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PREAMBLE

Cordwell Resources Pty Ltd. (the proponent) proposes to construct and operate an expansion to the existing hard-rock Kin Kin Quarry, at 900 Shepperson's Lane, Kin Kin, Queensland (the proposed action).

On 19 July 2023, the proposed action was referred under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) to the Minister for the Environment and Water.

On 17 July 2025, a delegate of the Minister for the Environment and Water determined the proposed action is a controlled action due to likely significant impacts on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) protected under Part 3 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act):

• Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A)

The delegate of the Minister also determined that the proposed action be assessed by a Public Environment Report (PER).

These tailored guidelines have been developed for the preparation of a draft PER. Information about the action and its relevant impacts, as outlined below, is to be provided in the PER. This information must be sufficient to allow the Minister to make an informed decision on whether or not to approve, under Part 9 of the EPBC Act, the taking of the action for the purposes of each controlling provision.

GENERAL ADVICE ON GUIDELINES

1. General content

The PER should be a stand-alone, cohesive document that primarily focuses on the MNES listed above. It must contain sufficient information to avoid the need to search out previous or supplementary reports. The PER must take into consideration the *EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines* and other relevant EPBC Act policy statements that can be accessed at: <u>EPBC Act publications and resources - DCCEEW</u>. The PER must include reference to all information relevant to the proposed action, including information previously provided to the department.

The PER must enable interested stakeholders and the Minister to understand the environmental consequences of the proposed action. Information provided in the PER must be objective, clear, and succinct and, where appropriate, be supported by maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive detail. The body of the PER is to be written in a clear and concise style that is easily understood by the general reader. Technical jargon should be avoided wherever possible. Where technical jargon is used, jargon must be clearly defined in a glossary. Cross-referencing should be used to avoid unnecessary duplication of text.

Detailed technical information, studies or investigations necessary to support the main text must be included as appendices to the PER and summarised within the main text. It is recommended that any additional supporting documentation and studies, reports or literature not normally available to the public from which information has been extracted be made available at appropriate locations during the period of public display of the PER.

The level of analysis and detail in the PER should reflect the level of significance of the expected impacts on the environment. Any and all unknown variables or assumptions made in the assessment must be clearly stated and discussed. The extent to which the limitations, if any, of available information may influence the conclusions of the environmental assessment should be discussed. Management commitments must be clear, genuine and specific, noting that they may be reflected in draft conditions of approval.

The proponent must ensure that the PER assesses compliance of the action with principles of Ecological Sustainable Development as set out in the EPBC Act, and the objects of the Act at <u>Appendix A</u>. A copy of Schedule 4 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* (EPBC Regulations), *Matters to be addressed by draft public environment report and environmental impact statement*, is at <u>Appendix B</u>.

After receiving the Minister's approval to publish the report, the proponent is required to make the draft PER available for a period of public comment. Specific instructions regarding publication requirements will be provided as part of the Minister's direction to publish.

If it is necessary to make use of material that is considered to be of a confidential nature, the proponent must consult with the department on the preferred presentation of that material, before submitting it to the Minister for approval for publication.

2. Format and style

The PER must comprise three elements, namely:

- the executive summary
- · the main text of the document
- appendices containing detailed technical information and other information that can be made publicly available.

The guidelines have been set out in a manner that may be adopted as the format for the PER. This format need not be followed where the required information can be more effectively presented in an alternative way. However, each of the elements must be addressed to meet the requirements of the EPBC Act and Regulations.

The PER must be written so that any conclusions reached can be independently assessed. To this end all sources must be appropriately referenced. The reference list must include the address of any websites used as data sources and the date the website was accessed.

The PER must include:

- a list of abbreviations,
- a glossary of terms and
- appendices containing:
 - o a copy of these guidelines
 - o a list of persons and agencies consulted during the PER
 - contact details for the proponent
 - the names and qualifications of the persons involved in preparing the PER and work done by each of these persons.
 - o Appendices containing appropriate data to provide relevant detail.

Maps, diagrams and other illustrative material must be included in the PER. The PER should be produced on A4 size paper capable of being photocopied, with maps and diagrams on A4 or A3 size and in colour where possible. All maps must follow the <u>Guide to providing maps and boundary data for EPBC Act projects - DCCEEW</u>.

The proponent must consider the format and style of the document appropriate for publication on the Internet. The capacity of the website to store data and display the material may have some bearing on how the document is constructed.

SPECIFIC CONTENT

1. General information

This is to provide the background and context of the action.

Inform	Information required		
1.1	The title of the action.		
1.2	The full name and postal address of the designated proponent.		
1.3	A clear outline of the objective of the action.		
1.4	The location of the action.		
1.5	The background to the development of the action.		
1.6	How the action relates to any other actions (of which the proponent should be reasonably aware) that have been, or are being, taken or that have been approved in the region affected by the action.		
1.7	The current status of the action.		
1.8	The consequences of not proceeding with the action.		

2. Description of the action

All construction, operational, ongoing maintenance, decommissioning and rehabilitation components of the action must be described in detail. This should include the precise location (including coordinates) of all works to be undertaken, structures to be built or elements of the action that may have impacts on MNES.

The description of the action must also include details on how the works are to be undertaken (including stages of development and their timing) and design parameters for those aspects of the structures or elements of the action that may have relevant impacts.

Clearly identify and explain any changes that have been made to the proposed action since the proposal to vary the proposed action was accepted. Describe any changes to project area or disturbance footprints that may have occurred since the request to vary the proposed action was accepted. Please note, depending on the scale of these changes, it may require submission of an additional formal variation request.

Information required		

2.1	Provide the location, extent, and size (in hectares) of the disturbance/impact footprint, project area (to accommodate any potential micrositing requirements), and any adjoining areas (beyond the impact area e.g., study area) that may be subject to indirect or facilitated impacts, including edge effects, noise, light spill, vehicle access, erosion, changes to water quality or quantity/availability or other associated activities. The department notes that within the referral and variation request various terms have been used to describe the proposed action (including proposal, action and project) and the project area (including study site, site area and project area). Please ensure the terminology used to describe/define areas is consistent across the PER. The department recommends the following definitions be used:
	 study area: the area in which surveys have been undertaken project area: the area in which the proposed action will be undertaken disturbance footprint: the area in which clearance will occur for the proposed action
2.2	Provide a description of the anticipated start and completion dates of all components of the action, such as the timing of clearing to be undertaken over the construction period, and other stages of quarry development.
2.3	Include mapping showing an indicative layout plan for the project area, including the location of key infrastructure such as:
2.4	Describe, and provide mapping for, shared infrastructure (public and private) to be constructed or upgraded to facilitate the construction and operation of the proposed action (e.g. roads, transmission, and/or accommodation camps). Include information on: I load carrying capacity of roads, and ownership /responsibility for, and maintenance, of shared infrastructure.
2.5	Describe the intended land uses proposed as part of the completed development, including of any proposed open space and/or conservation areas and associated ongoing activities, and details of the intended party that would be responsible for future management activities.

2.6	Provide details of any local or state government planning scheme, or plan or policy under any local or state government planning system that applies or is likely to apply to the proposed action. Details should include (but are not limited to):	
	a)	the environmental assessment of the proposed action that has been, or is being, carried out under the scheme, plan or policy
	b)	application/approval numbers for existing applications where relevant
	c)	obtained approvals or additional approvals that are required.

3. Feasible alternatives

Any feasible alternatives to the action to the extent reasonably practicable, including:

- a) if relevant, the alternative of taking no action
- b) a comparative description of the impacts of each alternative on the MNES protected by controlling provisions of Part 3 of the EPBC Act for the action
- c) sufficient detail to make clear why any alternative is preferred to another.

Discuss the short, medium and long-term advantages and disadvantages of the options.

4. Description of the environment

Include a description of the environment of the project area and the surrounding areas that may be affected by the action.

Inforn	Information required		
4.1	Describe the vegetation communities within, and adjacent to, the project area including the area (in hectares) they each cover, and the percent (%) cover for each vegetation type. Details of the scope, timing (survey season/s) and methodology for studies or surveys used to provide information on the vegetation communities.		
4.2	Provide information on topography and elevation across the project area and surrounds, including a map with clearly labelled contour intervals.		
4.3	Describe the hydrology within and adjacent to the project area including water courses and water bodies. Include a map that clearly documents stream order across the site.		
4.4	Describe the soil types across the project area including information on their dispersive/erosive characters. Include a map with clearly labelled contour intervals and soil types.		

4.5 Provide details of current and historical land use of the area.

5. Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)

5.1. General MNES information

The PER must include a detailed assessment of the presence, or likelihood of presence, of protected matters in the project area and its vicinity.

A recent report from the Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) must be considered and included as an appendix. This can be accessed at the following website: Protected Matters Search Tool - DCCEEW.

The PER must address listed protected matters, including but not limited to:

- a) Listed threatened species and ecological communities
 - a. Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus* (combined populations of Queensland, NSW and the ACT)) endangered
 - b. Greater Glider (southern and central) (Petauroides volans) endangered
 - c. Grey-headed Flying Fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) vulnerable
 - d. Scrub Turpentine (*Rhodamnia rubescens*) critically endangered
 - e. Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia Threatened Ecological Community critically endangered.

For listed threatened species and ecological communities, it is the proponent's responsibility to be aware of any changes to the distribution and listing status of threatened species and ecological communities, and information available in the Species Profile and Threats (SPRAT) Database. The list of threatened species and ecological communities above provides guidance on species of key concern, but further assessment may be required for other species or communities identified as being potentially impacted during the course of the assessment.

<u>Please note</u>: Failing to survey appropriately for protected matters that may be present at a site could result in the department applying the precautionary principle with regard to residual significant impact determinations. That is, if no supporting evidence (such as survey results) is presented to support the claim of protected matter likely absence or lack of impact, then the department may assume that the protected matter is present and potentially impacted by the proposed action. The department will not accept claimed protected matter likely absence without effective validation such as through application of survey guidelines, other survey techniques (for example, a state guideline or an accepted industry guideline), or statements from relevant species experts. Where a claim of likely absence is made,

proposals must provide a robust evaluation of protected matter likely absence.

5.2. Listed threatened species and ecological communities

5.2.1. Habitat assessment

Information required

5.2.1.1 Provide a habitat assessment for the relevant protected matters in the project area, including protected matters outside the project area where they have the potential to be impacted (including downstream).

Habitat assessments must be informed by desktop searches and field surveys, with reference to relevant departmental documents (e.g. approved conservation advices, recovery plans, survey guidelines, referral guidelines and listing advices, the SPRAT Database) and relevant peer-reviewed literature.

Provide distinct, specific definitions for each identified category of habitat as appropriate to the MNES (breeding, foraging, dispersal, refugia etc.) in accordance with relevant departmental documents.

Please note, the department does not accept reliance on Queensland Regional Ecosystem (RE) mapping alone to determine habitat for protected matters. Further, habitat assessments must not only consider remnant vegetation, but also non-remnant and regrowth vegetation.

Where habitat assessments and/or species habitat definitions depart from departmental documents, adequate justification must be provided to substantiate their suitability to the assessment.

The department notes that the disturbance footprint has increased since the submission of the referral. Please ensure that all habitat assessments include the increased area of disturbance.

5.2.1.2 Identify and describe known historical records of protected matters in the broader region.

All known records must be supported by an appropriate source (i.e., Commonwealth and State databases, Queensland Government's WildNet, Atlas of Living Australia, published research, publicly available survey reports, etc.), and where possible, include the year of the record and a description of the habitat in which the record was identified.

- 5.2.1.3 Provide details of the scope, methodology, timing and effort of field surveys to identify protected matters in the project area and surrounds, including:
 - when surveys were conducted (e.g., dates, time of day, season, etc.) and survey effort (e.g., two hours for every one hectare within a 5-hectare area)

- map/s of survey points and/or transects (as relevant) and how the survey points and/or transect locations were selected.
- how surveys were undertaken in accordance with relevant Commonwealth, State and/or best practice survey guidelines, including departmental survey guidelines: https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/advice/surveys-and-data.
- evidence that surveys were undertaken over a sufficient scale and period to adequately determine the likely presence or absence of the targeted species, or confirmation that a precautionary approach was taken where this was not possible (i.e. assumed presence).
- any limitations associated with the survey which may have impacted on the results, including but not limited to, resource limitations (time, equipment failure), inadequate sampling and/or effort.
- if relevant, the justification for divergence from relevant Commonwealth, State and/or best practice survey guidelines.

Attach all referenced ecological surveys as supporting documents to the PER.

Please note, the department generally cannot accept survey data that is more than 5 years old because:

- populations of species can change due to fires, drought, flooding and land management changes.
- some species' ranges can shift due to climate change.

If your data is older than 4 years when you start planning your proposed action, the department recommends you undertake further up to date surveys, and may insist on this after reviewing drafts of your PER.

- 5.2.1.4 Provide detailed mapping of habitat (within, adjacent to and downstream of the project area, where relevant) for all listed threatened species and ecological communities that may be impacted by the proposed action, which:
 - is specific to the habitat requirements for each listed species and community (i.e. does not only illustrate relevant Queensland REs)
 - includes an overlay of the disturbance footprint
 - identifies all specific MNES habitat on site (e.g. breeding, foraging or dispersal habitat, known important and refugia habitat such as riparian zones)
 - includes the regional context, and illustrates connectivity of habitat in the broader landscape

includes known records of individuals derived from desktop analysis and field surveys is of a suitable scale to allow interpretation and representation of mapped features includes a legend listing mapped features is provided separately as attachments in both JPEG format and as shape files. All maps must follow the Guide to providing maps and boundary data for EPBC Act projects - DCCEEW. 5.2.1.5 Include the total area of habitat (in hectares) for each relevant listed species or ecological community, including: total habitat within the project area and disturbance footprint (including detail on habitat type e.g. breeding/foraging/denning/dispersal) where relevant, total habitat in the study area. 5.2.1.6 Where potential habitat for listed species or ecological communities is identified in the project area, a habitat assessment must be undertaken regardless of whether the species or community was recorded. As such, the potential for occurrence of these protected matters must also be considered and assessed. 5.2.1.7 Include an appendix of occurrence records (both sightings and evidence of presence) for all listed threatened species and migratory species identified during field surveys for the proposed action. This data may be used by the department to update the relevant species distribution models that underpin the publicly available PMST. Species occurrence records must be provided in accordance with the department's Guidelines for biological survey and mapped data - DCCEEW and using the department's Species observation data template. Sensitive ecological data must be identified and treated in accordance with the department's Sensitive Ecological Data— Access and Management Policy V1.0 (dcceew.gov.au). 5.2.1.8 For all listed threatened species and communities likely to be impacted by the proposed action, provide a discussion on potential habitat use within, adjacent to, and downstream of the project area. Include a discussion on their use of relevant migratory, statewide, regional and riparian biodiversity corridors.

5.2.2. Specific additional information required

Further to the general information required above for all listed threatened species and ecological communities, the department requires the specific information listed below for the following protected matters.

Greater Glider (southern and central) (Petauroides volans) – Endangered

- 5.2.2.1 The department stipulates the following habitat definitions for the Greater Glider (southern and central) be used in assessment documentation:
 - Current Foraging and Denning Habitat: Areas containing locally important dominant/codominant trees for foraging. There should be a density of at least 0.8 trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) greater than the RE threshold for large trees per hectare.
 - **Future Foraging and Denning Habitat**: Areas containing locally important dominant/codominant trees for foraging that are within 500 m of a tree with a (DBH) greater than 30 centimetres (cm), but less than the RE threshold for large trees.
 - Dispersal habitat: Corridors wider than 30 m which connect Foraging and Denning habitat patches that are up to 7 km apart. Dispersal habitat must contain trees large enough and at an appropriate distance to facilitate gliding between the canopy, assuming the Greater Glider has a glide angle of 40 degrees. Dispersal habitat does not need to be foraging and denning habitat, but where it comprises other habitat types, foraging resources should be present at least every 2 km to ensure that dispersing individuals can feed.
- 5.2.2.2 Please note, where a large tree DBH threshold is not known for a relevant RE, minimum DBH thresholds of 20 cm for non-eucalypts and 30 cm for eucalypts should be used. Where areas of future and current foraging and denning habitat overlap, the area is current foraging and denning habitat.

6. Impact assessment

The PER must include a description of all relevant impacts of the action. Relevant impacts are impacts that the action will have or is likely to have on a matter protected by a controlling provision (as listed in the preamble of this document). Impacts during the construction, operation and, if applicable, decommissioning phases of the proposed action must be addressed.

General information required

- 6.1 Include an assessment of potential short-term and long-term impacts to MNES from the proposed action (during all proposed action phases) within the project area and surrounds, including but not limited to:
 - a) habitat loss, degradation and individual mortality from vegetation clearing

	b)	habitat fragmentation and patch isolation (with consideration of species' movement patterns and site utilisation), including site alienation resulting in fauna avoiding the project area
	c)	species site utilisation before/after disturbance
	d)	increased prevalence of invasive plants and animals
	e)	increased anthropogenic activities, including disturbance from dogs and other animals, vehicle collisions with fauna, illegal rubbish dumping and littering, risk of entanglement in fencing
	f)	altered fire regimes
	g)	altered hydrology
	h)	environmental pollution, including light and noise pollution, sediment/dust generation.
6.2	as a re	e the direct and indirect loss and/or disturbance of protected matters and their habitat sult of the proposed action. This must include the area (in hectares) for each type of t, the quality of the habitat to be impacted, and quantification of the individuals to be ted (where applicable).
6.3	Includ	e a statement whether any relevant impacts are likely to be unknown, unpredictable or rsible.
6.4	Discus	s whether the impacts are likely to be repeated, for example, as part of maintenance.
6.5	Includ	e an analysis of the significance of the relevant impacts.
6.6		e any technical data and other information used or needed to make a detailed ment of the relevant impacts.
6.7	additio	by and address cumulative impacts, where potential proposed action impacts are in on to existing impacts of other activities (including known potential future expansions elopments by the proponent and other proponents in the region and vicinity).
6.8	Consid	s the potential cumulative impact of the proposed action on ecosystem resilience. Her the anticipated/predicted future climatic conditions at the site in the assessment of its on MNES, and how changes in climate and the frequency and severity of weather is may interact with, exacerbate or reduce the impacts of the proposed action on MNES ime.

6.9 Provide a detailed assessment of any likely impact that this proposed action may facilitate on relevant controlling provisions (at the local, regional, state, national and international scale).

6.1. Impacts to listed threatened species and ecological communities

For listed threatened species and ecological communities, the PER must include the impact information listed in the above 'general information required' table in addition to the following information listed below.

Inform	nation required
6.1.1	Provide justification, with supporting evidence, as to how the proposed action will not be inconsistent with:
	a) Australia's obligations under the Biodiversity Convention, the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
	b) a recovery plan or threat abatement plan.
6.1.2	Provide justification, with supporting evidence, as to how the proposed action has taken into account any relevant approved conservation advice.

7. Proposed avoidance, minimisation, mitigation and management measures

Avoidance, minimisation, and mitigation measures are the primary methods of eliminating and reducing impacts on protected matters. Avoidance of impacts is best. Where it is not possible to completely avoid impact to a protected matter, there may be ways to reduce the impact. If impacts cannot be avoided, then they must be minimised or mitigated as much as possible.

Mitigation is what you can do to reduce how likely or serious the unavoidable impact will be. For example, the risk of soil erosion can be mitigated by not using machinery during heavy rainfall or the risk of mortality of protected matters from vehicle strike can be mitigated by lowering speed limits and scheduling truck movements during the day (rather than dawn and dusk when animals are likely to be more active). Please see further information here: Offsets mitigation hierarchy - DCCEEW.

Avoidance, minimisation and mitigation measures must be investigated thoroughly as a part of the PER and be supported by evidence to demonstrate likely success. The PER must demonstrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied and all options to avoid and mitigate harm to protected matters have been exhausted, before resorting to environmental offsets (offsets are discussed in Chapter 9 of these PER Guidelines).

Proposed measures must be based on best available practices, appropriate standards, evidence of success for other similar actions and supported by published scientific evidence. The SPRAT Database,

conservation advice, recovery plans and associated statutory and policy documents may provide a starting point for relevant mitigation and management measures.

The department requires the development of scientifically rigorous monitoring programs to measure impacts and assess the effectiveness of mitigation.

Inform	ation required
7.1	Include a detailed summary of measures proposed to be undertaken by the proponent to avoid, minimise, mitigate and manage relevant impacts of the proposed action on protected matters, for all stages of the proposed action. Include details of any relevant measures to avoid, mitigate and manage impacts required through other Commonwealth, State and local government approvals.
7.2	 All measures must be developed to meet the 'S.M.A.R.T' principle: S – Specific (what and how) M – Measurable (supported by baseline information, number/value, quantifiable, auditable)
	 A – Achievable (with consideration of e.g., timeframe, money, personnel) R – Relevant (consistent with conservation advices, recovery plans, threat abatement plans, scientific literature) T – Time-bound (specific timeframe to complete, include timeframe and frequency).
7.3	Include details of specific and measurable environmental outcomes to be achieved for relevant protected matters. All commitments must be drafted using committal language (e.g. 'will' and 'must') when describing the proposed measures. This includes identifying milestones, or specifying performance or completion criteria. Any commitments by the person proposing to take the action must be clearly distinguished from recommendations or statements of best practice made by the document author or other technical expert.
7.4	Include an assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of the proposed measures.
7.5	Include any statutory or policy basis for the proposed measures, including reference to the SPRAT Database and relevant approved conservation advice, recovery plan or threat abatement plan, and a discussion on how the proposed measures are not inconsistent with relevant plans.

7.6	Provide details of ongoing management, including monitoring programs to support an adaptive management approach, that validate the effectiveness of the proposed management measures and overall demonstrate that environmental outcomes will be achieved.
	Proposed impact triggers must be informed by scientific literature and relevant departmental guidelines.
7.7	Provide details of tangible, on-ground corrective actions that will be implemented in the event the monitoring programs indicate that the environmental outcomes have not or will not be achieved, and when these corrective actions would be triggered. Note that provision of environmental offsets will also be expected for any residual significant impact (see section 9).

7.1. Management plans

Management plans describe how an action might impact on the natural environment in which it occurs and set out clear commitments from the person taking the action on how those impacts will be avoided, minimised and managed so that they are environmentally acceptable.

Management plans may not be essential, but they are often an efficient way to organise and commit to management actions for easy reference of the proponent, contractors, regulators and other stakeholders. Management plans can often be used to efficiently satisfy multiple regulatory regimes (for example, a management plan prepared to satisfy a state government regulation may be relevant to your assessment and potential approval under the EPBC Act), but care should be taken to understand and identify the relevant approval mechanisms and how they interact.

Include any management plans relevant to the mitigation and management of impacts to MNES (for all stages of the proposed action) as separate documents attached to the PER. These plans may include:

- Rehabilitation Management Plan
- Weed Management Plan
- Quarry management Plan
- Environment or MNES Management Plan
- Offset Area Management Plan

Relevant plans should be included prior to publication of the draft PER. Combining management plans to simplify management arrangements should be considered, where appropriate. A final version of each plan is likely to require approval prior to commencement of the action, should the action be approved.

Management plans should state the environmental objectives, performance criteria, monitoring, reporting, corrective actions, responsibility and timing for each environmental issue.

The *Environmental Management Plan Guidelines* provides general guidance to stakeholders preparing environmental management plans for environmental impact assessments and approvals under Chapter 4 of the EPBC Act. This is available at: Environmental Management Plan Guidelines - DCCEEW.

8. Rehabilitation requirements

Rehabilitation applies to areas that have been impacted and will be restored to their pre-impact condition. Where rehabilitation is proposed and relevant to protected matters, the below information must be included in a Rehabilitation Management Plan or a subsection of the PER.

The department notes that a Rehabilitation Management Plan was provided as part of the referral documentation. The department considers that the area proposed for rehabilitation in that plan is characteristic of an offset area, as it is an area which does not form part of the proposed action's disturbance footprint and appears to be intended as compensation for the impacts of the proposed action (i.e. an offset). Please see Chapter 9 of these PER Guidelines for more information on OAMP requirements.

Infor	mation required
8.1	Provide details of rehabilitation methods and how they meet best practice standards, including for the restoration of habitat for relevant protected matters and avoidance of sedimentation/erosion.
8.2	Provide a summary of the vegetation community/habitat that is being rehabilitated and the dominant species that will be included in the rehabilitation site.
8.3	Include the details of any rehabilitation activities proposed to be undertaken as required by Commonwealth, state or territory, and local government legislation.
8.4	Include maps showing the areas that will be rehabilitated within the project area and the size in hectares of these areas.
8.5	Provide information on management of the rehabilitation site, including, but not limited to, weed and pest management.
8.6	Include rehabilitation acceptance criteria relevant to MNES and the procedures, including contingency measures, that will be undertaken to achieve them.
8.7	Provide details of a monitoring program to determine the success of rehabilitation activities implemented by the proponent, including any contingency measures and when they would be triggered.

8.8 Include information on whether any post-construction rehabilitation sites will be subsequently cleared during the decommissioning stage.

9. Offsets

If a residual significant impact on protected matters is likely to occur from a proposed action, then environmental offsets are measures that compensate for that impact. Offsets provide environmental benefits to counterbalance the impacts that remain after consideration of avoidance and mitigation measures.

Offsets must be specific to the species or ecological community being impacted, must address the attribute of the protected matter that is impacted, and must deliver an outcome for the protected matter that is demonstrably equal or better than if neither the impact nor the offset occurred. This could include purchasing, protecting or improving another area of land which supports the same protected matter that is being impacted. Offsets are not intended to make proposed actions with unacceptable impacts, acceptable.

It is important to consider environmental offsets early in the assessment process. Correspondence with the department regarding offsetting is highly encouraged.

An Offset Management Plan (OAMP) must be included as an appendix to the PER if residual significant impacts are likely. The OAMP must be included prior to publication of the draft PER for potential approval concurrently with approval of the action itself.

Info	Information required		
9.1	An assessment of the likelihood of residual significant impacts occurring on relevant MNES, after avoidance, mitigation and management measures have been applied.		
9.2	A summary of the proposed environmental offset and key commitments to achieve a conservation gain for each protected matter.		
9.3	The OAMP must meet the information requirements set out in <u>Appendix C</u> and must be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist and in accordance with the department's <u>Environmental Management Plan Guidelines</u> (2014), available at: <u>Environmental Management Plan Guidelines</u> - <u>DCCEEW</u> .		
9.4	The environmental offset/s proposed for the proposed action must meet the core principles of the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy (2012) available at: EPBC Act environmental offsets policy - DCCEEW.		
9.5	Offset proposals must engage specifically with the ecological requirements of the protected matter.		
	For example, for a species like the greater glider, management measures such as weeding and fencing will not generally be accepted as suitable compensation for the loss of hollows suitable		

for denning, which is a limiting habitat requirement for the species. Where denning resources are proposed to be impacted, offset proposals should demonstrate an increase in the quality and/or availability of denning resources at an offset site, relative to the quantum of impact. Offset proposals based on creation of hollows (or artificial denning resources) must realistically address whether they will be used by greater gliders, whether they will attract predator or competitor species, and their durability. They must also be accompanied by suitable monitoring and performance measures. Deviations from these principles will need to be explained and justified.

9.1. Habitat quality assessment

When calculating offset requirements, please refer to the department's published guidance, *How to use the Offsets Assessment Guide*, available at <u>EPBC Act environmental offsets policy - DCCEEW</u>.

Where an offset is required, a methodology that is suitable for the protected matter must be used to assess habitat quality (i.e., endorsed by the department or supported by literature), noting the same scoring mechanism must be used at both impact and offset sites.

The department encourages proponents to consult and seek endorsement from the department on a proposed habitat quality scoring method prior to undertaking any habitat quality assessment at both impact and offset site(s).

The department currently prefers the use of the Modified Habitat Quality Assessment (MHQA) method, an adaptation of the Queensland Government's *Guide to determining terrestrial habitat quality v1.2* (2017) (DEHP Guide). The MHQA was developed to better reflect the requirements of the *EPBC Act Offsets Policy* for determining habitat quality.

To support habitat quality assessments, a MHQA scoring guide and a MHQA scoring spreadsheet template (.xlsx) are provided with these guidelines.

The department notes that not all of the MHQA attributes may be directly relevant to the viability of all listed species. Therefore, the use of attributes and/or relative contribution of attributes may diverge from the standard MHQA. If you intend to propose an alternative habitat quality scoring methodology for any protected matters, the alternative methodology must:

- directly relate to habitat requirements of the species and factors associated with the viability of the protected matter, and align with information contained in the SPRAT Database and relevant statutory/departmental documents
- b) be substantiated with appropriate field surveys in accordance with the relevant survey guidelines or using a scientifically robust and repeatable methodology.

Where there are any inconsistencies between the habitat assessment approach and information contained in the SPRAT Database, the inconsistencies must be discussed with the department prior to the submission of the assessment documentation and must be supported by scientific evidence, including published research, independent expert advice and information derived from field surveys.

A conservative approach to forecasting habitat quality scores for the Offset Assessment Guide should be applied, with all limitations and uncertainties considered, documented and integrated within the 'Confidence in Result % (Quality)' value applied in the Offset Assessment Guide. Please also note the following:

- a) If you propose a habitat quality gain of more than 2 points, or an achieved future habitat quality score 'with offset' of 9 or 10, it becomes less certain that the conservation outcome can be achieved. The justification of effectiveness of your proposed management measures and associated habitat quality score improvements and (reflected in the confidence in result) must be supported by substantial evidence.
- b) Higher habitat quality gains will generally be associated with lower 'confidence in result' scores in the Offset Assessments Guide to reflect the difficulty associated with achieving the conservation outcomes. In these cases, it is likely that outcomes-based commitments will be required in the associated management plan for the site, including specifying binding metrics to be met to demonstrate quality improvement. For further information, please contact the department to discuss the metrics that will be used to demonstrate achievement of quality standards.
- c) Please be aware that future habitat quality 'without offsets' is expected to remain the same as current habitat quality as a standard. A habitat quality drop 'without offsets' must be supported by substantial evidence.

10. Other approvals and conditions

The PER must include information on any other requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action. The department notes that extensive work has already been undertaken to determine and locate previous approvals for the proposed action. Please attach relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory, and local government approvals and permits as supporting documents to the PER.

Information required		
10.1	Include a description of any approval that has been obtained from a State, Territory or Commonwealth agency or authority (other than an approval under the Act), including any conditions that apply to the action.	
10.2	Include a statement identifying any additional approval that is required.	
10.3	Describe the monitoring, enforcement and review procedures of these other approvals that apply, or are proposed to apply, to the action.	

11.Consultation

Information required		
11.1	Provide details of any consultation that has already taken place.	
11.2	Describe any proposed consultation about relevant impacts of the action.	
11.3	If there has been consultation about the proposed action, provide any documented response to, or result of, the consultation.	
11.4	Identify affected parties (including groups such as Wildcare Australia, the Kin Kin Community Group Executive and Save Noosa Hinterland), including a statement mentioning any communities that may be affected and describing their views.	
11.5	Identify existing or potential native title rights and interests that may be impacted by the proposed action, including any areas and objects that are of particular significance to Indigenous peoples and communities. Include information on how these impacts will be managed.	
11.6	Describe any Indigenous consultation that has been undertaken, or will be undertaken, in relation to the proposed action and their outcomes. This should include details regarding the specific Indigenous groups and Traditional Owners consulted and an indication of the areas, both tangible and intangible, of cultural significance across the project area.	
11.7	Describe any State requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action with regards to Indigenous peoples and communities.	

The department considers that best practice Indigenous consultation, in accordance with the Interim
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (2023) includes:

- a) ensuring cultural safety
- b) building and maintaining trust
- c) engaging early and often
- d) negotiating suitable timeframes
- e) negotiating suitable submission formats.

12.Environmental record of person(s) proposing to take the action

Provide information on any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against:

- a) the person proposing to take the action; and
- b) for an action for which a person has applied for a permit, the person making the application.

If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, details of:

- a) the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework must also be included
- b) the history of its executive officers in relation to environmental matters
- c) the history in relation to environmental matters of the parent body and its executive officers if the corporation is a subsidiary of another body or company (the parent body).

13. Ecologically sustainable development (ESD)

Describe how the proposed action meets the principle of ESD, as defined in section 3A of the EPBC Act (see <u>Appendix A</u>).

14. Economic and social matters

The economic and social impacts of the action, both positive and negative, must be analysed. Matters of interest may include:

- a) details of any public consultation activities undertaken, and their outcomes
- b) projected economic costs and benefits of the proposed action, including the basis for their estimation through cost/benefit analysis or similar studies
- employment opportunities expected to be generated by the proposed action (including construction and operational phases).

Economic and social impacts should be considered at the local, regional and national levels. Details of the relevant cost and benefits of alternative options to the proposed action, as identified in section 3 above, should also be included.

15. Information sources provided in the PER

For information given in a draft PER, state:

- a) the source of the information
- b) how recent the information is

- c) how the reliability of the information was tested
- d) what uncertainties (if any) are in the information.

16. Conclusion

An overall conclusion as to the environmental acceptability of the proposed action should be provided, including discussion on compliance with principles of ESD and the objects and requirements of the EPBC Act. Reasons justifying undertaking the proposed action in the manner proposed should also be outlined.

Measures proposed or required by way of offset for any unavoidable impacts on MNES, and the relative degree of compensation, should be restated here.

APPENDIX A: The objects and principles of the *Environment Protection*and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Sections 3 and 3A

3 Objects of the Act

- (a) to provide for the protection of the environment, especially those aspects of the environment that are matters of national environmental significance;
- (b) to promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources;
- (c) to promote the conservation of biodiversity;
- (d) to promote a co-operative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, land-holders and indigenous peoples;
- (e) to assist in the co-operative implementation of Australia's international environmental responsibilities;
- (f) to recognise the role of indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity; and
- (g) to promote the use of indigenous peoples' knowledge of biodiversity with the involvement of, and in co-operation with, the owners of the knowledge.

3A Principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development

The following principles are principles of ecologically sustainable development.

- (a) Decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations.
- (b) If there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- (c) The principle of inter-generational equity that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.
- (d) The conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making.
- (e) Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

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APPENDIX B: Matters that must be addressed in a PER and EIS

Schedule 4 of the EPBC Regulations 2000

1 General information

- 1.01 The background of the action including:
- (a) the title of the action;
- (b) the full name and postal address of the designated Proponent;
- (c) a clear outline of the objective of the action;
- (d) the location of the action;
- (e) the background to the development of the action;
- (f) how the action relates to any other actions (of which the Proponent should reasonably be aware) that have been, or are being, taken or that have been approved in the region affected by the action;
- (g) the current status of the action; and
- (h) the consequences of not proceeding with the action.

2 Description

- 2.01 A description of the action, including:
- (a) all the components of the action;
- (b) the precise location of any works to be undertaken, structures to be built or elements of the action that may have relevant impacts;
- (c) how the works are to be undertaken and design parameters for those aspects of the structures or elements of the action that may have relevant impacts;
- (d) relevant impacts of the action;
- (e) proposed safeguards and mitigation measures to deal with relevant impacts of the action;
- (f) any other requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the Proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action;
- (g) to the extent reasonably practicable, any feasible alternatives to the action, including:
 - (i) if relevant, the alternative of taking no action;

- (ii) a comparative description of the impacts of each alternative on the matters protected by the controlling provisions for the action; and
- (iii) sufficient detail to make clear why any alternative is preferred to another;
- (h) any consultation about the action, including:
 - (iv) any consultation that has already taken place;
 - (v) proposed consultation about relevant impacts of the action; and
 - (vi) if there has been consultation about the proposed action any documented response to, or result of, the consultation; and
- (i) identification of affected parties, including a statement mentioning any communities that may be affected and describing their views.

3 Relevant impacts

- 3.01 Information given under paragraph 2.01(d) must include
- (a) a description of the relevant impacts of the action;
- (b) a detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the likely short term and long term relevant impacts;
- (c) a statement whether any relevant impacts are likely to be unknown, unpredictable or irreversible;
- (d) analysis of the significance of the relevant impacts; and
- (e) any technical data and other information used or needed to make a detailed assessment of the relevant impacts.

4 Proposed safeguards and mitigation measures

- 4.01 Information given under paragraph 2.01(e) must include:
- (a) a description, and an assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of, the mitigation measures;
- (b) any statutory or policy basis for the mitigation measures;
- (c) the cost of the mitigation measures;
- (d) an outline of an environmental management plan that sets out the framework for continuing management, mitigation and monitoring programs for the relevant impacts of the action, including any provisions for independent environmental auditing;
- (e) the name of the agency responsible for endorsing or approving each mitigation measure or monitoring program; and

(f) a consolidated list of mitigation measures proposed to be undertaken to prevent, minimise or compensate for the relevant impacts of the action, including mitigation measures proposed to be taken by State governments, local governments or the Proponent.

5 Other Approvals and Conditions

- 5.01 Information given under paragraph 2.01(f) must include:
- (a) details of any local or State government planning scheme, or plan or policy under any local or State government planning system that deals with the proposed action, including:
 - (i) what environmental assessment of the proposed action has been, or is being carried out under the scheme, plan or policy; and
 - (ii) how the scheme provides for the prevention, minimisation and management of any relevant impacts;
- (b) a description of any approval that has been obtained from a State, Territory or Commonwealth agency or authority (other than an approval under the Act), including any conditions that apply to the action;
- (c) a statement identifying any additional approval that is required; and
- (d) a description of the monitoring, enforcement and review procedures that apply, or are proposed to apply, to the action.

6 Environmental record of person proposing to take the action

- 6.01 Details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against:
- (a) the person proposing to take the action; and
- (b) for an action for which a person has applied for a permit, the person making the application.
- 6.02 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework.

7 Information sources

- 7.01 For information given the PER must state:
- (a) the source of the information; and
- (b) how recent the information is; and
- (c) how the reliability of the information was tested; and
- (d) what uncertainties (if any) are in the information.

APPENDIX C: Information requirements for an EPBC Act Offset Area Management Plan

Minimum Requirements for an Offset Area Management Plan

The Offset Area Management Plan (OAMP) outlines what needs to be done to manage an offset site once it is in place, such as setting milestones, monitoring, and reporting. It should also include a risk assessment and identify triggers for adaptive management. All direct offsets require an OAMP.

- C.1 Details of the residual impacts to MNES from the proposed action, including the inputs to the Offsets Assessment Guide in relation to the impact area for each MNES (i.e. the quantum of impact), including:
 - total area of habitat (in hectares)
 - habitat quality (see Section 9.1 of these Guidelines)
- C.2 Specific, committal and measurable environmental outcomes which detail the nature of the conservation gain to be achieved for relevant MNES, including the creation, restoration and revegetation of habitat in the proposed offset area/s.
- C.3 A description of the offset area/s, including location, size, condition, environmental values present and surrounding land uses.

Include maps and shapefiles to clearly define the location and boundaries of the offset area/s.

- C.4 Baseline data and other supporting evidence that documents the presence of the relevant MNES, and the quality of their habitat within the offset area/s.
- C.5 Details of how the offset area/s will provide connectivity with other habitats and biodiversity corridors and/or will contribute to a larger strategic offset for the relevant MNES.
- C.6 Details, with supporting evidence, to demonstrate how the environmental offset/s compensate for residual significant impacts of the proposed action on relevant MNES, and/or their habitat, in accordance with the principles of the Offsets Policy and all requirements of the Offsets Assessment Guide including:
 - time over which loss is averted (max. 20 years)
 - · time until ecological benefit
 - risk of loss (%) without offset
 - risk of loss (%) with offset

	confidence in result (%).
	When calculating offsets, please refer to the department's published guidance, <i>How to use</i> the Offsets Assessment Guide, available at EPBC Act environmental offsets policy - DCCEEW.
	Please note, risk of loss should not include consideration of stochastic events (e.g. bushfires), activities that contribute to changes in habitat quality scores or impacts that would otherwise require an offset under any relevant legislation.
C.7	An assessment of the site habitat quality for the offset area/s.
	Please note, the department currently prefers the Modified Habitat Quality Assessment (MHQA) method, an adaptation of the <i>Queensland</i> Guide to determining terrestrial habitat quality v1.2 (2017). MHQA was developed to better reflect the requirements of the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy for determining habitat quality. A copy of the MHQA scoring spreadsheet template and guidance material is attached.
C.8	Specific offset completion criteria derived from the site habitat quality to demonstrate the improvement in the quality of habitat in the offset area/s over a 20-year period.
C.9	Details of the management actions, and timeframes for implementation, to be carried out to meet the offset completion criteria. The plan should define the roles and responsibilities of personnel in charge of the environmental management of the proposed action.
C.10	Interim milestones that set targets at a maximum of 5-yearly intervals for progress towards achieving the offset completion criteria.
C.11	Details of the nature, timing and frequency of monitoring to inform progress against achieving the maximum 5-yearly interim milestones (the frequency of monitoring must be sufficient to track progress towards each set of milestones, and sufficient to determine whether the offset area/s are likely to achieve those milestones in adequate time to implement all necessary corrective actions).
C.12	Proposed timing for the submission of monitoring reports which provide evidence demonstrating whether the interim milestones have been achieved.
C.13	Timing for the implementation of tangible, on-ground corrective actions to be implemented if monitoring activities indicate the interim milestones have not been achieved. The plan should also identify who is responsible for implementing these actions. Auditable systems should be developed for recording the implementation of these procedures and their outcomes.
C.14	Evidence of how the management actions and corrective actions take into account relevant approved conservation advices and are consistent with relevant recovery plans and threat abatement plans.

-	T
C.15	Details and execution timing of the mechanism to legally secure the proposed offset area/s, such that legal security remains in force over the offset area/s for at least the life of the impact, to provide enduring protection for the offset area/s against development
	incompatible with conservation.
	Please note, should the proposed action be approved, conditions of an approval are likely to require that environmental offset/s be legally secured prior to the commencement of the proposed action.
C.16	All measures must be written using committed language (e.g. 'will' and 'must') and in accordance with the 'S.M.A.R.T' principle:
	S – Specific (what and how)
	M – Measurable (supported by baseline information, number/value, quantifiable, auditable)
	A – Achievable (with consideration of e.g., timeframe, money, personnel)
	R – Relevant (consistent with conservation advices, recovery plans, threat abatement plans, scientific literature)
	T – Time-bound (specific timeframe to complete, include timeframe and frequency).
C.17	Assessment of the risk of failure to achieve the plan's performance targets and/or completion criteria. Including:
	a) stating the plan's performance targets and/or completion criteria;
	 b) identifying events or circumstances that prejudice attainment/maintenance of performance targets and/or completion criteria. The events or circumstances must address scientific/ecological uncertainty, stochastic events and legal/land use planning factors that may represent risks;
	c) qualitative assessment of the likelihood and consequence of those events or circumstances, and the residual risk of failure to achieve those criteria due to identified events or circumstances (assuming management A be implemented);
	d) characterising risk as low, medium, high or severe, and derived from likelihood (highly likely, likely, possible, unlikely, rare) and consequence (minor, moderate, high, major and critical); and
	e) outlining how consequence, likelihood and risk level for each risk have been determined.
	The plan must manage the risk of failure to achieve performance targets and/or completion criteria by:
	a) specifying management measures that will be implemented to attain/maintain the completion criteria and/or performance targets;

- enhancing monitoring and management measures for high risk events or circumstances, thereby providing a 'margin of safety' to detect, avoid or mitigate the likelihood and/or impacts of the event or circumstance;
- specifying measurable events or circumstances (management triggers) that detect actual or potential issues in a timely manner to avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse impacts;
- d) ensuring the monitoring program includes activities to detect management triggers, and explains how monitoring activities may inform the selection and implementation of corrective actions;
- e) specifying methods to be used to determine whether the management trigger is proposed action attributable;
- specifying effective and appropriate corrective actions that may be implemented if a management trigger is realised; and
- g) monitoring the effectiveness of corrective actions and implementing appropriate responses in the event corrective actions are not effective.

C.18 Describe the monitoring methods that will be implemented. The plan must include:

- a) evidence to demonstrate the relevance of the monitoring methods to the protection of the relevant aspect of the protected matter(s) for which the offset is implemented;
- quantitative (e.g. on-ground survey results) and qualitative baseline data (e.g. photopoint monitoring sites) that establish the start quality/condition of the environment and which can be used to measure performance against;
- c) a description of the sampling strategy (including monitoring area, site selection and sampling intensity over space and time) and statistical analyses to be employed;
- d) justification for the sampling strategy/monitoring methods, including:
 - i. an assessment of effectiveness and constraints to use;
 - ii. a discussion of the methods' capacity to detect change in environmental condition due to management interventions;
 - iii. a discussion of the methods' capacity to demonstrate attainment of performance targets and/or completion criteria; and
 - iv. Information on the statistical power of the strategy/method.
- e) commitments to engage with appropriately qualified experts to design (if relevant) and conduct monitoring and survey activities, and analyse monitoring results;
- f) information/a discussion on how the methods will account for seasonal/climatic variability; and
- g) details of the location, nature and number of monitoring sites, including benchmark/reference sites to evaluate management performance.

C.19

Include commitments to report on plan implementation and success as well as opportunities for improvement. This is achieved by:

- a) if the proposed action is approved, identifying relevant reporting obligations under the EPBC approval, or otherwise proposing appropriate regular reporting intervals, objectives and methods;
- b) specifying how plan/strategy implementation will be reported in accordance with those obligations;
- including a reporting template specifying key risk management, management measures, monitoring and adaptive implementation outcomes for the reporting period; and
- d) including a schedule and triggers for reporting types (e.g. annual compliance, incident, non-compliance, contingency).