

Media release

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Flora and fauna spring surveys underway

As part of WA's drive towards decarbonisation, Western Power will be undertaking flora and fauna surveys in the shires of Collie, West Arthur, Williams and Boyup Brook as part of the initial scoping work, preparing the network for a clean energy future.

The scoping work is part of the \$126 million provided to Western Power by the State Government to begin investigating how the vision of the South West Interconnected System Demand Assessment (SWISDA) could be implemented.

The SWISDA, a forecasting and modelling report, highlighted what the possible renewable energy demand would be in the coming years and what needed to be done to meet this demand in the future – with new industry electricity demand to triple by 2042, requiring almost 10 times the current generation and storage capacity.

Western Power Executive Manager of Energy Transition and Sustainability Matt Cheney said part of the \$126 million was scoping work in the southern part of the network with flora and fauna surveys a key priority.

“In planning for future network enhancements, we undertake preliminary desktop assessments of environment, heritage and planning considerations to ensure we understand the key natural habitat.

“This is significant in identifying areas of high environmental values and rich biodiversity, where there are threatened or endangered species.

“Once preliminary assessments are complete, we engage environmental consultants to undertake on ground flora, fauna, and vegetation surveys. These are done by experts such as zoologists or ecologists, who survey for evidence of significant species, and mapping the biodiversity values, quality and ecological significance of an area.

“It's important that we start this work in spring to give us the greatest possible chance of detecting any notable plants and habitats in their flowering and growth phase.

“Fauna surveys can occur into the summer months in order to provide the greatest possible chance of locating key species like the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Baudin's Cockatoo and Carnaby's Cockatoo.”

“The experts also look out for high-quality foraging habitat, breeding trees and hollows suitable to support key species.’

Mr Cheney said once the survey results were received, Western Power will complete an Environmental Impact Assessment to determine the overall impact and appropriate approvals required.



“Flora, fauna, and vegetation surveys take place very early in the scoping phase and this does not mean any project work will be undertaken, it’s merely an assessment of what the environmental landscape is like.

“In many circumstances, multiple surveys in different areas are done to identify the best possible outcomes for the community and the environment.

“If a survey is taking place on or adjacent to a customer’s land, including working around key periods like shearing/lambing and harvest seasons, wherever practical, we will contact the owner ahead of accessing properties – particularly those on farms.

“Doing our best by the community while supporting WA’s unique biodiversity is a key part of our commitment to creating a sustainable energy future for WA.”

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About Western Power:

Western Power is a Western Australian State Government owned corporation responsible for building, maintaining, and operating an electricity network which connects our 2.3 million customers to traditional and renewable energy sources, delivering a critical service to the community.

We’re at the forefront of the energy industry in leveraging modern technologies, including integrating microgrid and battery storage solutions. We’re planning the grid of the future that’s leading the way to a cleaner, brighter, and more resilient energy supply for the next generation.

To find out more visit the Western Power website at www.westernpower.com.au

Western Power Media: media@westernpower.com.au or 1300 139 240 (24 hours)