



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1519/5
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: St Ives Gold Mining Company Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Lease 15/300
Mining Lease 15/1537
Mining Lease 15/1538
Miscellaneous Licence 15/276
Local Government Area: Shire of Coolgardie
Colloquial name: Cave Rocks project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
15		Mechanical Removal	Mineral Production

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 27 July 2017

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description The area applied to clear has been broadly mapped at a scale of 1:250,000 as Beard Vegetation Associations: **9**: Medium woodland; Coral Gum (*Eucalyptus torquata*) and Goldfields Blackbutt (*E. lesouefii*); and **936**: Medium woodland; Salmon Gum (GIS Database).

Botanica Consulting conducted a flora survey on the 26th of July 2006 of the vegetation occurring within a 10 metre strip either side of a 2.4 kilometre section of an existing dirt road accessing the Caves Rock mine from the Goldfields Highway (Botanica Consulting, 2006).

Two vegetation groups were encountered within the survey area:

1. *Eucalyptus stricklandii* woodland - the dominant species was *Eucalyptus stricklandii*. The midstorey comprised of *Atriplex nummularia*, *Eremophila interstans* subsp. *virgata*, *E. ionantha* and *Santalum acuminatum*, while the understorey comprised of *Olearia muelleri*, *Atriplex vesicaria*, *Halosarcia indica*, *Maireana georgei*, *Sclerolaena diacantha* and *S. eriacantha*; and

2. *Eucalyptus salmonophloia* woodland - the dominant species was *Eucalyptus salmonophloia*. The midstorey comprised of *Atriplex bunburyana*, *A. nummularia*, *Acacia jennerae*, *Eremophila interstans* subsp. *virgata*, *E. oldfieldii* subsp. *angustifolia* and *Santalum acuminatum*, while the understorey comprised of *Ptilotus exaltatus*, *P. obovatus*, *Atriplex vesicaria*, *Sclerolaena diacantha*, *S. eriacantha*, *Maireana georgei* and *Swainsona canescens* (Botanica Consulting, 2006).

Botanica Consulting (2006) advise that two weed species were recorded in the survey area: Mint Weed (*Salvia reflexa*) and Burr Medic (*Medicago polymorpha*).

Clearing Description Cave Rocks project.
St Ives Gold Mining Company Pty Ltd (SIGM) proposes to clear up to 15 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 62 hectares, for the purpose of mineral production and mining-related infrastructure. The project is located approximately 1 - 5 kilometres west of Kambalda West, in the Shire of Coolgardie.

Vegetation Condition Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994).

Comment The original proposal to clear 62.12 hectares of native vegetation was amended to 15 hectares upon recommendation by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

A section of the area proposed to be cleared falls within the Kambalda Nature Reserve (GIS Database). This reserve has been disturbed through historic mining and grazing activities, although stock have been excluded from the area for about 30 years.

The Conservation Commission, which is the vesting body for the Kambalda Nature Reserve, has given its 'in principle' support for the Cave Rocks project to proceed. This outcome was reached after the proponent undertook consultation with stakeholders such as the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) (now DBCA), Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR) (now the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS)), EPA, Main Roads of Western Australia (MRWA), Water Corporation, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Coolgardie Shire, local pastoralists and the Kambalda community (SIGM, 2006).

Clearing permit CPS 1519/1 was granted by the Department of Industry and Resources (DoIR) (now DMIRS) on 17 January 2008 and was valid from 16 February 2008 to 16 February 2013. The clearing permit authorised the clearing of up to 15 hectares of native vegetation for the purpose of mineral production.

On 6 October 2008 the permit holder applied to amend the permit to change the annual reporting period from calendar year to financial year to align with other reporting requirements. CPS 1519/2 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP), (now DMIRS) on 15 January 2009 and also extended the permit expiry date to 31 July 2012. The area approved to clear, and permit boundary remained unchanged.

On 11 April 2011 the permit holder applied to amend CPS 1519/2 to change the annual reporting period back to calendar year, due to changes in company reporting periods. CPS 1519/3 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP), (now DMIRS) on 30 June 2011. The area approved to clear, and permit boundary remained unchanged.

On 30 January 2012 the permit holder applied to amend CPS 1519/3 to extend the permit duration to 31 July 2017 as mining operations were ongoing. CPS 1519/4 was granted on 8 March 2012. The area approved to clear and permit boundary remained unchanged.

On 14 June 2017 the permit holder applied to amend CPS 1519/4 to extend the permit duration by a further five years to 31 July 2022. The area approved to clear (15 hectares), and permit boundary are to remain unchanged.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

St Ives Gold Mining Company Pty Ltd has applied to amend the clearing permit, to extend the permit duration by five years. The size of the area approved to clear (15 hectares) and the permit boundaries remain unchanged.

The amendment is unlikely to result in any significant change to the environmental impacts of the proposed clearing (GIS Database). The assessment of the proposed clearing against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment contained in previous versions of the decision report.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Hydrography, linear
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities (TEC/PEC) - Boundaries
- Threatened Fauna

Planning instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

According to available databases, there are no native title claims over the area under application (DPLH, 2017). However, the mining tenements have been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore, the granting of a clearing permit is not a future act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

According to available databases, there are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2017). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal Sites of Significance are damaged through the clearing process.

In March 2006, St Ives Gold Mining Company Pty Ltd (SIGM) commissioned a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of their entire operations, including Cave Rocks, as part of their ongoing stakeholder consultation. The aim of the SIA was to ascertain SIGM's impacts on their stakeholders and ways forward for further social improvement (SIGM, 2006). Stakeholder consultation relating specifically to the Cave Rocks project followed the SIA, with the main stakeholders including DoIR (now DMIRS), DEC (now DBCA), Coolgardie Shire and Mt Monger Pastoral Station (SIGM, 2006).

On 11 December 2006, the Conservation Commission met with DoIR (now DMIRS), SIGM and the DEC (now DBCA) to discuss the Cave Rocks Mining Proposal. Following this meeting, the Conservation Commission gave their 'in principle' support for the proposal to proceed. On 14 December 2006, the Environmental Management Branch of the DEC (now DBCA) advised the Office of the EPA that concerns regarding potential impacts of the proposal on biodiversity and conservation values had largely been addressed. Accordingly, assessment of the proposal under part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* was deemed not necessary.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

Methodology DPLH (2017)
SIGM (2006)

4. References

- Botanica Consulting (2006) Vegetation Survey of the Cave Rocks Proposed Satellite Pit, Waste Dump (M15/300) and Haul Road (L15/214, L15/61). Report prepared for St Ives Gold Mine (SIGM) Gold Fields Limited, by Botanica Consulting, August 2006.
- DPLH (2017) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.
<http://maps.daa.wa.gov.au/AHIS/> (Accessed 18 July 2017).
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- SIGM (2006) Mining Proposal - Cave Rocks Project: Underground and Open Pit Operations. St Ives Gold Mining Company Pty Ltd.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DBCA and DWER)
DEE	Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
DMIRS	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMIRS)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DoE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government (now DEE)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DEE)
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia (now DWER)
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Federal Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
PEC	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
RIWI Act	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DPaW (2017) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia}:-

- T** **Threatened species:**
Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedules 1 to 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).
Threatened fauna is that subset of 'Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'likely to become extinct' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.
Threatened flora is flora that has been declared to be 'likely to become extinct or is rare, or otherwise in need of special protection', pursuant to section 23F(2) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.
The assessment of the conservation status of these species is based on their national extent and ranked according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List categories and criteria as detailed below.
- CR** **Critically endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- EN** **Endangered species**
Threatened species considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- VU** **Vulnerable species**
Threatened species considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- EX** **Presumed extinct species**
Species which have been adequately searched for and there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora.
- IA** **Migratory birds protected under an international agreement**
Birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and the Bonn Convention, relating to the protection of migratory birds. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- CD** **Conservation dependent fauna**
Fauna of special conservation need being species dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 6 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- OS** **Other specially protected fauna**
Fauna otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- P** **Priority species**
Species which are poorly known; or
Species that are adequately known, are rare but not threatened, and require regular monitoring. Assessment of Priority codes is based on the Western Australian distribution of the species, unless the distribution in WA is part of a contiguous population extending into adjacent States, as defined by the known spread of locations.
- P1** **Priority One - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species:

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species:

Species that are known from several locations, and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat, or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. Such species are in need of further survey.

P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring:

(a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.

(b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for Vulnerable, but are not listed as Conservation Dependent.

(c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.

Principles for clearing native vegetation:

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (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.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.
- (d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.
- (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.
- (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (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.
- (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.
- (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.