



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 3350/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Focus Minerals (Laverton) Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Miscellaneous Licence 38/160
Local Government Area: Shire of Laverton
Colloquial name: Mt Weld Parallel Haul Road project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
30		Mechanical Removal	Road construction and maintenance

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 12 June 2014

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description The application area has been broadly mapped as the following Beard Vegetation Association:
18: Low woodland; mulga (*Acacia aneura*) (GIS Database).

Goldfields Landcare Services conducted a flora and vegetation survey of the application area in September 2009, and identified the following six vegetation units within the application area (Goldfields Landcare Services, 2009):

SIMS: Stony Ironstone Mulga Shrublands

SIMS was the most widely represented vegetation unit within the survey area accounting for approximately 62% of it. Consequently, it exhibited a considerable degree of variation in species diversity and composition. At one location, it was represented as: mulga open scrub, *Acacia aneura* var. *major* (10 – 30% Projected Foliage Cover (PFC) < 5 metres tall) over scrub (10 – 30% PFC 2 – 5 metres) of *A. stowardii* and *A. ramulosa* var. *ramulosa*, with occasional *Santalum spicatum* over low shrubs (10 – 30% PFC 1 – 2 metres) of *Senna artemisioides* subsp. *filifolia*, *A. tetragonophylla*, *Eremophila oldfieldii*, *E. scoparia* and *Scaevola spinescens* over sparse dwarf scrub (10 – 30% PFC <1metre) of *Sida calyxhymeria*, *Ptilotus obovatus*, *P. exaltatus*, *Maireana georgei*, *Solanum lasiophyllum* and *Sclerolaena bicornis* with scattered grasses (2% PFC), *Enneapogon caeruleus* on red loam covered with (mainly) ironstone and quartz pebbles and cobbles.

DRMS: Drainage Tract Mulga Shrublands

Drainage lines account for approximately 10% of the area and although not consistently so, are represented by: *Acacia aneura* thicket (30 – 70% PFC >2metres) with *A. stowardii*, *A. craspedocarpa* and *A. tetragonophylla* over heath (30 – 70% PFC 1 – 2 metres) of *Eremophila latrobei* subsp. *filiformis*, *Scaevola spinescens* and *Sida calyxhymeria* over low heath (30 – 70% PFC <1 metre) of *Atriplex bunburyana*, *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Maireana triptera*, *Sclerolaena* sp., and *Zygophyllum eremaeum* on red sandy loam.

GRMU: Mulga Groves on Hardpan Plains

GRMU is described by Pringle in Technical Journal 87 thus: "mulga groves generally occur as arcuate clumps of considerably denser mulga shrubs than areas around them, and are generally found arranged with their long axes along the contour as a series of bands of vegetation on gently inclined 'wash plans'. They have distinct and abrupt boundaries with sparser intergrove communities..." (Pringle, 1994 as cited in Goldfields Landcare Service, 2009). While these features were not all apparent on the ground during the survey, subsequent detailed examination of aerial photographs and Google Earth images revealed sufficient of them to justify this classification being applied to approximately 10% of the area surveyed, some of which had been largely disturbed by clearing for intensive drilling projects and associated access tracks. The following species were identified within this vegetation unit: *Acacia aneura*, *A. quadrimarginea*, *A. cuthbertsonii*, *Psyrax suevolens*, *Hakea* aff. *recurva*, *Eremophila latrobei* subsp. *filiformis*, *Mirbelia rhagodioides*, *Solanum lasiophyllum*, *Ptilotus obovatus* and *Eragrostis eriopoda*.

LHMS: Lateritic Hardpan Mulga Shrublands

This site was restricted to one location, interspersed by drainage lines, near the middle of the surveyed area and constituted approximately 8% of the total area surveyed. It is described as: mulga scrub (10 – 30% PFC >2metres) of *Acacia aneura* var. *intermedia*, *A. craspedocarpa*, *A. tetragonophylla* and *A. ramulosa* var. *ramulosa* with very occasional *Grevillea berryana* and *Psyrax suevolens*. Although the mid and lower storey shrubs are sparse they have a relatively high degree of diversity: mixed low scrub (10 – 30% PFC 1 – 2 metres) of *Eremophila*

margarethae, *E. forrestii* subsp. *forrestii*, *E. latrobei* subsp. *latrobei*, *Spartothamnella teucriflora*, *Dodonaea rigida* and *Sida calyxhymeria* over open dwarf scrub (2 – 10% PFC <1metre) of *Ptilotus obovatus*, *P. schwartzii*, *Mirbelia rhagodioides*, *Dianella revoluta*, *Eremophila georgei* and *Prostanthera althoferi* with very little *Eragrostis eriopoda* on red loam with a mantle of fine ferruginous gravel.

OLEW: Open Low Eucalypt Woodlands

Occupying just 6% of the survey area OLEW was described as: scattered low trees, *Eucalyptus striatocalyx* (<2% PFC <5 metres) over mixed open low scrub (2 – 10% PFC 1 – 2 metres) of *Eremophila scoparia*, *Acacia erinaceae*, *Senna artemisioides* subsp. *filifolia*, *Scaevola spinescens* and *Maireana sedifolia* over open dwarf scrub (2 – 10% PFC <1 metres) of *Ptilotus obovatus*, *P. aevoides*, *Maireana pentatropis*, *M. triptera* and *Olearia muelleri*.

Dist: Disturbed Areas. Borrow Pit

Areas classified as disturbed accounted for approximately 4% of the surveyed area. The main causes of the disturbance were the removal of gravel from borrow pits for the construction of the Mt Weld to Euro road; concentrated areas of tracks and gridlines created for previous exploration surveys and drilling programs and mining operations, estimated to have occurred 20 – 30 years ago, which involved the removal of vegetation to gain access to topsoil for screening gold.

Clearing Description	Mt Weld Parallel Haul Road project. Focus Minerals (Laverton) Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 30 hectares of native vegetation, within a total boundary of approximately 92.7 hectares, for the purpose of construction and maintenance of a haul road. The project is located approximately 2.5 kilometres south of Laverton, in the Shire of Laverton.
Vegetation Condition	Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994).
Comment	The vegetation condition rating has been derived from the information provided by Goldfields Landcare Services (2009). Vegetation will be cleared by bulldozer and other heavy plant machinery and vegetation and topsoil will be stockpiled for rehabilitation purposes (Crescent Gold, 2009). Clearing permit CPS 3350/1 was granted to Crescent Gold Limited by the Department of Mines and Petroleum on 19 November 2009, and was valid from 19 December 2009 to 31 July 2015. The permit approved the clearing of 30 hectares of native vegetation for the purpose of road construction. On 15 April 2014, Focus Minerals (Laverton) Pty Ltd applied to amend CPS 3350/1 to change the annual reporting date from 31 July to 30 September each year, and to change the name of the permit holder from Crescent Gold Limited to Focus Minerals (Laverton) Pty Ltd, due to a change of company name.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

The amendment to change the annual reporting date and to change the name of the permit holder will not change the environmental impacts of the proposed clearing. The size of the area approved to clear (30 hectares) and the permit boundaries remain unchanged.

The assessment against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment in decision report CPS 3350/1.

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

Comments

There are no Native Title Claims over the area under application (GIS Database). The mining tenure has 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*.

There are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (GIS Database). 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.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Environment Regulation, the Department of Water, and the Department of Parks and Wildlife, 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	GIS Database: - Aboriginal Sites of Significance - Native Title Claims - Determined by the Federal Court - Native Title Claims - Filed at the Federal Court - Native Title Claims - Registered with the NNTT
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4. References

- Crescent Gold (2009) Clearing Permit Application Supporting Documentation, October 2009.
- Goldfields Landcare Services (2009) Flora and Vegetation Survey of Laverton Tenement L 338/160. Unpublished report. Goldfields Landcare Services, Western Australia.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Pringle, H., Van Vreeswyk, A. and Gilligan, S. (1994) An Inventory and condition survey of the north-eastern Goldfields, Western Australia. Technical Bulletin 87. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DPaW and DER)
DER	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DotE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
DSEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DotE)
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
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
s.17	Section 17 of the <i>Environment Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DPaW (2013) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia}:-

T	Threatened species: Specially protected under the <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna or the Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora). Threatened Fauna and Flora are further recognised by the Department according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List criteria. For example Carnaby's Cockatoo <i>Calyptorhynchus latirostris</i> is specially protected under the <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> as a threatened species with a ranking of Endangered. <u>Rankings:</u> CR: Critically Endangered - considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. EN: Endangered - considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. VU: Vulnerable - considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.
X	Presumed Extinct species: Specially protected under the <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , listed under Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).
IA	Migratory birds protected under an international agreement: Specially protected under the <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i> , listed under Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice. Birds that are subject to an agreement between governments of Australia and Japan, China and The Republic of Korea relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction.

- S** **Other specially protected fauna:**
Specially protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- P1** **Priority One - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from one or a few collections or sight records (generally less than five), all on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, Shire, rail reserves and Main Roads WA road, gravel and soil reserves, and active mineral leases and under threat of habitat destruction or degradation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes.
- P2** **Priority Two - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from one or a few collections or sight records, some of which are on lands not under imminent threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, unallocated Crown land, water reserves, etc. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes.
- P3** **Priority Three - Poorly-known species:**
Species that are known from collections or sight records from several localities not under imminent threat, or from few but widespread localities 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 localities but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them.
- 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 do not qualify for Conservation Dependent, but that are close to qualifying for Vulnerable.
(c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.
- P5** **Priority Five - Conservation Dependent species:**
Species that are not threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.