



1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 151/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Range River Gold Limited**
Postal address: 5/56 Kings Park Rd West Perth WA 6005
Contacts: Phone: 9226 3929
Fax: 9226 3945
E-mail: dbutton@swiftdsl.com/au

1.3. Property details

Property: M47/474
M47/475
M47/476
M47/477
M47/478
M47/479

Colloquial name: Mallina and Indee Pastoral Stations

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
260		Mechanical Removal	Mining

2. Existing Environment

2.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Vegetation Association 93 – Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; kanji over soft spinifex.	The vegetation of the site has been recently burnt and is in the process of regenerating.	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery 1994)	Vegetation assessment based on field survey undertaken by Astron (2004).

3. Assessment of application against Clearing Principles

(a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Comments Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

A total of 94 taxa were recorded during a survey representing 31 families and 56 genera. This is a relatively low number of species considering the size of the site but reflects the combined fire and grazing history along with drought conditions experienced over the past 3-4 years (Astron, 2004).

Methodology Astron (2004)

(b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.

Comments Proposal may be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation on the site is represented elsewhere in the local area and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere in the Pilbara (Astron, 2004). However, a desktop assessment of the fauna values of the site identified several species of significance that may occur in the project area (Consulting Ecologists, 2004).

Significant fauna that are likely to be reliant on the vegetation within the project area include the Orange Horseshoe Bat (listed as Vulnerable), the Pebble-mound Mouse (Priority 4), and the Spectacled Hare Wallaby (Priority 3).

The assessment suggests that there is considerable habitat suitable for the Pebble-mound Mouse in particular across the project area. However, no field surveys have been undertaken to determine the presence and locations of Pebble-mound Mouse colonies.

CALM have also identified that it is likely that the Pilbara Olive Python (listed as Vulnerable) may also occur in the area. This raises the concern that earthworks may become unintentional pit traps for reptiles (CALM, 2005). This possible impact must be managed through the mine development process.

Methodology Astron (2004); Consulting Ecologists (2004); Site visit (2004); CALM (2005)

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, significant flora.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

No Declared Rare or Priority flora species were located within the survey area.

Methodology Astron (2004), GIS database: Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 13/08/03; CALM (2005)

(d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a significant ecological community.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

No known Threatened Ecological Communities within the site.

Methodology GIS database: Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 15/7/03; CALM (2005)

(e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

The vegetation of the site is part of Beard Vegetation Association 93 (Hopkins et al., 2001) of which there is ~100% of the pre-European extent remaining with ~2% of that area on lands managed by CALM (Shepherd et al., 2001).

Methodology GIS database: Per-European Vegetation - DA 01/01; Hopkins, et al. (2001); Shepherd, et al. (2001)

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

There are no wetlands or major watercourses within the project area.

Methodology GIS database: Hydrography, linear - DOE 1/2/04

(g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

A desktop study of the application did not identify that the clearing of vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Methodology LCO DAWA Advice (2004)

(h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

There are no conservation reserves adjacent to the site.

Methodology GIS database: CALM Managed Lands and Waters - CALM 1/06/04; CALM (2005)

(i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

It is unlikely that the clearing of vegetation at the site will impact on surface and ground water quality. Infrastructure for the mining activities will be located so as to avoid disturbance to local flow paths where practicable.

Methodology Aquaterra (2004)

(j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence of flooding.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

Flooding in the Peawah River catchment occurs only after significant rainfall events. It is unlikely that the clearing as proposed in the application will significantly effect flood regimes in the catchment.

Methodology Aquaterra (2004)

Planning instrument or other matter.

Comments **Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle**

The grant of mining tenements M47/473 - 477 and M47/480 to Range River Gold are currently pending Native Title agreement (as at 11 November 2004).

Methodology DOIR advice (11 November 2004).

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Mining	Mechanical Removal	260	Grant	<p>By October, the permit holder is to provide an annual report outlining: the areas of vegetation cleared and their location in the landscape; the purpose of the clearing completed (eg road, mine site); the management strategies and actions employed to protect native vegetation and significant fauna habitat and avoid areas of sensitivity within the landscape as part of the clearing program; and the rehabilitation practices adopted and implemented.</p> <p>The permit holder is advised that the area includes likely habitat for the Western Pebble-mound Mouse (<i>Pseudomys chapmani</i>) and, as such, non-essential ground disturbance should be minimised.</p>

5. References

CALM (2004) Land clearing proposal advice. Advice to A/Director General, Department of Environment (DoE). Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia. DoE TRIM ref KNI563.

DAWA (2004) Land degradation assessment report. Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation, Department of Agriculture Western Australia. DoE TRIM ref KNI456.

Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.

Keighery, BJ (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.