9/24

- Large, bearded dragon found in sheared tree pile; captured and released on neighbouring property with permission.

Figure 2: Noisy Minor Nest



Noisy Miner in *Cassinia laevis*



Noisy Minor nest left untouched



Figure 3: Brushtail Possum



Young Possum rescued



Reunited with Mother



Young Possum relocated



Figure 4: Bearded Dragon



Rescued Bearded Dragon



Bearded Dragon relocated



Figure 5: Koala



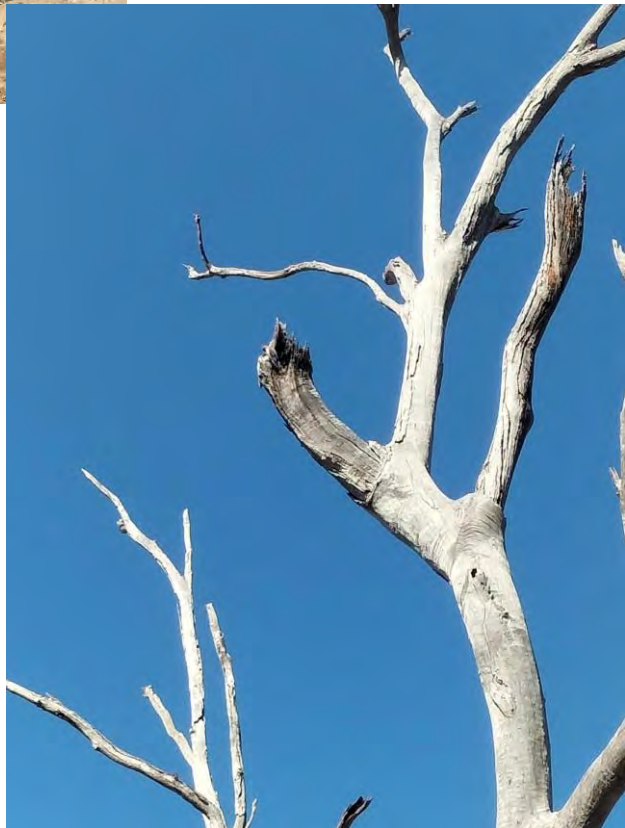
Koala sites and tree retained until Koala self-vacated



Figure 6: Habitat Trees



Dead trees with hollows



Numerous hollows to inspect



7.0 Summary

There were numerous large trees, habitat trees and Koala Trees removed on site. All vegetation removed pertained to Narrow-leaf Ironbark, Spotted Gum, Smooth-bark Apple and Moreton-bay Ash.

The excavator operator employed by the client was cooperative with the fauna spotter / catcher and did everything possible to minimise harm to wildlife and ensure a safe working environment. Vegetation was gently removed and disturbed in such a way as to scare wildlife out of the area. Machinery was stopped as soon as there was evidence of wildlife and assistance provided when required. Most importantly, while Koala were encountered, no Koala were harmed and those encountered, move to neighbouring trees outside the proposed clearing area of their own accord.

No wildlife (Birds, Mammals or Reptiles) was harmed or injured during the vegetation clearing operations.

For further advice and/or guidance, contact:



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