



# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 3934/2  
Permit type: Purpose

### 1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd

### 1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Lease 31/3  
Mining Lease 31/4  
Mining Lease 31/5  
Mining Lease 31/6  
Mining Lease 31/76  
Mining Lease 31/190  
Miscellaneous Licence 31/11  
Exploration Licence 31/621  
Local Government Area: Shire of Menzies  
Colloquial name: Million Dollar Project

### 1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
200		Mechanical	Mineral Exploration and Mineral Production

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
Decision Date: 19 December 2013

## 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. Two Beard vegetation associations have been mapped within the application area (GIS Database).

**389:** Succulent steppe with open low woodland; mulga over saltbush; and

**400:** Succulent steppe with open low woodland; mulga over bluebush (GIS Database; Government of Western Australia, 2013).

The application area was surveyed by Botanica Consulting staff on 14 and 15 July 2010 (Botanica Consulting, 2010). The following vegetation types were identified within the application area:

**Creepline Vegetation** - Upper-storey of *Acacia burkittii*, *Santalum lanceolatum* and *Santalum spicatum*. The mid-storey included *Eremophila longifolia*, *Acacia tetragonophylla* and *Maireana pyramidata*. The lower-storey included *Sida calyxhymenia*, *Maireana triptera* and *Cheilanthes sieberi* subsp. *sieberi*. Many germinants of *Asteraceae* sp. were found within this vegetation unit;

**Maireana pyramidata Chenopod Shrubland** - Upper-storey comprised of *Eucalyptus torquate*, *Santalum lanceolatum*, *Acacia aneura*, *Acacia burkittii*, *Acacia tetragonophylla* and *Hakea preissii*. The middle canopy included *Maireana sedifolia*, *Maireana pyramidata*, *Pittosporum angustifolium*, *Themeda triandra* and *Eremophila longifolia*. The lower-storey included *Scaevola spinescens*, *Eremophila clarkei* and *Solanum ferocissimum*;

**Maireana sedifolia Chenopod Shrubland** - Upper-storey comprised of *Santalum lanceolatum*, *Acacia aneura*, *Acacia burkittii*, *Acacia tetragonophylla* and *Hakea preissii*. The middle canopy included *Maireana sedifolia*, *Maireana pyramidata*, *Pittosporum angustifolium*, *Themeda triandra* and *Eremophila longifolia*. The lower-storey included *Scaevola spinescens*, *Eremophila clarkei* and *Solanum ferocissimum*;

**Mulga Woodland** - Upper-story comprised of *Acacia ramulosa*, *Acacia aneura*, *Acacia tetragonophylla* and *Casuarina pauper*. The middle canopy included *Maireana sedifolia*, *Maireana pyramidata*, *Maireana triptera*, *Themeda triandra* and *Eremophila longifolia*. The lower-storey included *Scaevola spinescens*, *Eremophila clarkei* and *Solanum ferocissimum*;

**Casuarina pauper Woodland** - Upper-storey comprised of *Acacia aneura* and *Casuarina pauper*. The middle

canopy included *Dodonaea lobulata*, *Exocarpos aphyllus*, *Maireana sedifolia*, *Maireana pyramidata*, *Hakea preissii* and *Eremophila forrestii*. The lower-storey included *Ptilotus obovatus* and *Poaceae* sp. (Botanica Consulting, 2010).

**Clearing Description** Million Dollar Project.  
Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 200 hectares of native vegetation, within a total boundary of approximately 436 hectares, for the purposes of mineral exploration and mineral production. The clearing is to develop the Million Dollar Project. The project is located approximately 120 kilometres east of Menzies.

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

**Comment** The Million Dollar Project forms part of the Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd Carosue Dam Operations (Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, 2010). The Million Dollar pit is located approximately 40 kilometres north of the Carosue Dam Operations processing plant and approximately 2 kilometres south of the Porphyry open pit (Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, 2010). The existing Million Dollar Project consists of an open pit 50 metres wide, 300 metres long and approximately 28 metres deep, an associated waste rock dump, low grade stockpile and haul road to Porphyry (Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, 2010). Three ore bodies, Million Dollar North, Million Dollar and Million Dollar South make up the Million Dollar resource.

As part of the Million Dollar Project, Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd intend to mine an open pit 1,500 metres long, 285 metres wide and up to 80 metres deep. Associated infrastructure will include a waste rock dump, run of mine (ROM) pad and settling dam for mine dewatering (Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, 2010). The existing workshop, offices and go-bay at Porphyry will be relocated to the Million Dollar area and the existing haul road will be realigned (Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, 2010).

Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd (2010) are also seeking to clear for ongoing exploration drilling south of the Porphyry Pit on two geological trends.

The vegetation condition was derived from a vegetation survey conducted by Botanica Consulting (2010).

Clearing permit CPS 3934/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) on 21 October 2010 and was valid from 20 November 2010 to 31 January 2014. The clearing permit authorised the clearing of up to 200 hectares of native vegetation. An application for an amendment was submitted to the DMP on 5 November 2013 to extend the duration of the permit for an additional five years to cover future clearing. The amount of clearing authorised and the clearing permit boundary will remain the same.

### 3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

#### Comments

Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd has applied to extend the duration of the clearing permit by five years. The amount of clearing authorised and the clearing permit boundary will remain unchanged. There are no additional environmental impacts associated with this amendment. Therefore, the assessment against the clearing principles has not changed and can be found in the Clearing Permit Decision Report CPS 3934/1.

#### Methodology

#### 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 tenements have been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the nature of that 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 in the vicinity of 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 (formerly 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 – Determined by the Federal Court  
- Native Title Claims – Filed at the Federal Court  
- Native Title Claims – Registered with the NNTT

## 4. References

- Botanica Consulting (2010) Level 1 Flora and Vegetation Survey (Tenements: M31/0003, M31/0004, M31/005, M31/0006, M31/0030, M31/0059, M31/0076, M31/0190, M31/0381, E31/0621, L31/0011). Prepared for Saracen Mineral Holdings Pty Ltd. Unpublished report dated July 2010.
- Government of Western Australia (2013) 2012 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of October 2012. WA Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd (2010) Million Dollar. Clearing Permit Application Supporting Documentation. Unpublished report dated August 2010.

## 5. Glossary

### Acronyms:

<b>BoM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
<b>CALM</b>	Department of Conservation and Land Management (now DEC), Western Australia
<b>DAFWA</b>	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
<b>DEC</b>	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia
<b>DEH</b>	Department of Environment and Heritage (federal based in Canberra) previously Environment Australia
<b>DEP</b>	Department of Environment Protection (now DEC), Western Australia
<b>DIA</b>	Department of Indigenous Affairs
<b>DLI</b>	Department of Land Information, Western Australia
<b>DMP</b>	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Environment (now DEC), Western Australia
<b>DoIR</b>	Department of Industry and Resources (now DMP), Western Australia
<b>DOLA</b>	Department of Land Administration, Western Australia
<b>DoW</b>	Department of Water
<b>EP Act</b>	Environmental Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
<b>EPBC Act</b>	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Federal Act)
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>ha</b>	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
<b>IBRA</b>	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union
<b>RIWI Act</b>	Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914, Western Australia
<b>s.17</b>	Section 17 of the Environment Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
<b>TEC</b>	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.