



# Clearing Permit Decision Report

## 1. Application details

### 1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 7364/1  
Permit type: Purpose Permit

### 1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited

### 1.3. Property details

Property: Mining Lease 39/366  
Mining Lease 39/375  
Mining Lease 39/499  
Miscellaneous Licence 39/248  
Local Government Area: Shire of Laverton  
Colloquial name: Sunrise Dam Airstrip Project

### 1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
30.7		Scrub Rolling, Raised Blade Clearing or Mechanical Removal	Airstrip maintenance

### 1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant  
Decision Date: 19 January 2017

## 2. Site Information

### 2.1. Existing environment and information

#### 2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

<b>Vegetation Description</b>	<p>Beard vegetation associations have been broadly mapped for the whole of Western Australia. The following two Beard vegetation associations have been mapped over the application area (GIS Database):</p> <p>18: Low woodland; mulga (<i>Acacia aneura</i>); and</p> <p>389: Succulent steppe with open low woodland; mulga over saltbush.</p> <p>Several flora and vegetation studies have been conducted across the Sunrise Dam Gold Mine leases between 1994 and 2016 (AngloGold, 2016). A review of these surveys by AngloGold (2016) identified the following three vegetation types within the application area:</p> <p>A2: Open Low Woodland to Woodland of <i>Acacia aneura</i> var. <i>aneura</i>, <i>A. aneura</i> var. <i>macrocarpa</i> and <i>A. ayersiana</i> over <i>A. ramulosa</i> var. <i>ramulosa</i>, <i>A. tetragonophylla</i>, <i>Eremophila</i> spp., <i>Maireana triptera</i>, <i>Solanum lasiophyllum</i>, <i>Ptilotus obovatus</i> var. <i>obovatus</i> and <i>Eragrostis eriopoda</i> in sandy-loam soils;</p> <p>C1: Shrubland of Chenopod species with occasional emergent <i>Acacia ayersiana</i> and <i>Acacia aneura</i> var. <i>aneura</i> over <i>Acacia ?kalgoorliensis</i> and <i>Hakea preissii</i> in clay loam soils; and</p> <p>C2: Shrubland of <i>Hakea preissii</i>, <i>Acacia tysonii</i>, <i>Eremophila miniata</i>, <i>Pimelea microcephala</i> subsp. <i>microcephala</i>, <i>Exocarpos aphyllus</i> and <i>Pittosporum angustifolium</i> over <i>Atriplex vesicaria</i>, <i>Maireana aphylla</i>, <i>Rhagodia drummondii</i>, <i>Cratystylis subspinescens</i> and <i>Senna artemisioides</i> subsp. <i>filifolia</i> over <i>Aristida holathera</i> var. <i>holathera</i> and <i>Solanum orbiculatum</i> subsp. <i>orbiculatum</i> and low Chenopod species in clay loam soils.</p>
<b>Clearing Description</b>	<p>Sunrise Dam Airstrip project.</p> <p>AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited (AngloGold) proposes to clear up to 30.7 hectares of native vegetation within a total boundary of approximately 31 hectares, for the purposes of airstrip maintenance. The project is located approximately 52 kilometres south of Laverton, in the Shire of Laverton.</p>
<b>Vegetation Condition</b>	<p>Good: Structure significantly altered by multiple disturbance; retains basic structure/ability to regenerate (Keighery, 1994).</p>
<b>Comment</b>	<p>The proposed clearing is for maintenance activities at each end of the existing airstrip, to improve safety. The vegetation is not intended to be completely cleared, but will be reduced in height by using scrub rolling or raised blade clearing techniques (AngloGold, 2016).</p>

### 3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

#### Comments

The application area occurs within the Eastern Murchison sub-region of the Murchison Bioregion of the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (GIS Database). The Murchison region and Eastern Murchison sub-region remain largely uncleared, retaining approximately 99 percent of their pre-European vegetation extent (Government of Western Australia, 2015).

The application area consists of two separate areas, located immediately adjacent to each end of the existing airstrip. Analysis of aerial imagery indicates that the vegetation of the application area is generally in a 'good' condition on the Keighery scale (Keighery, 1994), with some small areas of existing disturbance, particularly in the southern section.

No Threatened or Priority flora species have been recorded within the application area (AngloGold, 2016). No Threatened Ecological Communities or Priority Ecological Communities have been recorded within the application area (AngloGold, 2016; GIS Database). There are no conservation areas within or in close proximity to the application area (GIS Database).

Two major fauna studies have been conducted in the local area (AngloGold, 2016). No conservation significant fauna species or significant fauna habitats have been identified within the application area (AngloGold, 2016).

There are no watercourses or wetlands within the application area (GIS Database). The proposed clearing is unlikely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water or increase the incidence or intensity of flooding (GIS Database).

The Rainbow and Carnegie land systems which are broadly mapped over the application areas, are generally not susceptible to soil erosion (Pringle et al., 1994). The minor nature of the proposed clearing is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation.

The vegetation types and fauna habitats found within the application area are well represented locally and regionally (AngloGold, 2016; GIS Database).

The proposal to clear up to 30.7 hectares of native vegetation for the purpose of airstrip maintenance activities is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts.

The 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 unlikely to be at variance to any of the clearing principles.

#### Methodology

AngloGold (2016)  
Government of Western Australia (2015)  
Pringle et al. (1994)

GIS Database:

- DPaW Tenure
- Hydrography, lakes
- Hydrography, linear
- Imagery
- Pre-European Vegetation
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas
- Threatened and Priority Flora
- Threatened and Priority Ecological Communities - Boundaries
- Threatened Fauna

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

### Comments

There are no registered Native Title claims over the area under application (DAA, 2017). 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 (DAA, 2017). 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, the 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 application was advertised on 19 December 2016, inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received.

**Methodology** DAA (2017)

## 4. References

- AngloGold (2016) Clearing Permit Application - Aerodrome Scrub Rolling. AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited, October 2016.
- DAA (2017) Aboriginal Heritage Enquiry System. Department of Aboriginal Affairs. <http://maps.dia.wa.gov.au/AHIS2/> (Accessed 13 January 2017).
- Government of Western Australia (2015) 2015 Statewide Vegetation Statistics incorporating the CAR Reserve Analysis (Full Report). Current as of June 2015. WA Department of Parks and Wildlife, Perth.
- Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.
- Pringle, H.J.R., Van Vreeswyk, A.M.E., and Gilligan, S.A. (1994) An Inventory and Condition Survey of Rangelands in the north-eastern Goldfields, Western Australia. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

## 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>DEE</b>	Department of the Environment and Energy, Australian Government
<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>DoE</b>	Department of the Environment, Australian Government (now DEE)
<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 DEE)
<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>TEC</b>	Threatened Ecological Community

## **Definitions:**

**{DPaW (2015) Conservation Codes for Western Australian Flora and Fauna. Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia}:-**

- T**                    **Threatened species:**  
Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, listed under Schedules 1 to 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora (which may also be referred to as Declared Rare Flora).
- Threatened fauna* is that subset of 'Specially Protected Fauna' declared to be 'likely to become extinct' pursuant to section 14(4) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.
- Threatened flora* is flora that has been declared to be 'likely to become extinct or is rare, or otherwise in need of special protection', pursuant to section 23F(2) of the Wildlife Conservation Act.
- The assessment of the conservation status of these species is based on their national extent and ranked according to their level of threat using IUCN Red List categories and criteria as detailed below.
- CR**                    **Critically endangered species**  
Threatened species considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- EN**                    **Endangered species**  
Threatened species considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- VU**                    **Vulnerable species**  
Threatened species considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Threatened Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Threatened Flora.
- EX**                    **Presumed extinct species**  
Species which have been adequately searched for and there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 4 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice for Presumed Extinct Fauna and Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice for Presumed Extinct Flora.
- IA**                    **Migratory birds protected under an international agreement**  
Birds that are subject to an agreement between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and The Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), and the Bonn Convention, relating to the protection of migratory birds. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- CD**                    **Conservation dependent fauna**  
Fauna of special conservation need being species dependent on ongoing conservation intervention to prevent it becoming eligible for listing as threatened. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 6 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- OS**                    **Other specially protected fauna**  
Fauna otherwise in need of special protection to ensure their conservation. Published as Specially Protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, in Schedule 7 of the Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice.
- P**                        **Priority species**  
Species which are poorly known; or  
Species that are adequately known, are rare but not threatened, and require regular monitoring. Assessment of Priority codes is based on the Western Australian distribution of the species, unless the distribution in WA is part of a contiguous population extending into adjacent States, as defined by the known spread of locations.

**P1 Priority One - Poorly-known species:**

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

**P2 Priority Two - Poorly-known species:**

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

**P3 Priority Three - Poorly-known species:**

Species that are known from several locations, and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat, or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. Such species are in need of further survey.

**P4 Priority Four - Rare, Near Threatened and other species in need of monitoring:**

(a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.

(b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for Vulnerable, but are not listed as Conservation Dependent.

(c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.

**Principles for clearing native vegetation:**

- (a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.
- (b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.
- (c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.
- (d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.
- (e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.
- (f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.
- (g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.
- (h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.
- (i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.
- (j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.