



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details and outcome

1.1. Permit application details

Permit number:	4747/4
Permit type:	Purpose Permit
Applicant name:	Northern Star (Carosue Dam) Pty Ltd
Application received:	24 November 2021
Application area:	200 hectares
Purpose of clearing:	Airstrip and Associated Infrastructure
Method of clearing:	Mechanical Removal
Tenure:	Miscellaneous Licence 28/42 Miscellaneous Licence 28/54
Location (LGA area/s):	City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Colloquial name:	Carosue Dam Airstrip

1.2. Description of clearing activities

Northern Star (Carosue Dam) Pty Ltd proposes to clear up to 200 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 608 hectares, for the purpose of an airstrip and associated infrastructure.

This amendment application is to allow for airstrip maintenance and associated activities for an ongoing mining operation.

Clearing permit CPS 4747/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (now the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) on 19 January 2012 and was valid from 11 February 2012 to 11 February 2017. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 100 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 337 hectares, for the purpose of airstrip and associated infrastructure.

CPS 4747/2 was granted on 20 December 2016, amending the permit to extend the permit duration to 11 February 2022. The area of clearing authorised and the permit boundaries remained unchanged.

CPS 4747/3 was granted on 1 March 2018, amending the permit to increase the amount of clearing authorised to 200 hectares, and increase the permit boundary to include the whole of Miscellaneous Licence 28/54.

On 24 November 2021, the Permit Holder applied to amend CPS 4747/3 to extend the permit duration by ten years and update the permit holder name.

1.3. Decision on application and key considerations

Decision:	Granted
Decision date:	28 January 2022
Decision area:	200 hectares of native vegetation

1.4. Reasons for decision

This clearing permit application was made in accordance with section 51KA of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) and was received by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) on 10 December 2021. DMIRS advertised the application for public comment for a period of 7 days, and no submissions were received.

The Delegated Officer took into consideration that the proposed amendment relates to extending the permit duration, with no change to the permit boundary or area authorised to clear. The amendment is unlikely to result in any significant change to the environmental impacts of the project. The assessment against the clearing principles set out in Schedule 5 of the EP Act remains consistent with the previous assessments.

After consideration of the available information, the Delegated Officer determined that the proposed amendment is not likely to lead to an unacceptable risk to the environment. The Delegated Officer decided to grant a clearing permit with the existing permit conditions.

2. Assessment of application

2.1. Avoidance and mitigation measures

No evidence of avoidance or mitigation measures were provided to support the amendment application. Given no change to the environmental impacts of the project are expected, the proposed clearing can be adequately managed through the implementation of avoid/minimise, weed management, and fauna management conditions.

2.2. Assessment

The Permit Holder has applied to extend the permit duration to 31 December 2032, and update the Permit Holder name from Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd to Northern Star (Carosue Dam) Pty Ltd.

Based on information provided by the Permit Holder, a total of 87.25 hectares have been cleared under this permit to date. No clearing has occurred during the past two reporting years.

Flora and vegetation surveys of the project area were conducted in October 2009, November 2010 and September 2016 (Mattiske, 2010; Holm, 2011; Armstrong, 2016). Fauna surveys were conducted in October 2009 and March 2017 (Biologic, 2010; Saracen, 2017). It is noted that environmental values have the potential to change over time and that the biological surveys supporting the application are becoming dated. It is recommended the permit duration be extended by five years, instead of the requested ten years. The Permit Holder may apply for future duration extensions, if required.

Based on the above, the assessment against the ten clearing principles identified that the native vegetation proposed to be cleared is not likely to provide habitat for conservation significant flora; does not contain, or form a part of a threatened or priority ecological community; or significantly impact on any riparian vegetation.

Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*, VU) are known to breed in the amendment area and surrounds, with previously recorded mounds located within the amendment area (Saracen, 2017). The fauna management condition is recommended to be retained on the permit to help mitigate potential loss of malleefowl foraging and breeding habitat.

The amendment area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation association 20: Low woodland; mulga mixed with *Allocasuarina cristata* & *Eucalyptus* species (GIS Database). Approximately 99% of the pre-European extent of this vegetation association remains uncleared at both the state and bioregional (Murchison) level (Government of Western Australia, 2019).

The nearest conservation area is the Goongarrie National Park which is located approximately 53 kilometres northwest of the amendment area, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on the environmental values of this area (GIS Database). The proposed clearing is not likely to lead to appreciable land degradation or impacts surface water quality, groundwater quality or lead to increase in flooding.

The amendment application has been assessed against the clearing principles, planning instruments and other matters in accordance with s.51O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Environmental information has been reviewed, and the assessment of the proposed clearing against the clearing principles remains consistent with the assessment contained in decision reports CPS 4747/1, 4747/2, and 4747/3.

There are two native title claims (WC2017/001; WC2019/002) over the area under application (DPLH, 2022). These claims have been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant groups. 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*.

There are no registered Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the application area (DPLH, 2022). 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 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.

Appendix A - References and databases

1. GIS datasets

Publicly available GIS Databases used (sourced from www.data.wa.gov.au):

- Aboriginal Heritage Places (DPLH-001)
- DBCA – Lands of Interest (DBCA-012)
- DBCA Legislated Lands and Waters (DBCA-011)
- Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia – Western Australia (DBCA-045)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (DWER-046)
- Regional Parks (DBCA-026)

Restricted GIS Databases used:

- Threatened Flora (TPFL)
- Threatened Flora (WAHerb)
- Threatened Fauna
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities
- Threatened Ecological Communities and Priority Ecological Communities (Buffers)

2. References

Armstrong (2016) Vegetation Survey and Rare Flora Search of the Carosue Dam Airstrip Project. Report prepared for Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, by Paul Armstrong and Associates, November 2016.

Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) (2022) Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. <https://espatial.dplh.wa.gov.au/AHIS/index.html?viewer=AHIS> (Accessed 20 January 2022).

Government of Western Australia (2019) 2018 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of March 2019. WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Perth. <https://catalogue.data.wa.gov.au/dataset/dbca-statewide-vegetation-statistics>

Holm (2011) Environmental Assessment: Proposed Airstrip for Saracen Gold Mines. Report prepared for Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, by Alexander Holm and Associates Natural Resource Management Services, January 2011.

Mattiske (2010) Flora and Vegetation Survey of the Infrastructure Corridor GGT / Black Swan Nickel Mine to Carosue Dam Gold Mine. Report prepared for Tropicana Joint Venture and Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, by Mattiske Consulting Pty Ltd, January 2010.

Saracen (2017) Carosue Dam Aerodrome CPS 4747/2 Clearing Permit Amendment Supporting Information L28/42 and L28/54. Saracen Gold Mines Pty Ltd, November 2017.

3. Glossary

Acronyms:

BC Act	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> , Western Australia
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)
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Australian Government
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
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)
DoEE	Department of the Environment and Energy (now DAWE)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora (now known as Threatened Flora)

DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority, 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:

{DBCA (2019) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia}:-

T Threatened species:

Listed by order of the Minister as Threatened in the category of critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable under section 19(1), or is a rediscovered species to be regarded as threatened species under section 26(2) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act).

Threatened fauna is that subset of ‘Specially Protected Fauna’ listed under schedules 1 to 3 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018* for Threatened Fauna.

Threatened flora is that subset of ‘Rare Flora’ listed under schedules 1 to 3 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice 2018* for Threatened Flora.

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 in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as critically endangered under section 19(1)(a) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 20 and the ministerial guidelines. Published under schedule 1 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018* for critically endangered fauna or the *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice 2018* for critically endangered flora.

EN Endangered species

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as endangered under section 19(1)(b) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 21 and the ministerial guidelines. Published under schedule 2 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018* for endangered fauna or the *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice 2018* for endangered flora.

VU Vulnerable species

Threatened species considered to be “*facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with criteria set out in the ministerial guidelines*”.

Listed as vulnerable under section 19(1)(c) of the BC Act in accordance with the criteria set out in section 22 and the ministerial guidelines. Published under schedule 3 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018* for vulnerable fauna or the *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice 2018* for vulnerable flora.

Extinct Species:

EX Extinct species

Species where “*there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died*”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 24 of the BC Act).

Published as presumed extinct under schedule 4 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018* for extinct fauna or the *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice 2018* for extinct flora.

EW Extinct in the wild species

Species that “is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; and it has not been recorded in its known habitat or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form”, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 25 of the BC Act).

Currently there are no threatened fauna or threatened flora species listed as extinct in the wild. If listing of a species as extinct in the wild occurs, then a schedule will be added to the applicable notice.

Specialty protected species:

Listed by order of the Minister as specially protected under section 13(1) of the BC Act. Meeting one or more of the following categories: species of special conservation interest; migratory species; cetaceans; species subject to international agreement; or species otherwise in need of special protection.

Species that are listed as threatened species (critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable) or extinct species under the BC Act cannot also be listed as Specially Protected species.

MI Migratory species

Fauna that periodically or occasionally visit Australia or an external Territory or the exclusive economic zone; or the species is subject of an international agreement that relates to the protection of migratory species and that binds the Commonwealth; and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 15 of the BC Act).

Includes 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 fauna subject to the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (Bonn Convention), an environmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Program. Migratory species listed under the BC Act are a subset of the migratory animals, that are known to visit Western Australia, protected under the international agreements or treaties, excluding species that are listed as Threatened species.

Published as migratory birds protected under an international agreement under schedule 5 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018*.

CD Species of special conservation interest (conservation dependent fauna)

Fauna of special conservation need being species dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 14 of the BC Act).

Published as conservation dependent fauna under schedule 6 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018*.

OS Other specially protected species

Fauna otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation, and listing is otherwise in accordance with the ministerial guidelines (section 18 of the BC Act).

Published as other specially protected fauna under schedule 7 of the *Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2018*.

P Priority species:

Possibly threatened species that do not meet survey criteria, or are otherwise data deficient, are added to the Priority Fauna or Priority Flora Lists under Priorities 1, 2 or 3. These three categories are ranked in order of priority for survey and evaluation of conservation status so that consideration can be given to their declaration as threatened fauna or flora.

Species that are adequately known, are rare but not threatened, or meet criteria for near threatened, or that have been recently removed from the threatened species or other specially protected fauna lists for other than taxonomic reasons, are placed in Priority 4. These species 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.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, threatened 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 the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.