

5 April 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION: PROPOSED AGRICULTURE INTENSIVE – ANNUAL HORTICULTURE (BERRY FARM), PERENNIAL HORTICULTURE (CHERRY FARM) & POLY TUNNELS

ADDRESS: LOT 25 (236) ORANGE SPRINGS ROAD, ORANGE SPRINGS

This letter is written to invite you to comment on an application received for the development of an Agriculture Intensive – Annual Horticulture (Berry Farm), Perennial Horticulture (Cherry Farm) & Poly Tunnels at the abovementioned address.

Local Planning Scheme No. 9 (LPS No. 9) provides a basis for the control of development / land use throughout the Shire of Gingin. When a development may impact on the amenity of adjoining property owners, comments may be sought by the Shire from those potentially impacted. Following consultation, Shire officers will undertake an assessment against the 'objectives' of the 'General Rural' zone prior to determining the application.

With respect to the abovementioned development application, the following is proposed:

- The staged development of an irrigated, multi-bay poly tunnel facility for protective cropping of blueberries and low-chill cherries. It is intended to stage the development of the farm over 4 to 5 years as follows:

Stage	Area Planted (Ha)	Crop
1 & 2	10.6	Blueberries
3 & 4	10.3	Blueberries
5	2.4	Blueberries
	7.6	Cherries
Total	30.9	

The poly tunnels will measure 9.5m x 90m on 2m steel posts.

- The proposal is also seeking a setback variation to the western boundary. The proposed setback is 10m in lieu of the LPS 9 requirement of 20m.

As a potentially affected owner, you are invited to comment on this proposal **within 14 days from the date of this letter** (by 19 April 2019). Should no written comment be received, the Shire may determine the application without your response.

Plans, documents and a stakeholder comment form setting out and explaining the proposal have been attached for your information. Should you make a submission, please note that your details may be made public at a Council meeting and included in a Council Agenda, which will be available on the Shire's website, unless you specifically request otherwise on the stakeholder comment form.

Should you have any queries or wish to discuss the application, please contact the Shire's Planning Department.



Yours sincerely



KYLIE BACON
MANAGER STATUTORY PLANNING

KB:am

Ref:

BLD/7028

P1826

Enc:

Proposal, Plans and Stakeholder Comment Form



Aerial map - Lot 25 (236) Orange Springs Road, Orange Springs

Date: 18/03/2019

Scale: 1:12500

Shire of Gingin does not warrant the accuracy of information in this publication and any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that Gingin Shire Council shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in this information.

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WESTERN BERRY COMPANY PTY LTD

Planned Horticultural Operation on Lot 25, Orange Spring Rd, Regans Ford

Leased from Lismore Capital Pty Ltd

The Property

The farm is 46ha in area of which approximately 40ha is suitable for horticultural use. It is triangular in shape, with the longest side being the western, north/south boundary, and the south east boundary being Orange Springs Road. To the north and north east it bounds the Moore River.

Landform

The land is 90% flat sand-plain country of the Swan Coastal Plain featuring yellow loamy sands, with approximately $\pm 1.5\text{m}$ variation in elevation across this area. To the north and north east the topography drops sharply 10 to 12m to the narrow (100 – 150m wide) flood plain of the Moore River. The horticultural operation will be established on the flat sand-plain country.

Vegetation

The sand plain was cleared many years ago for grazing and cropping with only the occasional coastal blackbutt left for livestock shade. No land clearing other than the removal of these paddock shade trees is required for the development.

River gums and casuarinas populate the river flats and banks while redgums dominate the terrace slopes where the river flats transition to the sand plain.

Orchard Development

The staged development of an irrigated, multi-bay polytunnel facility for protective cropping of blueberries and low-chill cherries is planned for the property

It is intended to stage the development of the farm over 4 to 5 years as follows:

Year	Area Planted (ha)	Crop
1,2	10.6	Blueberries
3,4	10.3	Blueberries
5	2.4	Blueberries
	7.6	Cherries

Hothouse Cultivation - the protective structures to be used are multi-bay polytunnels, manufactured in the UK. They are non-permanent 9.5m x 90m arched structures constructed from steel hoops positioned on 2m steel posts augured into the ground. The polythene sheets are stretched over the hoops and secured by straps and clips. Further protection will be provided by birdnetting. The tunnels will be oriented north/south and grouped in blocks of forty.

The blueberries will be grown in woven polythene bags with suspended driplines providing water and fertiliser.

Similar protective structures will be used for the cherries but will have retractable coverings. The trees will be grown in the ground and again irrigated with drip-lines.

Irrigation - the drip lines allow reduced deficit irrigation water management techniques with the water sourced from bores on the property drawing from the superficial aquifer. A 0.375 gigalitre water licence for the property has been applied for and we have been informed by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) that there is water available in the sub-region. Water analyses from bores on adjacent properties show that the superficial aquifer in this area produces water with very low salinity, low ECs, low iron and phosphates and is mildly acidic. It is ideal for drip irrigated horticulture.

Spray and Dust Drift - blueberry horticulture in Western Australia requires little in the way of spraying, unlike NSW and Queensland where high humidity results in significant fungal and insect pest problems. If spraying is required very little drift will occur because the plants are housed in polythene enclosures.

There will be minimal dust generated on the property because of the enclosed nature of the cultivation. The only dust generated will be from vehicles traversing the farm roads and tracks and this will be kept to a minimum because dust on fruit is a marketing negative.

Waste Management – there is very little waste generated by blueberry or cherry cultivation. Being grown in a protected, covered environment results in a very low incidence of damaged fruit. Hand picking of the ripe fruit is also a selective process. Typically, “seconds” in blueberry production amount 2% to 3% of the crop and are marketed as frozen fruit.

Prunings will be mulched and used for inter-row weed suppressing ground cover.

Infrastructure

Electricity – It is planned to bring 3-phase power to the property. It is currently serviced by a single-phase line. A district 3-phase line follows Orange Springs Road along the properties southern boundary while it is also available on the adjacent property to the west.

Roads - The gravel access road on the eastern side of the property will be widened and upgraded, and ultimate bitumen sealed to suppress dust. Laneways between the orchard blocks will be gravelled.

Firebreaks - a 3m firebreak will be maintained around the perimeter of the property and widened to 7m along the southern and northern boundaries of the orchard. Internal lanes and access roads will be gravelled and will also act as firebreaks. Protection is also provided by a sealed bitumen road along the western boundary on the neighbouring property.

Two houses, an old, three-stand shearing shed and a dilapidated storage shed are located in the north east corner of the property overlooking the river. These structures are surrounded by approximately one hectare of irrigated and maintained lawns which provide significant bush fire protection to these structures.

Transport

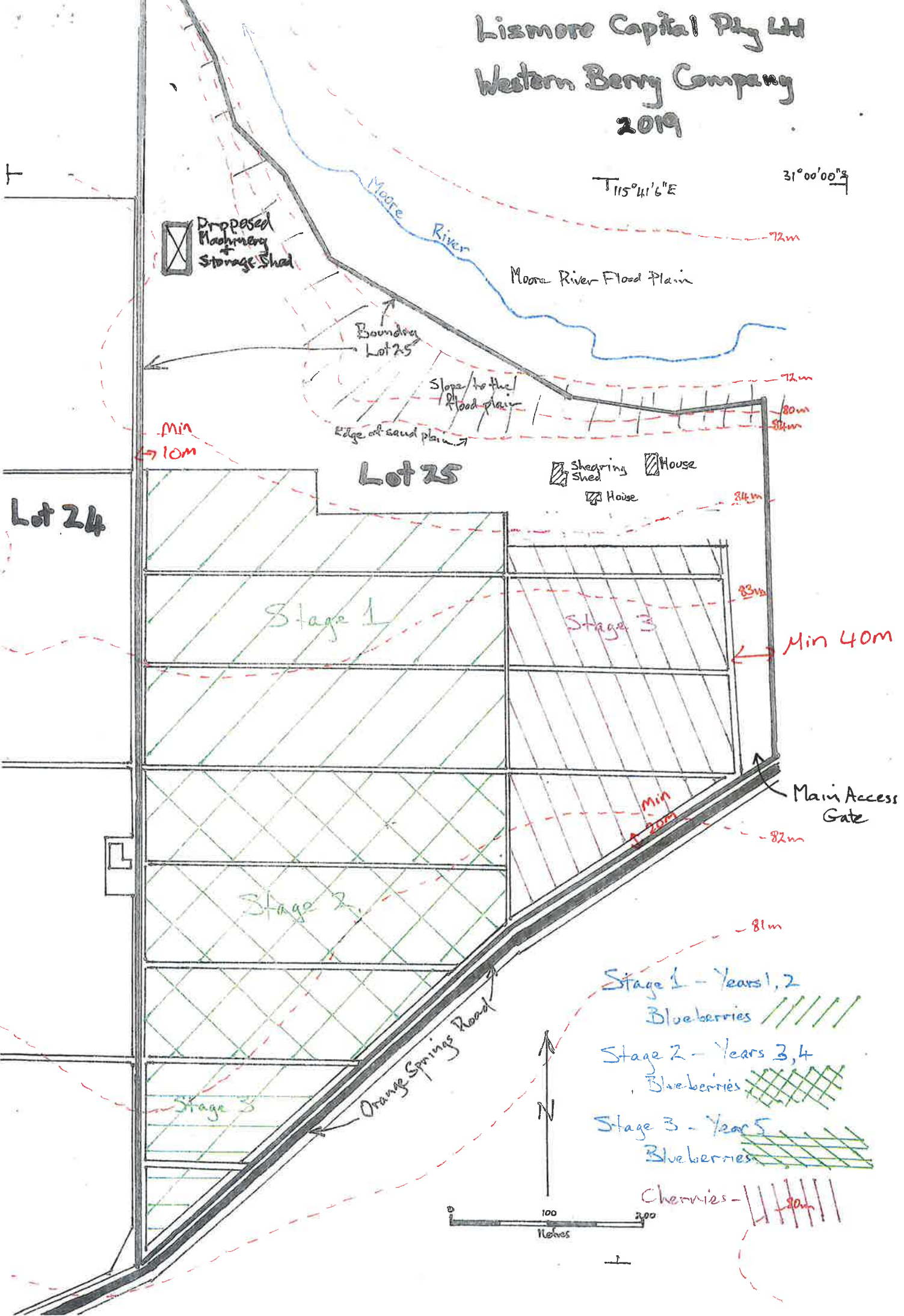
It is planned to transport the harvested fruit off the property for contract packing by a third party. This will require one movement of a single trailer refrigerated pan-tech truck per day at the height of the harvest season (September to November) reducing to one per week for the two-month shoulders either side of that period.

Other truck movements will include periodic deliveries of fertiliser and other supplies, etc.

Employment

The project will result in approximately 15 new full-time jobs being created. There will also be a requirement for a significant casual workforce with this peaking during harvest at 300 to 400. The positive flow-on to the other industries in the Shire will be significant.

Lismore Capital Pty Ltd
 Western Berry Company
 2019



- Stage 1 - Years 1, 2
Blueberries
- Stage 2 - Years 3, 4
Blueberries
- Stage 3 - Year 5
Blueberries
- Cherries -

Individual Tunnel Dimensions

