



# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 6476/1  
Permit type: Purpose Permit

### 1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Hanking Gold Mining Pty Ltd

### 1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Lease 77/352  
Local Government Area: Shire of Yilgarn  
Colloquial name: Cornishman North Project

### 1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
3.77		Mechanical Removal	Mineral Production

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
Decision Date: 9 April 2015

## 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. One vegetation association has been mapped within the application area (GIS Database):

1068: Medium woodland; salmon gum, morel, gimlet & *Eucalyptus sheathiana*.

A Level 2 flora survey of the application area and surround region was undertaken by Recon Environmental from 31 October to 4 November 2007. The following vegetation community was identified within the application area (Read, 2014):

**EMLH:** *Eucalyptus* and *Melaleuca* Woodland on Low Hills; and  
**PESW-L:** Plain *Eucalyptus longicornis* Saltbush Woodland.

**Clearing Description** Cornishman North Project.  
Hanking Gold Mining Pty Ltd proposes to clear 3.77 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 3.77 hectares, for the purposes of mineral production. The project is located approximately 5 kilometres south-east of Southern Cross, in the Shire of Yilgarn.

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

To:

Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery, 1994).

**Comment** The vegetation condition was derived from a report prepared by Read (2014). Weather conditions preceding the survey were below average, resulting in limited amounts of ephemerals and grasses and a lack of flowering material on perennials.

## 3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

### Comments

The application area occurs within the Southern Cross (COO2) subregion of the Coolgardie Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia bioregion (GIS Database). The vegetation is in a 'very good' to 'completely degraded' condition due to mining activities in the area (Read, 2014; Keighery, 1994). The vegetation community within the application area was common within the greater survey boundary (Read, 2014). A total of 123 flora taxa from 61 genera and 26 families were recorded within the larger survey area (Read, 2014). No species of Threatened flora have been recorded within the application area (Read, 2014; GIS Database). There were three species of Priority flora recorded during the flora survey, however, these were not recorded within the application area or within the same vegetation community (Read, 2014). No Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities have been recorded within the application area or the local area (GIS Database).

One weed species was identified which is listed by the Western Australian Department of Agriculture and Food as Declared Plants; *Carthamus lanatus* (Read, 2014). Weeds have the potential to significantly change the dynamics of a natural ecosystem and lower the biodiversity of an area. Potential impacts to biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a weed management condition.

A Level 2 fauna survey was conducted over four areas of remnant vegetation in the Southern Cross area during November 2007 and April/May 2008 (Western Wildlife, 2008). This survey included the Cornishman Belt remnant which the application area is located within, however no trapping sites were located within the application area. The Cornishman Belt covers an area of 4,700 hectares and extends from Southern Cross to Marvel Loch (Western Wildlife, 2008). It is comprised mostly of tall Eucalypt woodlands and some tall shrublands and is likely to be important for landscape level fauna movement (Western Wildlife, 2008). Whilst the application area is located within a significant remnant in the region, the proposed clearing is not likely to impact on the ability of the remnant to act as an ecological linkage (GIS Database). The following four species of conservation significance were recorded within the Cornishman Belt remnant (Western Wildlife, 2008):

- Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata* - Vulnerable);
- Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus* - Schedule 4);
- Western Rosella (*Platycercus icterotis xanthogenys* - Priority 4); and
- Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus* - Migratory).

The fauna survey recorded a single Malleefowl from the shrubland at the south of the Cornishman Belt along with two recently active mounds and one inactive mound (Western Wildlife, 2008). Given this, Malleefowl are likely to breed and forage in the shrubland in the southern part of the Cornishman Belt (Western Wildlife, 2008). The application area is located in the north of the Cornishman Belt remnant and does not contain shrubland habitat. The other bird species may utilise the application area, however the proposed clearing of 3.77 hectares is not expected to significantly impact these species.

There are no permanent watercourses or water bodies mapped within the area under application (GIS Database).

Given the small scale clearing (3.77 hectares), the application area is not susceptible to erosion and the proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water or increase the incidence or intensity of flooding (GIS Database).

The application area is not located within any conservation areas (GIS Database). The nearest conservation area is an un-named Nature Reserve 12 kilometres north-west of the application area (GIS Database). There are no watercourses within the application area (GIS Database).

- Methodology**
- Keighery (1994)
  - Read (2014)
  - Western Wildlife (2008)
  - GIS Database:
    - DEC Tenure
    - Hydrography, linear
    - IBRA WA (Regions – Sub Regions)
    - Pre-European Vegetation
    - Public Drinking Water Source Areas
    - Threatened and Priority Flora
    - Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered

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

#### Comments

There are no Native Title claims over the area under application (GIS Database). 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 located within the clearing permit 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.

The clearing permit application was advertised on 16 March 2015 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received.

- Methodology**
- GIS Database:
    - Aboriginal Sites of Significance
    - Native Title Claims - Registered with the NNTT

- Native Title Claims - Filed at the Federal Court
- Native Title Claims - Determined by 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.
- Read, T.J. (2014) Flora & Vegetation Survey: Cornishman to Axehandle. Unpublished Report prepared for Hanking Gold Mining Pty Ltd by Recon Environmental. Report No. HGSX01.
- Western Wildlife (2008) St Barbara Limited, Southern Cross Operations: Baseline Fauna Survey; Spring 2007 & Autumn 2008. Western Wildlife, Mahogany Creek, W.A.

#### 5. Glossary

##### Acronyms:

<b>BoM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
<b>DAA</b>	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia
<b>DAFWA</b>	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
<b>DEC</b>	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DPaW and DER)
<b>DER</b>	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia
<b>DMP</b>	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
<b>DRF</b>	Declared Rare Flora
<b>DotE</b>	Department of the Environment, Australian Government
<b>DoW</b>	Department of Water, Western Australia
<b>DPaW</b>	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
<b>DSEWPaC</b>	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DotE)
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Authority, Western Australia
<b>EP Act</b>	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
<b>EPBC Act</b>	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (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>PEC</b>	Priority Ecological Community, Western Australia
<b>RIWI Act</b>	<i>Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914</i> , Western Australia
<b>s.17</b>	Section 17 of the <i>Environment Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
<b>TEC</b>	Threatened Ecological Community

##### Definitions:

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

<b>T</b>	<p><b>Threatened species:</b> 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).</p> <p>Threatened Fauna and Flora are further recognised by DPaW 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.</p> <p><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.</p>
<b>X</b>	<p><b>Presumed Extinct species:</b> 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).</p>
<b>IA</b>	<p><b>Migratory birds protected under an international agreement:</b> 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.</p>
<b>S</b>	<p><b>Other specially protected fauna:</b> Specially protected under the <i>Wildlife Conservation Act 1950</i>, listed under Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.</p>

- 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.**

**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.