

# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7240/4  
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:
779		Mechanical Removal	Mineral Production and Associated Activities

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
Decision Date: 18 January 2021

## 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):

- Rehabilitated 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.

Gascoyne (2021) have mapped where they have proposed to clear up to an addition 194 hectares within their existing permit boundary. A targeted flora survey of these areas proposed to be cleared under this amendment was conducted by Ecotec (2021) during August 2021. The following vegetation types were recorded within these areas (Ecotec, 2021):

1: *Acacia caesaneura* and *Acacia assimilis* subsp. *assimilis* sparse woodland over *Acacia craspedocarpa*, *Eremophila oldfieldii* subsp. *angustifolia*, *Eremophila latrobei* subsp. *latrobei*, *Eremophila glutinosa* and *Eremophila punicea* sparse shrubland over mixed sparse herbs.

2: *Acacia fuscaneura* and *Acacia caesaneura* very open woodland over *Acacia ramulosa*, *Acacia grasbyi*, *Acacia tetragonophylla* open shrubland over *Eremophila* species very open low shrubland.

3: *Acacia grasbyi*, *Acacia ramulosa* and *Acacia tetragonophylla* sparse tall shrubland over sparse *Eremophila* species low shrubland.

4: *Acacia pteraneura* and *Acacia eremaea* very open tall shrubland over *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Eremophila latrobei* subsp. *latrobei* and *Eremophila fraseri* subsp. *fraseri* very open mid-shrubland over mixed sparse low shrubs and herbs.

5: *Acacia craspedocarpa* and *Acacia caesaneura* tall shrubland over *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Eremophila glutinosa*, *Eremophila forrestii* subsp. *forrestii* and *Eremophila fraseri* subsp. *fraseri* mid shrubland over mixed low shrubs and herbs.

6: *Acacia fusca* and *Acacia caesaneura* open woodland over *Acacia tetragonophylla*, *Eremophila fraseri* subsp. *fraseri* open mid-shrubland over mixed low open shrubland and herbs.

<b>Clearing Description</b>	Dalgaranga Gold Project. Gascoyne Resources Limited proposes to clear up to 779 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.
<b>Vegetation Condition</b>	Excellent: Vegetation structure intact; disturbance affecting individual species, weeds non-aggressive (Keighery, 1994).  to  Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994).
<b>Comment</b>	The vegetation condition was derived from a vegetation survey conducted by Native Vegetation Solutions (2016) and Ecotec (2021).  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.  CPS 7240/3 was granted on 22 October 2020, amending the permit to increase the amount of clearing authorised to 585 hectares, and to increase the permit boundary to approximately 1,724 hectares.  On 14 September 2021, the Permit Holder applied to amend CPS 7240/3 to increase the amount of clearing authorised and extend the permit duration.

### 3. Assessment of application against Clearing Principles

<b>Comments</b>	<p>The permit holder has applied to increase the amount of clearing authorised by 194 hectares and extend the permit duration by five years, to 31 December 2031. The amendment will allow for the construction of an additional waste rock dump, extending the existing waste rock dump, and constructing additional infrastructure (Gascoyne, 2021).</p> <p>A targeted flora survey was conducted over the areas Gascoyne (2021) have proposed to be cleared under this amendment by Ecotec (2021) on 9-10 August 2021. The vegetation of these areas was mapped and six vegetation types were identified (Ecotec, 2021). No Threatened or Priority Ecological Communities were identified as potentially occurring within the amendment areas and the field assessment of the area did not record any (NVS, 2016; NVS, 2020; Ecotec, 2021).</p> <p>A total of 93 flora species from 51 genera and 27 families were recorded within the targeted survey area (Ecotec, 2021). A number of conservation significant flora species have the potential to occur within these additional areas based on suitable habitat, however the likelihood of their presence is considered low due to long term stock grazing (Ecotec, 2021). No Threatened or Priority flora were recorded within the proposed cleared areas to be cleared (Ecotec, 2021).</p> <p>Two weed species were identified within the areas Gascoyne (2021) have proposed to clearing during the targeted flora survey, these are <i>Rumex vesicarius</i> and <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> (Ecotec, 2021). A weed survey conducted 25-27 May 2021 of the whole project area recorded 14 species of weeds (JBBC, 2021). 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.</p> <p>Fauna habitats found within the amendment area have been identified within the greater project area (Clark Lindbeck, 2020; MBC, 2016). <i>Acacia</i> woodland/shrubland is the dominant fauna habitat within the additional areas proposed to clear, with a small area of rocky outcrop which will be avoided (Ecotec, 2021; Gascoyne, 2021). This fauna habitat is common and widespread beyond the amendment area and in the greater region</p>
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(Ecotec, 2021; Clark Lindbeck, 2020; MBC, 2016). No conservation significant fauna species were identified during the targeted fauna survey of the proposed clearing area (Ecotec, 2021). It is unlikely that the proposed increasing in clearing will significantly impact available fauna habitats or assemblage.

The amendment area is broadly mapped as occurring within the Jundee, Violet, and Yanganoo land systems (GIS Database). These land systems also occur within the original permit area (GIS Database). Continued implementation of the existing staged clearing condition will minimise the risk of erosion, however, the additional areas of clearing proposed are unlikely to result in appreciable land degradation.

There are no permanent watercourses or wetlands within the amendment area (GIS Database). There are multiple ephemeral drainage lines that occur within the additional areas proposed to clear (GIS Database). The watercourse management condition is recommended to be retained to minimise impacts to riparian vegetation and to maintain water flow.

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 7240/1, 7240/2, and 7240/3.

**Methodology** Clark Lindbeck (2020)  
Ecotec (2021)  
Gascoyne (2021)  
JBBC (2021)  
MBC (2016)  
NVS (2016)  
NVS (2020)

GIS Database:

- DPaW Tenure
- Hydrography, Lakes
- Hydrography, Linear
- IBRA Australia
- Imagery
- Landsystem Rangelands
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas
- 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, 2021). This claim has been determined by the Federal Court 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, 2021). 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 29 October 2021 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 (2021)

## 4. References

- Clark Lindbeck (2016) Dalgara 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) Dalgara 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.
- DPLH (2021) Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.  
<https://espatial.dplh.wa.gov.au/AHIS/index.html?viewer=AHIS> (Accessed 21 December 2021).
- Ecotec (2021) Dalgara targeted Threatened and Priority flora and fauna habitat survey. Report prepared by Ecotec Environmental Management, for GNT Resources Pty Ltd, September 2021.
- Gascoyne (2021) Dalgara Gold Project - Supporting Document for Clearing Permit (CPS 7240/3) Amendment Application. Report prepared by GNT Resources Pty Ltd, September 2021.
- JBBC (2021) Weed survey of the GNT Resources Dalgara Gold Project Disturbance Envelope. Report prepared by Jenny Borger Botanical Consulting, for GNT Resources Pty Ltd, May 2021.
- 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 Dalgara. Report prepared for Gascoyne Resources Ltd, by MB Contracting Environmental, June 2016.
- NVS (2016) Level 1 Flora and Vegetation Survey Gascoyne Resources Dalgara Tenements. Report prepared for Clark Lindbeck and Associates Pty Ltd, by Native Vegetation Solutions, June 2016.
- NVS (2020) Targeted Threatened Flora Survey At Dalgara – April 2020. Prepared for Clark Lindbeck and Associates Pty Ltd, by Native Vegetation Solutions, May 2020.

## 5. Glossary

### Acronyms:

<b>BC Act</b>	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> , Western Australia
<b>BoM</b>	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
<b>DAA</b>	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Western Australia (now DPLH)
<b>DAFWA</b>	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (now DPIRD)
<b>DAWE</b>	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Australian Government
<b>DBCA</b>	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Western Australia
<b>DER</b>	Department of Environment Regulation, Western Australia (now DWER)
<b>DMIRS</b>	Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, Western Australia
<b>DMP</b>	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia (now DMIRS)
<b>DoEE</b>	Department of the Environment and Energy (now DAWE)
<b>DoW</b>	Department of Water, Western Australia (now DWER)
<b>DPaW</b>	Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia (now DBCA)
<b>DPIRD</b>	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
<b>DPLH</b>	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, Western Australia
<b>DRF</b>	Declared Rare Flora (now known as Threatened Flora)
<b>DWER</b>	Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Western Australia
<b>EP Act</b>	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> , Western Australia
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Authority, 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>TEC</b>	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.

- (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.