

- 2.3. The assessment must provide a baseline description of the site which includes, as a minimum, the following aspects:
- 2.3.1. a description of the ecological drivers or processes of the system and how the proposed development will impact these;
  - 2.3.2. ecological functioning and ecological processes (e.g. fire, migration, pollination, etc.) that operate within the preferred site;
  - 2.3.3. the ecological corridors that the proposed development would impede including migration and movement of flora and fauna;
  - 2.3.4. the description of any significant terrestrial landscape features (including rare or important flora-faunal associations, presence of strategic water source areas (SWSAs) or freshwater ecosystem priority area (FEPA) sub catchments;
  - 2.3.5. a description of terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems on the preferred site, including:
    - (a) main vegetation types;
    - (b) threatened ecosystems, including listed ecosystems as well as locally important habitat types identified;
    - (c) ecological connectivity, habitat fragmentation, ecological processes and fine-scale habitats; and
    - (d) species, distribution, important habitats (e.g. feeding grounds, nesting sites, etc.) and movement patterns identified;
  - 2.3.6. the assessment must identify any alternative development footprints within the preferred site which would be of a "low" sensitivity as identified by the screening tool and verified through the site sensitivity verification; and
  - 2.3.7. the assessment must be based on the results of a site inspection undertaken on the preferred site and must identify:
    - 2.3.7.1. terrestrial critical biodiversity areas (CBAs), including:
      - (a) the reasons why an area has been identified as a CBA;
      - (b) an indication of whether or not the proposed development is consistent with maintaining the CBA in a natural or near natural state or in achieving the goal of rehabilitation;
      - (c) the impact on species composition and structure of vegetation with an indication of the extent of clearing activities in proportion to the remaining extent of the ecosystem type(s);
      - (d) the impact on ecosystem threat status;
      - (e) the impact on explicit subtypes in the vegetation;
      - (f) the impact on overall species and ecosystem diversity of the site; and
      - (g) the impact on any changes to threat status of populations of species of conservation concern in the CBA;
    - 2.3.7.2. terrestrial ecological support areas (ESAs), including:
      - (a) the impact on the ecological processes that operate within or across the site;
      - (b) the extent the proposed development will impact on the functionality of the ESA; and
      - (c) loss of ecological connectivity (on site, and in relation to the broader landscape) due to the degradation and severing of ecological corridors or introducing barriers that impede migration and movement of flora and fauna;
    - 2.3.7.3. protected areas as defined by the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2004 including-
      - (a) an opinion on whether the proposed development aligns with the objectives or purpose of the protected area and the zoning as per the protected area management plan;
    - 2.3.7.4. priority areas for protected area expansion, including-