



Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community - Guidance for referrals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

This guidance document accompanies the *Approved Conservation Advice (incorporating listing advice) for the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain Ecological Community* (the conservation advice), which is the key document for identifying the ecological community, available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicshowcommunity.pl?id=131>.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to persons preparing referrals under the EPBC Act for actions that may impact the Banksia Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain ecological community (the Banksia Woodlands TEC), which is listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. When considering whether or not an action will have a significant impact on the Banksia Woodlands TEC, the Department will consider a range of variables relevant to an individual patch and the broader occurrences of the Banksia Woodlands TEC.

Referrals under the EPBC Act for a proposed action that may impact the Banksia Woodlands TEC should include information to demonstrate whether native vegetation in the project site or in other off-site areas that may be impacted by the action (e.g. by hydrological changes), is the Banksia Woodlands TEC; and whether the action will result in a significant impact to the Banksia Woodlands TEC.

In order to determine this, referrals should firstly consider whether any native vegetation is consistent with the description and key diagnostic characteristics which classify the Banksia Woodlands TEC (as outlined in the conservation advice), including location, structure, composition.

If any native vegetation is consistent with the key diagnostic characteristics, the referral then needs to consider additional information, which describes the condition, sub-community, size and specific characteristics of the Banksia Woodlands TEC that may be impacted by the proposed action.

Informed by this information, referrals should then consider whether the proposed action has a real chance or possibility in resulting in a significant impact to the Banksia Woodlands TEC.

Key diagnostic characteristics

- Must meet these characteristics to be considered the Banksia Woodlands TEC
- If the key diagnostic characteristics are met, the additional information should be provided for consideration

Additional information

- Define the condition, size, sub-community and specific characteristics of the ecological community

Significant impact guidelines

- Discuss the likelihood that the proposed action has a real chance or possibility in resulting in a significant impact
- Impacts expected need to be explained and, to the extent possible, quantified.

The following information should be provided in a referral to assist the decision makers in determining whether there is a real chance or possibility that the proposed action will result in a significant impact to the EPBC Act listed Banksia Woodlands TEC. In the absence of adequate information, the Department will take a precautionary approach in assessing the

likelihood of significant impacts to a vegetation community that could be considered to be the Banksia Woodlands TEC.

Key diagnostic characteristics

Table 1: Key diagnostic characteristics of the Banksia Woodlands TEC

Key diagnostic characteristics [□]	Information	Key diagnostic questions* (Refer to Section 2.2 of the conservation advice for a complete explanation of these diagnostic features)	Response (yes/no/possibly) and discussion (Use as much space as necessary) [#]
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 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 comprise restored or revegetated flora. Do not exclude vegetation from being classed as the Banksia Woodlands TEC because it is restored or revegetated flora.

Any discussion should include references to appropriate supporting information and data.

Additional information

Table 2: Additional information to characterise the Banksia Woodlands TEC

Key diagnostic characteristics [□]	Information	Relevant content to be discussed in the referral (Relevant section of BWSCP Conservation advice)	Response and discussion (Use as much space as necessary) [#]
Location and physical environments	Regional distribution and quality	Quantity/quality of vegetation community in, and in the region around, the site where the proposed action will occur (Section 2.2.2)	
Patch condition	Condition thresholds	What is the patch condition using the condition categories outlined in Section 2.2.2 Note: A patch could vary in quality over the range of the patch.	

Patch Size	Patch size in hectares	Is the patch size large enough to meet criteria in Section 2.2.3? Note: Patch boundaries are not limited to the proposal site.	
	Surrounding buffer	What is the size and vegetation community of the surrounding buffer? (Section 2.2.3) and what is the connectivity to the surrounding vegetation? Note: The assessments of a patch should initially be centred on the area of highest native floristic diversity and/or cover i.e. the best condition area of the patch and one patch could be made up of several sub-communities.	
Other condition considerations	Presence/absence and spread of <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> (dieback)	If present, how much dieback exists and is the proposed action likely to spread dieback further? (Appendix D5) If not present, can its introduction be prevented?	
	Presence/absence weeds	Does the patch contain weeds? (Appendix D6) Which species are present and how can they be managed?	
	Any other notable disturbance to the site where relevant (i.e. fragmentation, fire regimes, bare patches, erosion, feral animals)	What disturbance is present which may degrade the quality of the community or species? (Appendix D) For any/each form of disturbance, what is the degree of the disturbance? Is there evidence of recruitment of key native plant species following disturbance?	
	Patch isolation	Is the patch connected to other areas of Banksia Woodland or is it isolated? (Section 2.2)	
Sub-community and vegetation unit	Broad scale structural unit (Beard vegetation associations)	Provide the best corresponding Beard vegetation association (s) (Appendix C1)	
	Floristic community types (Gibson et al., 1994; Keighery et al., 2008)	Provide the closest resemblance of floristic community type(s) with reference to those discussed in Appendix C2 of the BWSCP Conservation advice (Appendix C2 and Section 1.3.2) Note: there is potential for multiple sub-communities within a patch.	
	Western Australian ecological community listing	Is this ecological community listed in Western Australia? (Section 2.2.2) Note: Ecological communities which are also listed as threatened or Priority ecological communities in Western Australia have higher significance than sub-types known to be more common and should be provided specific or additional protection.	

Surveying	Timing of the surveying	Ideally surveys should be undertaken in spring with two sampling periods to capture early and late flowering species (Section 2.2.2). When was sampling undertaken at the proposed site? Is there any reason why the vegetation community could not be readily identified (e.g. due to recent disturbance such as fire)? Note: Section 2.2.4 of the BWSCP Conservation advice has guidance on timing/protocols for surveys (e.g. after fire).	
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□ Further information on the key diagnostic characteristics is provided in the BWSCP Conservation advice.

Any discussion should include references to appropriate supporting information and data.

Assessment of significant impacts

The discussion of the likelihood that the proposed action has a real chance or possibility in resulting in a significant impact to the Banksia Woodlands TEC should consider 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](#) and the conservation advice (particularly the other factors outlined in section [2.2.4 Step 4: Further information to assist in determining the presence of the ecological community and significant impacts](#)).

Impacts expected need to be explained and, to the extent possible, quantified.

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		
Fragment or increase fragmentation of an ecological community, for example by clearing vegetation for roads or transmission lines		
Adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of an 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		
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		
Cause a substantial reduction in the quality or integrity of an occurrence of an ecological community, including, but not limited to: — 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		
Interfere with the recovery of an ecological community		

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