



Australian Government

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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DESALINATION PLANT APPROVED WITH STRICT CONDITIONS

The federal environment department has given conditional approval to the Southern Seawater Desalination Project at Binningup.

The department has imposed 23 strict conditions on the project to minimise impacts on nationally threatened and migratory species, with particular focus on the listed black cockatoo species, the western ringtail possum and whales.

The project design was negotiated and strict conditions were put in place relating to revegetation work to preserve important habitat for the species. As a result, significantly more habitat will be established than will be cleared.

The approval conditions include a requirement to preserve and revegetate nearly 47ha of habitat at the plant site. A total of 7ha will be permanently cleared.

The conditions also require 7ha to be established at the water tank site where 13 trees will be removed or pruned.

The Water Corporation's purchase of land with no habitat values behind the development site has allowed most of the infrastructure to be placed on the purchased site. As a result, the project requires less habitat clearing and no off-site offsets.

The Water Corporation must prepare a management plan for the revegetation work detailing how and when the site will be revegetated, and ensure listed orchid species along the pipeline route are protected during construction.

Strict conditions also apply to the project's marine construction activities.

Exclusion zones must be set up during marine construction and a qualified marine mammal observer will be required to watch for any whales or turtles entering these areas.

If any of the listed marine species are spotted, work must stop immediately and cannot resume until the species has been out of the zone for at least half an hour.

The department has also imposed a condition requiring a marine management plan to be prepared in case the Water Corporation needs to carry out blasting during marine construction.

If any blasting is needed, the department will need to see all the details beforehand, and there will be restrictions on when and how it can happen.

The approval conditions can be found at: www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=referral_detail&proposal_id=4173