



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7240/3
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Gascoyne Resources Limited

1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Lease 59/749
Miscellaneous Licence 59/152
Miscellaneous Licence 59/168
Local Government Area: Shire of Mount Magnet
Colloquial name: Dalgaranga Gold Project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
585		Mechanical Removal	Mineral Production and Associated Activities

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 22 October 2020

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description The vegetation of the application area is broadly mapped as the following Beard vegetation associations:
18: Low woodland; mulga (*Acacia aneura*);
204: Succulent steppe with open scrub; scattered mulga & *Acacia sclerosperma* over saltbush & bluebush; and
395: Hummock grasslands, mixed sandplain; bowgada, mallee, heath and spinifex (GIS Database).

A level 1 flora and vegetation survey was conducted over the application area by Native Vegetation Solutions (NVS) during May and June 2016. The following vegetation types were recorded within the application area (NVS, 2016; NVS, 2020):

- Rehabilitation vegetation.
- Open Mulga woodland.
- Mulga over *Acacia ramulosa* and *Eremophila forrestii* shrubland.
- Mulga over *Thryptomene costata* and *Eremophila glutinosa* shrubland.
- Open Mulga shrubland over stony plains.
- *Acacia aneura* and *Acacia craspedocarpa* over *Eremophila jucunda* open shrubland with herbaceous understorey.
- *Acacia burkittii* shrubland.
- Mulga over Chenopod shrubland.
- *Acacia grasbyi* shrubland over laterite breakaways.
- Mulga woodland over *Acacia grasbyi* and *Acacia rhodophloia*.
- *Acacia aneura* over *Eremophila exilifolia* and *Eremophila forrestii* shrubland on hill slopes.
- Existing disturbance.

Clearing Description Dalgaranga Gold Project.
Gascoyne Resources Limited proposes to clear up to 585 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 1,724 hectares, for the purpose of mineral production and associated activities. The project is located approximately 60 kilometres northwest of Mount Magnet, within the Shire of Mount Magnet.

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

To

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

Comment

The vegetation condition was derived from a vegetation survey conducted by Native Vegetation Solutions (2016).

Gascoyne Resources Limited proposes to recommence and further develop mining operations at the Gilbeys and Golden Wings gold deposits which ceased operations in 2001. The application area includes existing mine pits and related infrastructure.

Clearing permit CPS 7240/1 was granted by the Department of Mines and Petroleum (now the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) on 17 November 2016 and was valid from 10 December 2016 to 31 December 2021. The permit authorised the clearing of up to 227 hectares of native vegetation within a boundary of approximately 943 hectares, for the purpose of mineral production and associated activities.

CPS 7240/2 was granted on 16 November 2017, amending the permit to increase the amount of clearing authorised to 455 hectares, and increase the permit boundary to 1,654 hectares. The amendment was to allow for further mine site development.

On 29 July 2020, Gascoyne Resources Limited applied to amend CPS 7240/2 to increase the amount of clearing authorised to 585 hectares, and to increase the permit boundary to approximately 1,724 hectares, to allow for the construction of additional mine infrastructure.

3. Assessment of application against Clearing Principles

Comments

The permit holder has applied to increase the amount of clearing authorised by 130 hectares and increase the permit boundary by approximately 70 hectares, to allow for the expansion of the Gilbey's East and West waste rock dumps, construction of a surface water diversion bund and a new borefield (Clark Lindbeck, 2020).

The amendment area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation associations 18: Low woodland; mulga (*Acacia aneura*) and 204: Succulent steppe with open scrub; scattered mulga & *Acacia sclerosperma* over saltbush & bluebush (GIS Database). The amendment area falls within vegetation types previously described during a level 1 flora survey conducted by NVS (2016) during 30 May to 2 June 2016: *Acacia aneura* and *Acacia craspedocarpa* over *Eremophila jucunda* open shrubland with herbaceous understorey, *Acacia burkittii* shrubland, and Mulga over Chenopod shrubland (Clark Lindbeck, 2020; NVS, 2020). No Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities were identified as potentially occurring within the amendment area and the field assessment of the area did not record any (NVS, 2020; Clark Lindbeck, 2020).

No Threatened or Priority flora were recorded within the amendment area in 2020 (Clark Lindbeck, 2020; NVS, 2020). A targeted Threatened and Priority flora survey conducted by NVS (2020) in April 2020 identified vegetation present within the amendment area that may support Priority 1 flora species *Jacksonia lanicarpa*, however this species was not recorded during the field assessment.

No weed species were identified within the amendment area during the field assessment, however 11 weed species have previously been identified within the larger application area, including Weed of National Significance and Declared Pest *Tamarix aphylla* (Clark Lindbeck, 2020; Earth Stewardship, 2018). Weeds have the potential to outcompete native flora and reduce the biodiversity of an area. Potential impacts to biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the continued implementation of the weed management condition.

A desktop assessment and targeted Malleefowl (*Leiopoa ocellata*, VU at a state and federal level) mound survey was conducted over the amendment area by Western Ecological during February and May 2020 (Western Ecological, 2020a; Western Ecological, 2020b). The desktop assessment identified two fauna species of conservation significance that could potentially occur within the amendment area due to suitable habitat present and prior records within the local area: Malleefowl (*Leiopoa ocellata*, VU at a state and federal level) and Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, OS) (Western Ecological, 2020b). The targeted survey identified no evidence of Malleefowl activity and Malleefowl were considered unlikely to utilise the amendment area given the limited suitable habitat available (Clark Lindbeck, 2020; Western Ecological, 2020a). The Peregrine Falcon has previously been identified within the greater project area during a previous fauna assessment, utilising water contained in the Gilbeys and Golden Wing open pits (Clark Lindbeck, 2020). Peregrine Falcons may forage over the amendment area, however the local area is likely part of a much larger home range (Clark Lindbeck, 2020). Due to the mobility of the species and abundance of suitable habitat located beyond the amendment area, the proposed clearing is not expected to cause a significant impact to this species.

Fauna habitats found within the amendment area have been identified within the greater project area (Clark Lindbeck, 2020; MBC, 2016). The habitats described are typical of the region and well represented beyond the amendment area (Clark Lindbeck, 2016). The proposed clearing within the amendment area is unlikely to significantly impact fauna or fauna habitats within a regional context.

Parts of the amendment area is located within a wash area (GIS Database). Given the arid climate of the region, the wash area is only likely to be inundated with water following significant rainfall events. The vegetation type growing within the wash area is mulga over chenopod shrubland (NVS, 2020). A watercourse management condition is recommended to minimise impacts to riparian vegetation and to maintain water flow. Localised flooding may occur following heavy rainfall, however the additional clearing is unlikely to have any significant impact on the quality of surface or groundwater, or on the incidence or intensity of flooding.

The amendment area is located within the Cunyu and Yanganoo land systems (GIS Database). Both of these land systems are mildly susceptible to erosion when vegetation is removed (Curry et al., 1994). Potential land degradation impacts from the proposed clearing may be minimised by the continued implementation of the existing staged clearing condition.

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*, and the proposed clearing is at variance to Principle (f), may be at variance to Principle (g), is not likely to be at variance to Principles (a), (b), (c), (d), (h), (i) and (j) and is not at variance to Principle (e).

Methodology CALM (2002)
Clark Lindbeck (2016)
Clark Lindbeck (2020)
Curry et al. (1994)
Earth Stewardship (2018)
MBC (2016)
NVS (2016)
NVS (2020)
Western Ecological (2020a)
Western Ecological (2020b)

GIS Database:

- DPaW Tenure
- Hydrography, Lakes
- Hydrography, Linear
- IBRA Australia
- Imagery
- Landsystem Rangelands
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas
- Soils, Statewide
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities boundaries
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities buffers
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened Fauna

Planning Instrument, Native Title, previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

There is one native title claim (WC2004/010) over the area under application (DPLH, 2020). This claim has been registered with the National Native Title Tribunal on behalf of the claimant group. 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, 2020). 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.

The amendment application was advertised on 17 August 2020 by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to this application.

Methodology DPLH (2020)

4. References

- CALM (2002) A Biodiversity Audit of Western Australia's 53 Biogeographic Subregions in 2002. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.
- Clark Lindbeck (2016) Dalgaranga Gold Project Supporting Document for Clearing Permit Application. Report prepared for Gascoyne Resources Ltd, by Clark Lindbeck and Associates Pty Ltd, August 2016.
- Clark Lindbeck (2020) Dalgaranga Gold Project. Supporting Document for Clearing Permit (CPS 7240/2) Amendment Application. Prepared by Clark Lindbeck and Associates Pty Ltd, for Gascoyne Resources Limited, July 2020.
- Curry, P J, Payne, A L, Leighton, K A, Hennig, P, and Blood, D A (1994) An inventory and condition survey of the Murchison

River catchment and surrounds, Western Australia. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia. Technical Bulletin 84.

DPLH (2020) Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.

<http://maps.daa.wa.gov.au/AHIS/> (Accessed 20 August 2020).

Earth Stewardship (2018) GNT Resources Pty Ltd: Dalgaranga Gold Mine – Weed Surveys. Prepared by Earth Stewardship, for Gascoyne Resources Limited, February 2018.

Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

MBC (2016) Level 1 Fauna Assessment and Level 2 Targeted Malleefowl Survey Dalgaranga. Report prepared for Gascoyne Resources Ltd, by MB Contracting Environmental, June 2016.

NVS (2016) Level 1 Flora and Vegetation Survey Gascoyne Resources Dalgaranga Tenements. Report prepared for Clark Lindbeck and Associates Pty Ltd, by Native Vegetation Solutions, June 2016.

NVS (2020) Targeted Threatened Flora Survey At Dalgaranga – April 2020. Prepared for Clark Lindbeck and Associates Pty Ltd, by Native Vegetation Solutions, May 2020.

Western Ecological (2020a) Malleefowl Survey for the Dalgaranga Gold Project. Prepared by Western Ecological, for Gascoyne Resources Limited, May 2020.

Western Ecological (2020b) Vertebrate Desktop Assessment for the Dalgaranga Gold Project. Prepared by Western Ecological, for Gascoyne Resources Limited, March 2020.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

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)
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia (now DBCA and DWER)
DoEE	Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government
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)
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
DoE	Department of the Environment, Australian Government (now DoEE)
DoW	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
DPaW	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
DSEWPac	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (now DoEE)
DWER	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
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:

{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.

Specially 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 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.