



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 376/5
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Paddington Gold Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property:

- Mining Lease 24/20
- Mining Lease 24/101
- Mining Lease 24/180
- Mining Lease 24/181
- Mining Lease 24/183
- Mining Lease 24/239
- Mining Lease 24/240
- Mining Lease 24/251
- Mining Lease 24/416
- Mining Lease 24/417
- Mining Lease 24/422
- Mining Lease 24/426
- Mining Lease 24/428
- Mining Lease 24/497
- Mining Lease 24/716
- Miscellaneous Licence 24/29
- Prospecting Licence 24/4253
- Prospecting Licence 24/4255

Local Government Area: City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Colloquial name: Paddington Area

1.4. Application

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

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 12 July 2012

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description Beard vegetation associations have been mapped for the whole of Western Australia and are useful to look at vegetation in a regional context. Six Beard vegetation associations have been mapped within the application area:

- Beard vegetation association 10:** Medium woodland; red mallee group;
- Beard vegetation association 125:** Bare areas; salt lakes;
- Beard vegetation association 2903:** Medium woodland; Salmon gum, Goldfields blackbutt, gimlet and *Allocasuarina cristata*;
- Beard vegetation association 468:** Medium woodland; salmon gum and Goldfield blackbutt;
- Beard vegetation association 480:** Succulent steppe with open low woodland; mulga and sheoak over saltbush; and
- Beard vegetation association 540:** Succulent steppe with open low woodland; sheoak over saltbush (GIS Database).

van Etten (2005) has surveyed the flora and mapped the vegetation for the Paddington mining area. Five plant communities have been described within the area proposed to be cleared:

Community 1 - Mixed *Acacia* spp, *Eremophila* spp, *Dodonaea lobulata* with emergent *Casuarina pauper* and mallee. Eucalyptus on hill tops and rocky upper slopes;
 Community 2 - Woodland of *Eucalyptus clelandii* with broombush understorey on dissected residual plateaus with ironstone gravels;
 Community 3 - Open woodland of *Eucalyptus salmonophloia* with understorey of mixed chenopod shrubs situated on lower slopes, floodplains and valley floors over deep sandy loams;
 Community 4 - Open woodland of *Callitris glaucophylla* and/or *Eucalyptus oleosa* with *Acacia masliniana* over *Triodia scariosa* open hummock grassland situated on sandy dunes around salt lakes; and
 Community 5 - Low open shrubland of mixed *Halosarcia* spp on low rises and dunes fringing salt lakes.
 Plant community 3 is the most widespread over the Paddington lease area, however, each community was found in numerous patches across the study area and immediate surrounds. None of them appear to be locally restricted in distribution within the Paddington vicinity (van Etten, 2005).

Clearing Description

The proposal is for the clearing of up to 100 hectares of native vegetation within a project area of 4,596 hectares for future exploration drilling, mining activity ie. open pits, waste dumps and related infrastructure ie. roads, water, powerlines. There will be up to 20 hectares of clearing within the project area at any one time (MBS Environmental, 2005).

Vegetation Condition

Very Good: Vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994).

Comment

The Paddington area has been subject to relatively intensive mining activity for the last 100 years with much of the area selectively logged in the early years to provide timber for mining-related infrastructure. The area has also been operated as a pastoral station during this time and as a result has been heavily grazed (van Etten, 2005). Despite the obvious disturbance from these activities, the associated impacts appear to be low with the general condition of vegetation across the study area being rated 'good to excellent' (van Etten, 2005).

An application for an amendment to clearing permit CPS 376/4 was submitted by Paddington Gold Pty Ltd on 8 June 2012. The proponent has requested to extend the permit duration by 5 years from 9 December 2012 to 9 December 2017. There are no additional environmental impacts as a result of this amendment.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

Paddington Gold has applied to extend the duration of the clearing permit by five years. There are no additional environmental impacts associated with this amendment. Therefore the assessment against the clearing principles is consistent with the assessment in Clearing Permit Decision Report CPS 376/4.

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

Comments

There are two native title claims over the area under application (WC98/027 and WC98/029) (GIS Database). The native title claim WC98/27 was registered with the NNTT on 15 June 1998. The native title claim WC10/14 was filed at the Federal Court on 14 October 2010. However, 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*.

According to available databases, there is no known registered Aboriginal Site 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 and Conservation and the Department of Water 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 – Registered with the NNTT
 - Native Title claims – Filed at the Federal Court

4. References

Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
 MBS Environmental (2005) Purpose Permit Application Assessment of Clearing Principles. Prepared for Placer Dome Paddington Tenements, April 2005.
 van Etten (2005) Vegetation and Flora of the Paddington Mining Area - A report prepared for Placer Dome Inc., April 2005. Centre for Ecosystem Management, Edith Cowan University.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (now DEC), Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage (federal based in Canberra) previously Environment Australia
DEP	Department of Environment Protection (now DEC), Western Australia
DIA	Department of Indigenous Affairs
DLI	Department of Land Information, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DoE	Department of Environment (now DEC), Western Australia
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources (now DMP), Western Australia
DOLA	Department of Land Administration, Western Australia
DoW	Department of Water
EP Act	Environmental Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (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
RIWI Act	Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914, Western Australia
s.17	Section 17 of the Environment Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{Atkins, K (2005). *Declared rare and priority flora list for Western Australia, 22 February 2005. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia*} :-

P1	Priority One - Poorly Known taxa: taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations which are under threat, either due to small population size, or being on lands under immediate threat, e.g. road verges, urban areas, farmland, active mineral leases, etc., or the plants are under threat, e.g. from disease, grazing by feral animals, etc. May include taxa with threatened populations on protected lands. Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
P2	Priority Two - Poorly Known taxa: taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
P3	Priority Three - Poorly Known taxa: taxa which are known from several populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in need of further survey.
P4	Priority Four – Rare taxa: taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed and which, whilst being rare (in Australia), are not currently threatened by any identifiable factors. These taxa require monitoring every 5–10 years.
R	Declared Rare Flora – Extant taxa (= Threatened Flora = Endangered + Vulnerable): taxa which have been adequately searched for, and are deemed to be in the wild either rare, in danger of extinction, or otherwise in need of special protection, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.
X	Declared Rare Flora - Presumed Extinct taxa: taxa which have not been collected, or otherwise verified, over the past 50 years despite thorough searching, or of which all known wild populations have been destroyed more recently, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.

{Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2005} [Wildlife Conservation Act 1950] :-

Schedule 1	Schedule 1 – Fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct: being fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
Schedule 2	Schedule 2 – Fauna that is presumed to be extinct: being fauna that is presumed to be extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
Schedule 3	Schedule 3 – Birds protected under an international agreement: being birds that are subject to an agreement between the governments of Australia and Japan relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
Schedule 4	Schedule 4 – Other specially protected fauna: being fauna that is declared to be fauna that is in need of

special protection, otherwise than for the reasons mentioned in Schedules 1, 2 or 3.

{CALM (2005). *Priority Codes for Fauna*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia} :-

- P1 Priority One: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on threatened lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, active mineral leases. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P2 Priority Two: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, vacant Crown land, water reserves, etc. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P3 Priority Three: Taxa with several, poorly known populations, some on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from several localities, some of which are on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P4 Priority Four: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and which are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These taxa are usually represented on conservation lands.
- P5 Priority Five: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are not considered threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.

Categories of threatened species (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

- EX Extinct:** A native species for which there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died.
- EX(W) Extinct in the wild:** A native species which:
(a) is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; or
(b) has not been recorded in its known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite exhaustive surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form.
- CR Critically Endangered:** A native species which is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- EN Endangered:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered; and
(b) is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- VU Vulnerable:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered or endangered; and
(b) is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- CD Conservation Dependent:** A native species which is the focus of a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered within a period of 5 years.

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.