



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 4461/2
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property: Miscellaneous Licence 39/216
Local Government Area: Shire of Menzies
Colloquial name: Red October Haul Road Project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
200		Mechanical Removal	Haul Road and Associated Infrastructure

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 14 July 2016

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. One Beard vegetation association has been mapped within the application area:

Beard vegetation association 18: low woodland; Mulga (*Acacia aneura*); and

Beard vegetation association 400: succulent steppe with open low woodland; Mulga over Bluebush.

A Level 1 flora and vegetation survey was conducted over a 300 metre by 400 kilometre survey area associated with the proposed haul road in Spring 2010 (Alexander Holm and Associates, 2011). The following vegetation communities were recorded as occurring within the application area:

Vegetation unit 1: Low rises on metamorphic rocks

Very scattered to scattered (Projected Foliage Cover (PFC) 5 - 15%) tall shrublands 4 – 6 metres dominated by *Acacia caesaneura*, *Acacia quadrimarginea*, *Acacia ramulosa* with undershrubs *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Eremophila glandulifera*, *Scaevola spinescens* and *Maireana* spp. or scattered (PFC about 20%) mixed height (0.3 - 3 metres) shrublands dominated by *Dodonaea lobulata*, *Acacia hemi* and *Ptilotus obovatus* with occasional trees of *Acacia incurvaneura*.

Vegetation unit 2: Low Breakaways and associated footslopes

Crests – very scattered (PFC about 5%) mixed shrublands to 4m of *Acacia sibirica*, *Casuarina pauper*, *Dodonaea lobulata*, *Eremophila scoparia*, *Eremophila latrobei* ssp. *glabra* and *Maireana* spp. with occasional small trees of *Eucalyptus celastroides* spp. *celastroides*, *Eucalyptus lesouefii*.
Lower slopes – only isolated shrubs (PFC <2.5%), much bare ground.

Vegetation unit 3: Loamy plains with acacia shrublands

Very scattered to moderately close (PFC 10 – 50%, occasionally more where vegetation is clumped or groved) tall shrublands to about 8 metres dominated by *Acacia caesaneura* and/or *Acacia incurvaneura* with numerous undershrubs commonly *Acacia ligulata*, *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Acacia burkittii*, *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Senna artemisioides* spp. *petiolaris*, *Rhagodia eremaea*, *Scaevola spinescens*, *Solanum lasiophyllum*, *Eremophila glandulifera* and other *Eremophila* spp.

Vegetation unit 4: Hardpan plains

Very scattered to moderately close (PFC 5 - 25%) tall (4 - 9 metres) shrublands dominated by *Acacia incurvaneura* and *Acacia caesaneura*, also *Acacia burkittii*; common low shrubs are *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Ptilotus schwartzii*, *Eremophila metallicorum*, *Eremophila glandulifera*, *Maireana planifolia*, *Senna artemisioides* spp. *petiolaris*, *Rhagodia eremaea*, *Spartothamnella teucrifolia* and *Solanum lasiophyllum*.

Vegetation unit 5: Gravelly Plains

Very scattered to scattered (PFC <5 – 20%) tall (4 – 6 metres) shrublands dominated by *Acacia incurvaneura* and *Acacia ramulosa* var. *ramulosa* with low shrubs *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Ptilotus schwartzii*, *Eremophila glandulifera*, *Eremophila latrobei* spp. *glabra* and *Solanum lasiophyllum*. Occasionally mixed height shrublands (<1 – 2 metres)

dominated by *Maireana georgei*, *Maireana triptera* other *Maireana* spp. and *Ptilotus obovatus* with isolated taller shrubs such as *Acacia ramulosa* spp. *ramulosa* and *Hakea preissii*.

Vegetation unit 6: Calcareous Plains

Very scattered to scattered (PFC 5 – 20%) low to mid height (0.5 – 1.5 metres) shrublands dominated by *Maireana sedifolia*, *Senna artemisioides* spp. *petiolaris* and *Ptilotus obovatus*, occasionally with an overstorey of *Casuarina pauper* small trees to about 6m; other isolated shrubs include *Acacia incurvaneura*, *Acacia ligulata* and *Solanum lasiophyllum*.

Vegetation unit 7: Saline stony plains with Myall

Very scattered (PFC 5 – 10%) low (<1 metre) shrublands frequently dominated by *Frankenia setosa* with a prominent overstorey of *Acacia papyrocarpa* (*Myall*) trees to about 8 metres; other common shrubs are *Maireana pyramidata*, *Maireana georgei*, *Maireana triptera*, *Maireana tomentosa*, *Atriplex vesicaria*, *Cratystylis subspinescens* and *Eremophila* sp.

Vegetation unit 8: Saline Stony Plains

Very scattered (PFC 5 – 10%) low (<1 metre) shrublands dominated by *Maireana pyramidata*, *Maireana georgei* and *Maireana triptera*; others include *Frankenia* spp., *Atriplex* spp., *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Cratystylis subspinescens* and *Hakea preissii*.

Vegetation unit 9: Highly saline stony plains

Very scattered to scattered (PFC 5 – 15%) low (<1m) shrublands dominated by *Tecticornia halocnemoides*, *Tecticornia disarticulata* (*Samphires*); minor components of numerous other mostly halophytic shrubs such as *Maireana platycarpa*, *Maireana atkinsiana*, *Maireana glomerifolia*, *Maireana tomentosa*, *Atriplex vesicaria*, *Disphyma crassifolium* and *Eremophila* sp. Less frequently low shrublands dominated by *Atriplex vesicaria* or co-dominated by mixed halophytic shrubs *Maireana atkinsiana*, *Maireana glomerifolia*, *Maireana tomentosa*, *Atriplex vesicaria*, *Frankenia setosa* and *Disphyma crassifolium*.

Vegetation unit 10: Alluvial Plains

Close (PFC 40 – 50%) tall shrublands to 7 metres dominated by *Acacia tetragonophylla* with numerous other tall shrubs and well developed mid and low layers. Very common other shrubs are *Acacia incurvaneura*, *Acacia craspedocarpa*, *Acacia pteroneura*, *Acacia burkittii*, *Eremophila metallicorum* and *Senna cardiosperma*; also *Ptilotus divaricatus* var. *divaricatus*, *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Eremophila decipiens* ssp. *decipiens*, *Rhagodia eremaea* and *Enchylaena tomentosa*.

Vegetation unit 11: Sandy Banks

Scattered (PFC about 15%) woodlands of *Acacia caesaneura* to 8 metres over low shrubs *Maireana pyramidata*, *Maireana triptera*, *Gunnipopsis quadrifida*, *Rhagodia drummondii* and *Enchylaena tomentosa*, or low shrublands of same species with occasional *Acacia caesaneura* and *Hakea preissii*.

Vegetation unit 12: Drainage foci – halophytic domain

Closed (PFC up to 100%) tall shrublands/ woodlands up to about 10 metres of *Pittosporum phylliraeoides*, *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Acacia pteroneura*, *Exocarpus aphyllus*, *Dodonaea lobulata*, *Eremophila decipiens* ssp. *decipiens*, *Hakea preissii* and other shrubs.

Vegetation unit 13: Drainage

Moderately close to closed (PFC 30 – 80%) tall shrublands or woodlands to 10 metres dominated by *Acacia incurvaneura* and/ or *Acacia caesaneura* with poorly developed or no lower layers; other isolated common shrubs are *Grevillea stenobotrya*, *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Eremophila gilesii* spp. *variabilis*, *Eremophila glandulifera*, *Rhagodia eremaea*, *Ptilotus obovatus* and *Maireana planifolia*. Occasionally less dense *Acacias* (PFC 15 – 20%).

Vegetation unit 14: Drainage tracts with creeklines

Moderately close to closed (PFC 20 – 80%) tall shrublands (6 – 10 metres) of *Acacia incurvaneura*, *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Acacia burkittii* with numerous mid and low shrubs *Eremophila metallicorum*, *Senna cardiosperma*, *Rhagodia eremaea* and *Enchylaena tomentosa*. Occasionally the low shrub layers are dominated by *Maireana pyramidata*, *Maireana triptera* and *Maireana georgei*.

Rarely moderately close (PFC about 30%) mid height shrublands (1 to 2 metres) dominated by *Acacia burkittii* with undershrubs such as *Ptilotus obovatus*, *Maireana pyramidata*, *Rhagodia eremaea* and *Senna* spp.

Vegetation unit 14: Saline drainage tracts

Very scattered to scattered (PFC 5 – 15%) low (<1 metre) shrublands dominated by *Atriplex*, *Maireana*, *Frankenia* and *Tecticornia* spp. or *Tecticornia* spp.

Vegetation unit 15: Creeklines with eucalypt woodlands

Closed (PFC up to 100%) Eucalypt woodlands up to 10 metres of *Eucalyptus lesouefii* with numerous undershrubs such as *Eremophila decipiens* spp. *decipiens*, *Eucalyptus youngii* spp. *youngii*, *Ptilotus divaricatus* var. *divaricatus*, *Cratystylis subspinescens* and *Ptilotus obovatus*.

Clearing Description

Red October Haul Road Project

Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 200 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 608.27 hectares for the purposes of haul road construction and associated infrastructure. The application area is located approximately 85 kilometres east of Kookynie, in the Shire of Menzies.

Vegetation Condition

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

To

Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994).

Comment

CPS 4461/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum on 1 September 2011 and authorised the clearing of 200 hectares within a boundary of approximately 608.27 hectares.

Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd has applied to extend the permit duration to 31 July 2021.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

Comments

The amendment to change the permit expiry date is unlikely to result in any significant change to the environmental impacts of the proposed clearing. The size of the area approved to clear (200 hectares) and the permit boundary remain unchanged.

The assessment against the clearing Principles remains consistent with the assessment contained in decision report CPS 4461/1.

Methodology

GIS Database:
- Imagery

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

Comments

There is no Native Title Claim over the areas under application (DAA, 2016). 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 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, Department of Parks and Wildlife 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

DAA (2016)

4. References

- Alexander Holm and Associates (2011) Environmental Assessment: Proposed Haul Road Butcher Well to Safari. Prepared for Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd. Unpublished report. Alexander Holm and Associates, Western Australia.
- DAA (2016) Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System, Government of Western Australia, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Perth, <<http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/>> (accessed 27 June 2016).
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, 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
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{DPaW (2015) 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.