

A SUMMARY REPORT OF

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES

FOR THE TROPICANA GOLD PROJECT

(Including Access Routes & Water Supply Area)

GREAT VICTORIA DESERT

JUNE 2002 - DECEMBER 2008

Prepared for
ANGLOGOLD ASHANTI AUSTRALIA LTD
(as Manager of the Tropicana Joint Venture)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tropicana JV (TJV) is planning to establishing the Tropicana Gold Project (TGP), which aims to mine the Tropicana and Havana gold deposits. The proposed TGP is located approximately 330 km east north-east of Kalgoorlie, and 15km west of the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve, on the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert (GVD) biogeographic region of Western Australia. The project is a joint venture between AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited (70% and Manager) and the Independence Group NL.

The project will be comprised of an Operational Area, Water Supply Area and Pipeline and an Infrastructure corridor. The infrastructure corridor will house an access road and / or fibre optical cable for the site communications.

A total of eight ethnographic surveys have been conducted for the Tropicana Joint Venture tenements by representatives of the Wongatha Native Title Claim group (WC99/01, dismissed 2007) over the period of 2002 to 2008. Six of these surveys covered land at and around the Operational Area and proposed access tracks and water bore fields of the Tropicana Gold Project.

In all cases, the Wongatha's working body for heritage matters, the North East Independent Body (NEIB), have nominated their representatives for these surveys.

All of the surveys have followed the "Site Identification" survey model.

No ethnographic or historical sites have been identified within the 31 mining tenements comprising the Operational Area or within any of the Water Supply Areas and water exploration tenements or within the mine access road infrastructure options. Nor have any such sites been reported nearby.

The nearest Aboriginal communities are

- at Laverton and at Cosmo Newberry, which are both approximately 220km away to the west-northwest,
- at Coonana, which is approximately 225km to the southwest, and
- at Tjuntjunjarra, which is approximately 250km to the east.

The TGP is wholly within the area of the former Wongatha Native Title Claim (WC 99/001). The initial ethnographic survey, which covered all of the 31 tenements of the Operational Area, was conducted with representatives of that claimant group at a time (2002) when the Wongatha NTC was registered at the National Native Title Tribunal.

That survey has been followed by subsequent ethnographic surveys with representatives of the same group. These surveys have covered additional tenements, including proposed water borefields, all of one proposed mine access road and parts of another, and exploration tenements which cover a water pipeline corridor from the Water Supply Area. In addition, there have been visits to the TGP for initial discussions for a Cultural Heritage Management Plan and visits to a sample of archaeological sites found in the course of separate archaeological surveys.

Only 2 ethnographic sites have been identified in the wider Tropicana tenements (outside the Operational Area) in the course of the surveys. A large gnamma called "Women's Rockhole" considered to have mythological associations, and a well defined arrangement called "Men's Stone Arrangement" considered to have had been a ceremonial place. These two sites are approximately 20km and 36km, respectively, east-northeast of the Operational Area.

A number of locations have been pointed out by the Aboriginal spokespersons in the wider area, including gnammas (or rockholes) and historic sandalwood pullers' camps. None of these features or locations have traditional, cultural or historic significance and they are not ethnographic sites. By pointing out these locations, some of the Wongatha spokespersons are proving their familiarity with the district.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Tropicana Joint Venture (JV) is planning to develop the Tropicana Gold Project, in a new gold province on the southwest edge of the Great Victoria Desert, close to the northwest edge of the Nullarbor Plain (Figure 1). The JV is a partnership between AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited (manager and 70% stakeholder) and Independence Group NL (30%).

The Tropicana Gold Project (TGP) is an arid region of sand plains and sand dune fields with few salient features. The only known historic activity in the Tropicana district has been sandalwood 'pulling', which dates from the past few decades. There has been no pastoralism and no mining in the region, and until very recently, very little exploration. The discovery of gold mineralisation in the Tropicana tenements has dramatically changed that.

The location and extent of the TGP is illustrated in Figure 1. The TGP Operational Area is approximately 330km east-northeast of Kalgoorlie, 220km east-southeast of Laverton and 190km north of the Transcontinental Railway. Lake Rason is located approximately 60km to the north-northwest and Lake Minigwal is 125km to the west. The western edge of the Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve is 13km to the south-east of the Operational Area.

The nearest Aboriginal communities are at Laverton and at Cosmo Newberry, which are both approximately 220km away, at Coonana, which is approximately 225km to the southwest, and at Tjuntjunjarra, which is approximately 250km to the east.

The TGP Operational Area is wholly within the area of the former Wongatha Native Title Claim (NTC reference WC 99/001).

At an early stage of the JVs exploration, an ethnographic survey was conducted with representatives of the Wongatha NTC. This has been followed by subsequent ethnographic surveys, visits to the Operational Area and initial discussions for a Cultural Heritage Management Plan. In all cases, the Wongatha's working body for heritage matters, the North East Independent Body (NEIB), have nominated their representatives for these surveys, visits and meetings.

Indigenous heritage management for the Tropicana Gold Project tenure, in respect to the *Native Title Act* and the *WA Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* compliances, has been managed under the Goldfields Land and Sea Council Representative Body and the Wongatha claimants North East Independent Body heritage protection protocols and standard heritage protection agreements.

This report provides a description of each ethnographic survey, based on a review of the consultancy reports. It also briefly describes the results of the surveys. The reports are yet to be submitted to the Department of Indigenous Affairs. This is scheduled to happen after the completion of this report and a complimentary archaeological summary report (Mattner 2009).

No ethnographic sites have been identified within the 31 mining tenements comprising the Operational Area or within any of the associated water borefield tenements or proposed mine access road options. In other words, no places or features with mythological, traditional, cultural or historical significance have been identified in the Operational Area.

Only two ethnographic sites have been identified during the ethnographic surveys of the wider Tropicana region. One is a large gnamma (rockhole), "Women's Rockhole", and the other is a well defined stone arrangement, "Men's Stone Arrangement". These two sites are approximately 20km and 36km, respectively, east-northeast of the Operational Area. Both of these sites

contain an archaeological component in addition to having cultural significance; namely, stone artefacts and several historic wooden structures are found near the gnamma, while the stone arrangement is an archaeological structure. On this account, both sites may be considered ethnoarchaeological sites.

It may be noted here that a number of locations have been pointed out by the Aboriginal spokespersons in the wider area during the surveys summarised in this report. Some of these are places or features known from several decades ago when a few of the spokespersons worked pulling sandalwood in the district, while others are landscape features noticed in the course of travelling through the area. These include gnammas, breakaways, hills and sandalwood pullers' camps.

None of these locations, features or historic remains have been identified as ethnographic or historic sites by the Aboriginal informants and none of them would constitute a heritage site, as defined by Sections 5 or 39 of the WA *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. Nonetheless, the JV partners have undertaken to avoid any damage to these features or historic places. In pointing these out, the spokespersons are affirming their familiarity with the Tropicana region and their historical knowledge gained by working and travelling through this remote region, which was within their former Native Title Claim.

Tropicana Gold Project – Location Plan

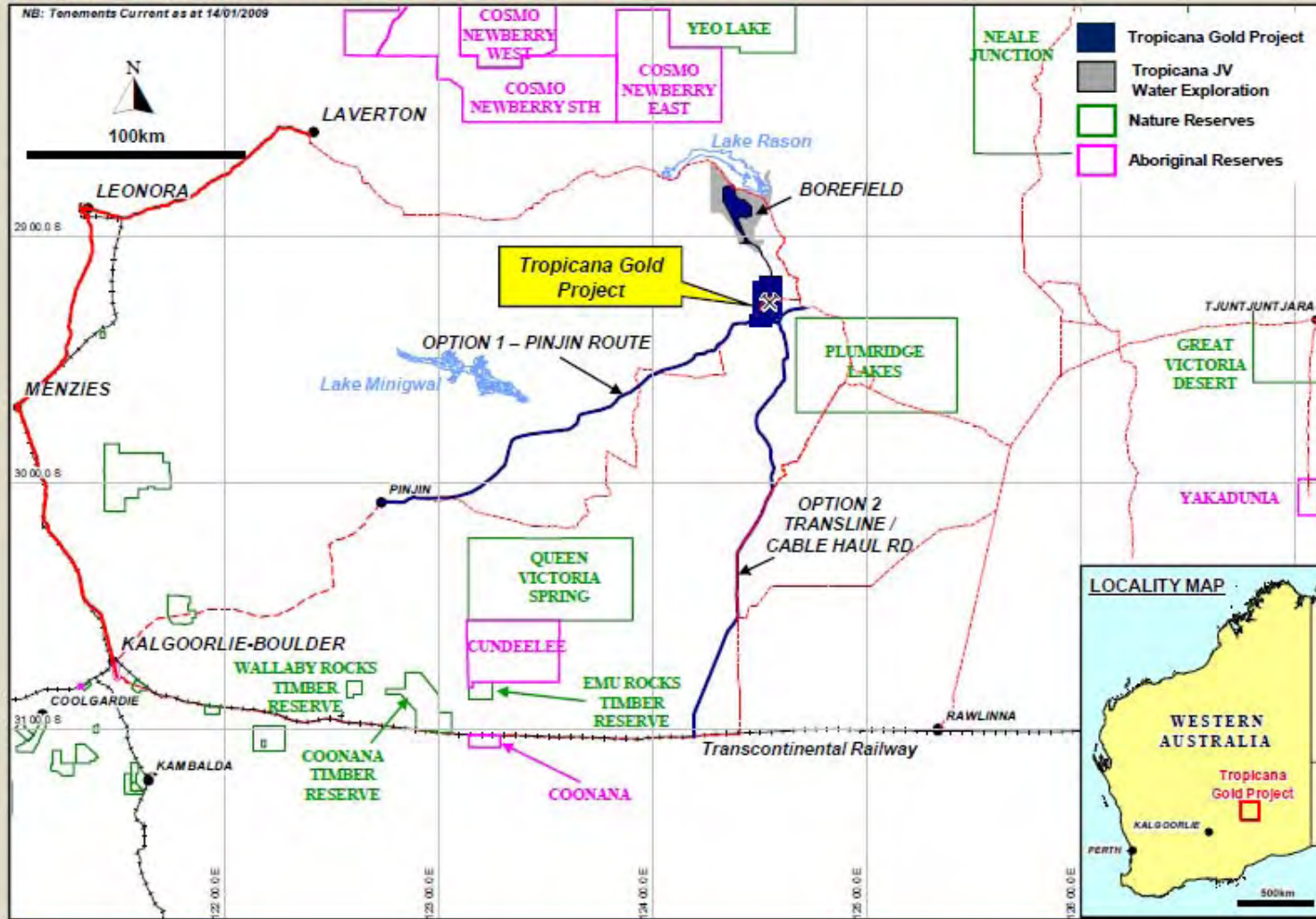


Figure 1

2.0 SURVEY AREA

The Tropicana Gold Project (TGP) is comprised of 3 main components:

- Operational Area - This area will contain the mine, processing plant, airstrip, accommodation village and other associated infrastructure (Figure 2);
- Mine Access Roads - 2 possible options are under consideration for a major access road; the Pinjin Road running west-southwest to Pinjin Station and the Cable Haul Road running south-southwest to the Transcontinental Railway. A short bypass road will also be constructed near the Operational Area to keep public traffic from mining roads and areas (Figure 3); and.
- Water Supply Area - 2 areas ('basins') have been investigated but only the Minigwal Trough located south of Lake Rason and north of the Operational Area is considered to be viable (Figure 4).

A total of 31 tenements constitute the Operational Area and a further 7 miscellaneous leases constitute the access road options and the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area. All 38 tenements form the area designated for this summary report. These tenements are listed in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 2.

Prior to the granting of mining leases for the project, the Operational Area fell within 2 exploration tenements. The central mining area was entirely within lease E39/951. Most of the surrounding land fell within the same lease (E39/951), with the remainder in exploration lease E39/956. While these exploration leases have been superseded, the early surveys still refer to them.

Table 1: Tenements in the Tropicana Project Area

Operational Area & Surrounding Project Area (previously within E39/951 & E39/956)	• M39/978	• M39/979	• M39/980	• M39/981
	• M39/982	• M39/983	• M39/984	• M39/985
	• M39/986	• M39/987	• M39/988	• M39/1010
	• M39/1011	• M39/1012	• M39/1013	• M39/1014
	• M39/1015	• M39/1016	• M39/1017	• M39/1018
	• M39/1019	• M39/1020	• M39/1021	• M39/1028
	• M39/1029	• M39/1030	• M39/1048	• M39/1049
	• M39/1050	• M39/1051	• M39/1052	
Infrastructure – Pinjin Road Option	• L31/56	• L31/57	• L39/185	
Infrastructure – Cable Haul Road Option	• L39/186			
Public Bypass Track & Airstrip and access	• L39/188	• L39/189	• L39/172	
Water Borefield Areas – Minigwal Trough	• L38/150	• L38/113,178	• L39/114	

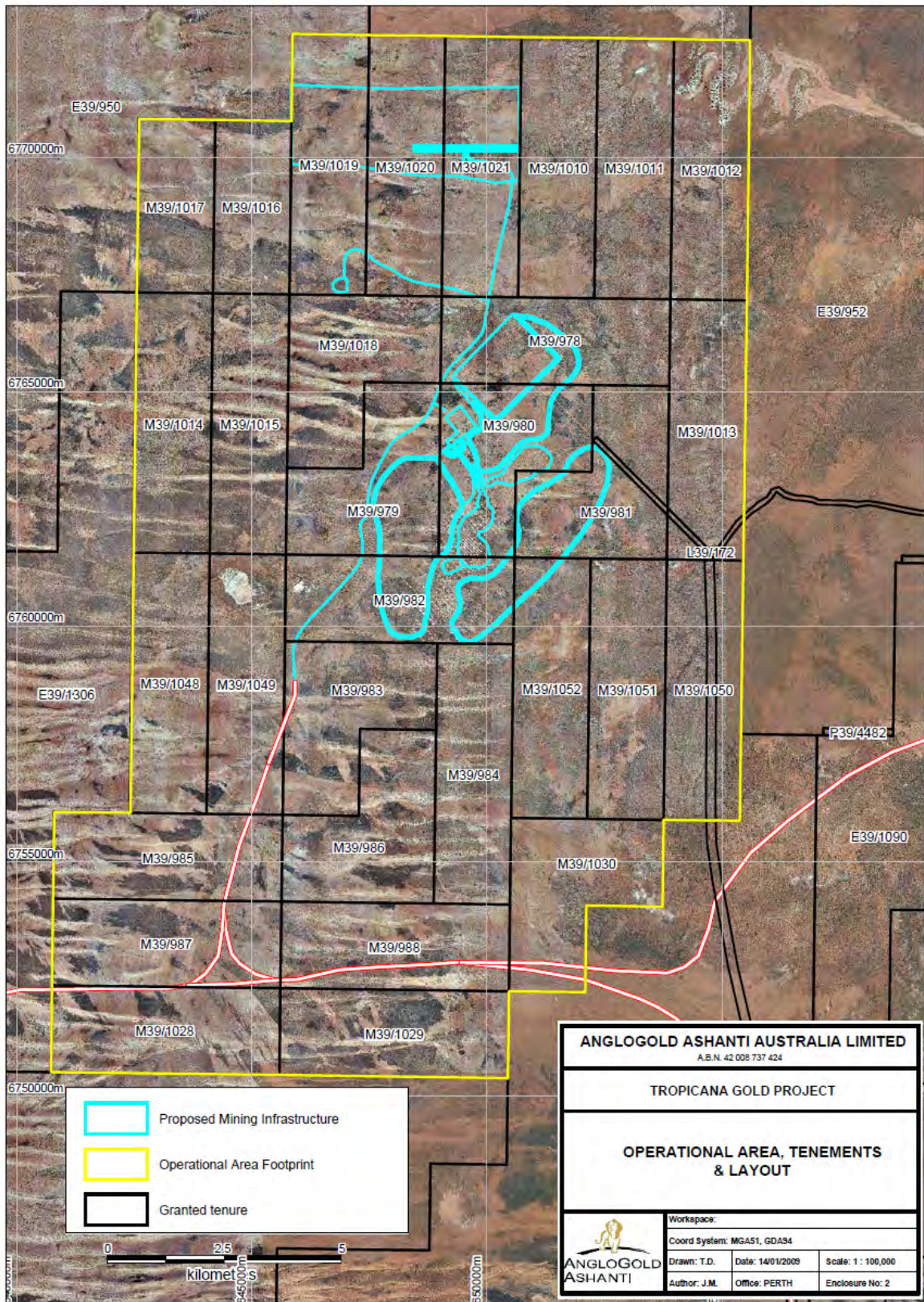


Figure 2: Operational Area & Conceptual Mine Site Layout

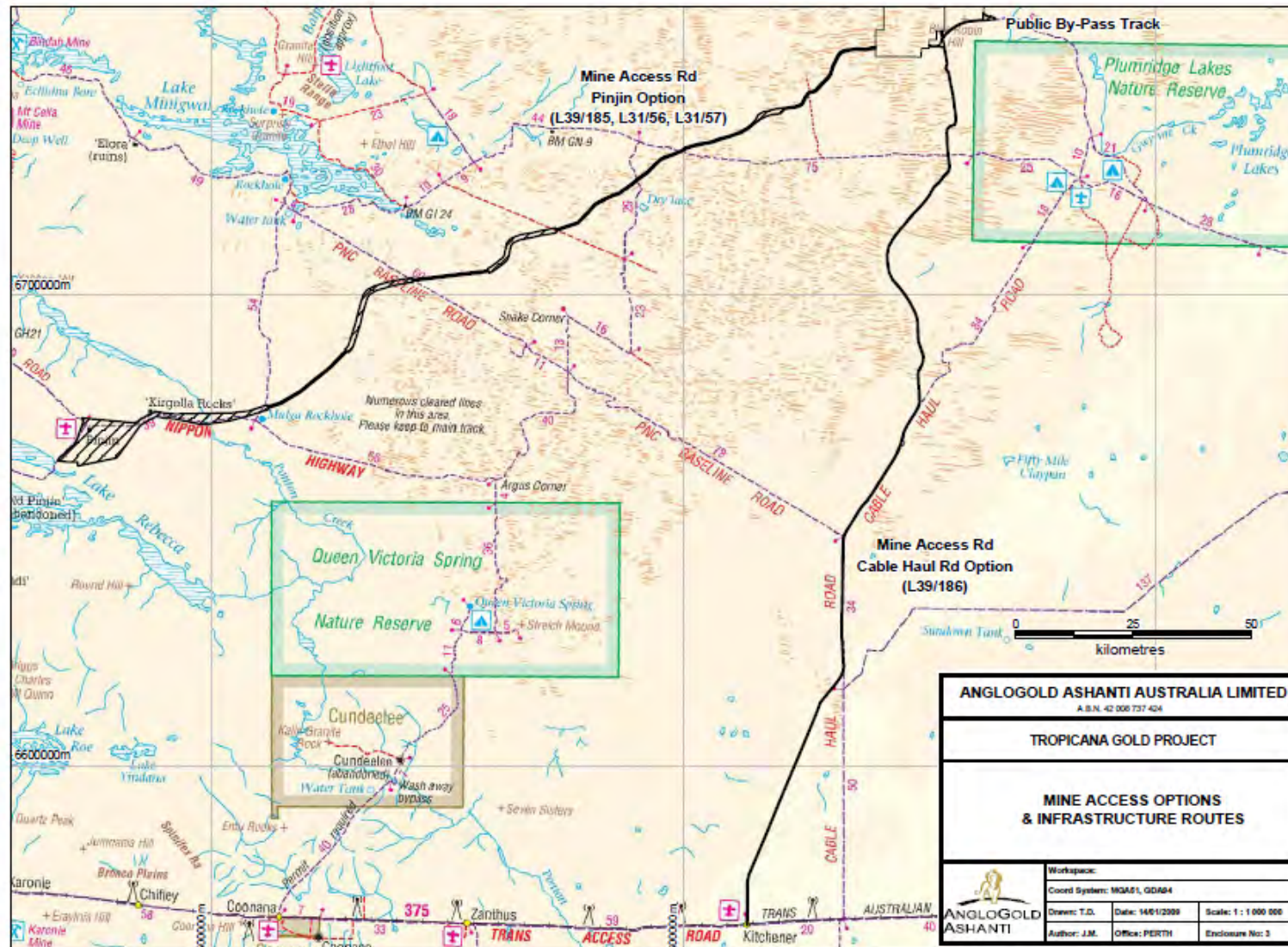


Figure 3: Mine Access Road Options and Public Bypass Road

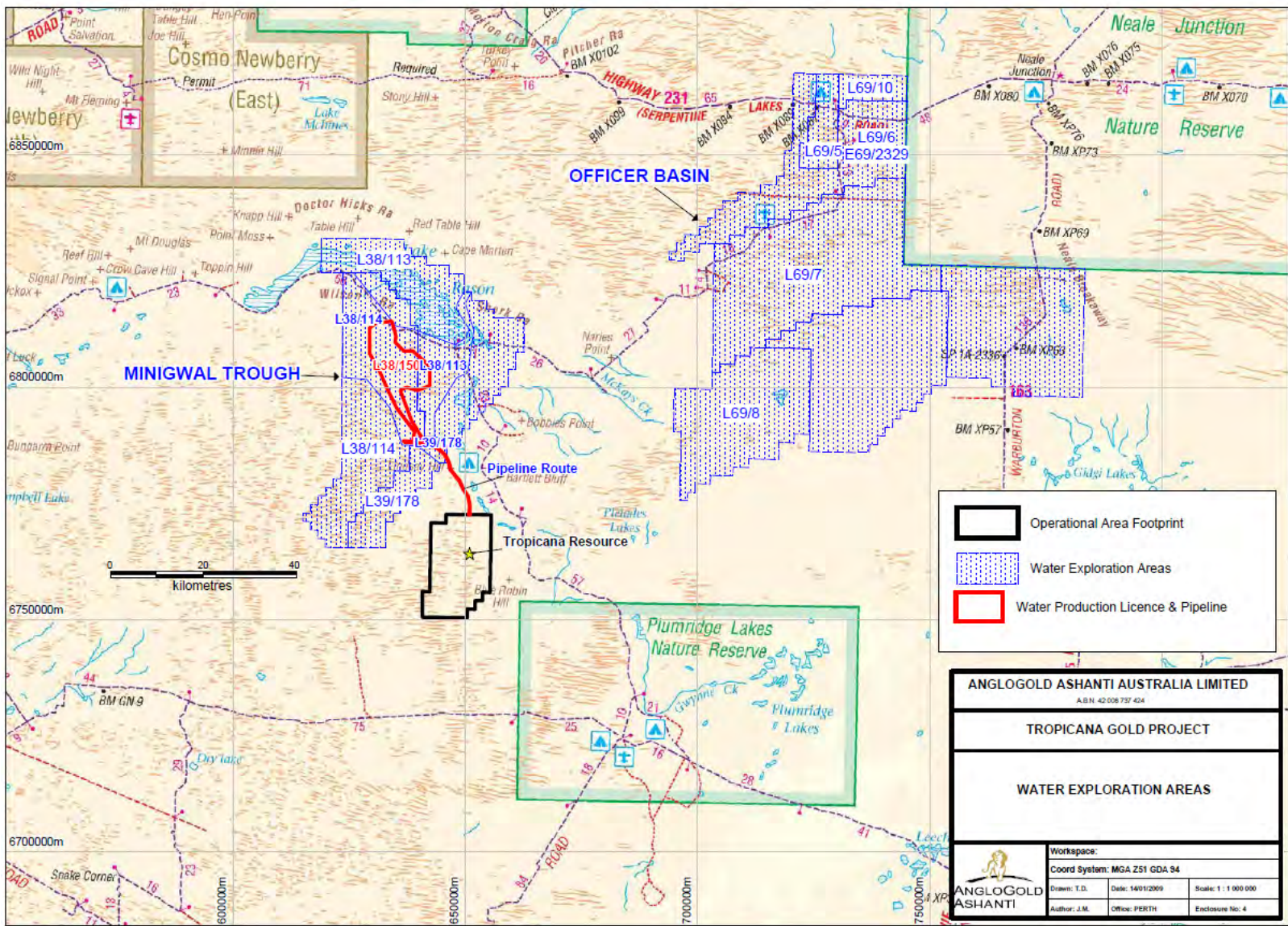


Figure 4: Water Supply Area (Minigwal Trough) & water pipeline

3.0 REVIEW OF REPORTS

A total of 8 ethnographic surveys have been commissioned by AngloGold Ashanti Australia for their Tropicana tenements which are situated within the prior Wongatha Native Title Claim area. This tenement coverage extends from east of Lake Rason (north of the Operational Area) to approximately 80km southwest of the Operational Area (Figure 5).

Of the 8 surveys, 6 have covered land at and around the Operational Area and the proposed access tracks and possible water borefields. In some cases, multiple surveys have been described in a single report, meaning that there are a total of 5 survey reports and 1 desktop report detailing ethnographic work performed between 2002 and December 2008 at the TGP.

All of the surveys have followed a model of 'site identification', with the stated objective of finding and recording any sites of ethnographic or historical significance.

All of the Operational Area was surveyed in 2002 with representatives of the Wongatha NTC. This is described in the following report:

- Machin & Glendenning 2002 *Aboriginal heritage survey for AngloGold Australia Limited: Leases ELA39/951, 952, 954, 956.*

Portions of the 2 proposed access roads to the TGP area, either from Pinjin Station or from the Transcontinental Railway, as well as the bypass road southeast of the Operation Area, were surveyed in early 2007. In late 2008, the Pinjin Access Road was fully surveyed. Those surveys are described in the reports:

- Chown & Mattner 2007a *Ethnographic survey of 7 exploration leases: E39/1204, E39/1238, E39/1214, E39/1224, E39/1225, E39/1226 & E39/1227 & 4 access road corridors: L39/164, L39/172 & Eastern Bypass & Independence Tracks.*
- Mathieu & Glendenning 2008a *A report of an ethnographic survey of a proposed Pinjin Station to Tropicana Camp Road.*

Possible water borefields and associated tracks, including the two Water Supply Areas, are entirely within tenements surveyed later in 2007. A follow-up survey, as requested by the informants in 2007, was conducted in late 2008. These surveys are described in:

- Chown & Mattner 2007b *Ethnographic survey with Wongatha representatives of 9 water exploration tenements: L38/113, L38/114, L39/178, L69/5, L69/6, L69/7, L69/8, L69/10 and E69/2329 & access tracks at Tropicana Project, Great Victoria Desert.*
- Mathieu & Glendenning 2008b *A report of an ethnographic survey of a proposed water borefield and pipeline project at Tropicana.*

The water pipeline from the Water Supply Area to the Operational Area crosses through tenements investigated in 2005 by Machin and in late 2008 by Mathieu. These surveys are detailed in the following reports:

- Machin 2005 *Aboriginal heritage desktop report of Tropicana Project tenements E38/1464, E38/1463, E38/1465, E39/953, E39/950, E39/949, E39/948.*
- Mathieu & Glendenning 2008b *A report of an ethnographic survey of a proposed water borefield and pipeline project at Tropicana.*

Descriptions of these 5 survey reports and a desktop study will be summarised in chronological order. Figure 5 shows the extent and coverage of each of the 8 field trips for the Wongatha ethnographic surveys commissioned by the Tropicana JV which are detailed in the 5 survey reports.

In addition to participating in surveys, senior Aboriginal representatives of the former Wongatha NTC have visited the Operational Area for preliminary discussions for a Cultural Heritage Management Plan. During these consultations, they visited a sample of the archaeological sites in the district. In this process, they have stayed at the Tropicana exploration camp and been driven through the Operational Area a number of times.

3.1 Machin & Glendenning June 2002 - survey covering the Operational Area

Aboriginal heritage survey for AngloGold Australia Limited: Leases ELA39/951, 952, 954, 956

Glendenning undertook an ethnographic survey of 4 exploration leases in 2002, well in advance of the intensive exploration of the past few years. This was conducted over 4.5 days in June 2002.

The designated area for Glendenning's survey was the following 4 exploration leases (applications):

ELA39/951, ELA39/952, ELA39/954 & ELA39/956

As mentioned above, all of the Operational Area is included in the former exploration leases E39/951 and E39/956 (refer Table 1 & Figure 5). That is, this ethnographic survey covered all of the 31 mining tenements in the TGP Operational Area.

At the time of the survey, the Wongatha NTC was still registered with the Native Title Tribunal. Seven representatives of this group were involved in the survey. Representatives of AngloGold Ashanti Australia, John Millikan and Doug Kentish, were also present.

Eight locations were identified by the informants during the course of the survey, but all are outside of the 31 mining tenements comprising the Operational Area, and outside any of the associated access road and water borefield tenements. Several locations are outside of the JV's tenements. Only one of the 8 was situated within the designated survey area; on ELA39/954.

It appears that none of the 8 locations recorded by Glendenning have been reported to the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA). Despite Glendenning calling these 'sites', from the report it is clear that only 3 could be considered as heritage sites, and these are ethnoarchaeological in nature. These 3 are rockholes, or gnammas, with associated artefact scatters (called 'Tropicana 1', 'Tropicana 2' and 'Tropicana 7' in Glendenning's report). Another gnamma was identified, but apparently no artefacts were present at this feature ('Tropicana 8').

The 4 other locations recorded by Glendenning are sandalwood pullers' camps. These contain , mulga-bough shelter(s), historic rubbish and/or stacks of sandalwood and mounds of bark that was stripped from the sandalwood trees. All of these are near tracks and 3 are close to the Lake Rason Road (Tropicana-Laverton Road). None of the Aboriginal informants identified or claimed any significance for these 4 historic locations and they are not ethnographic or historic sites.

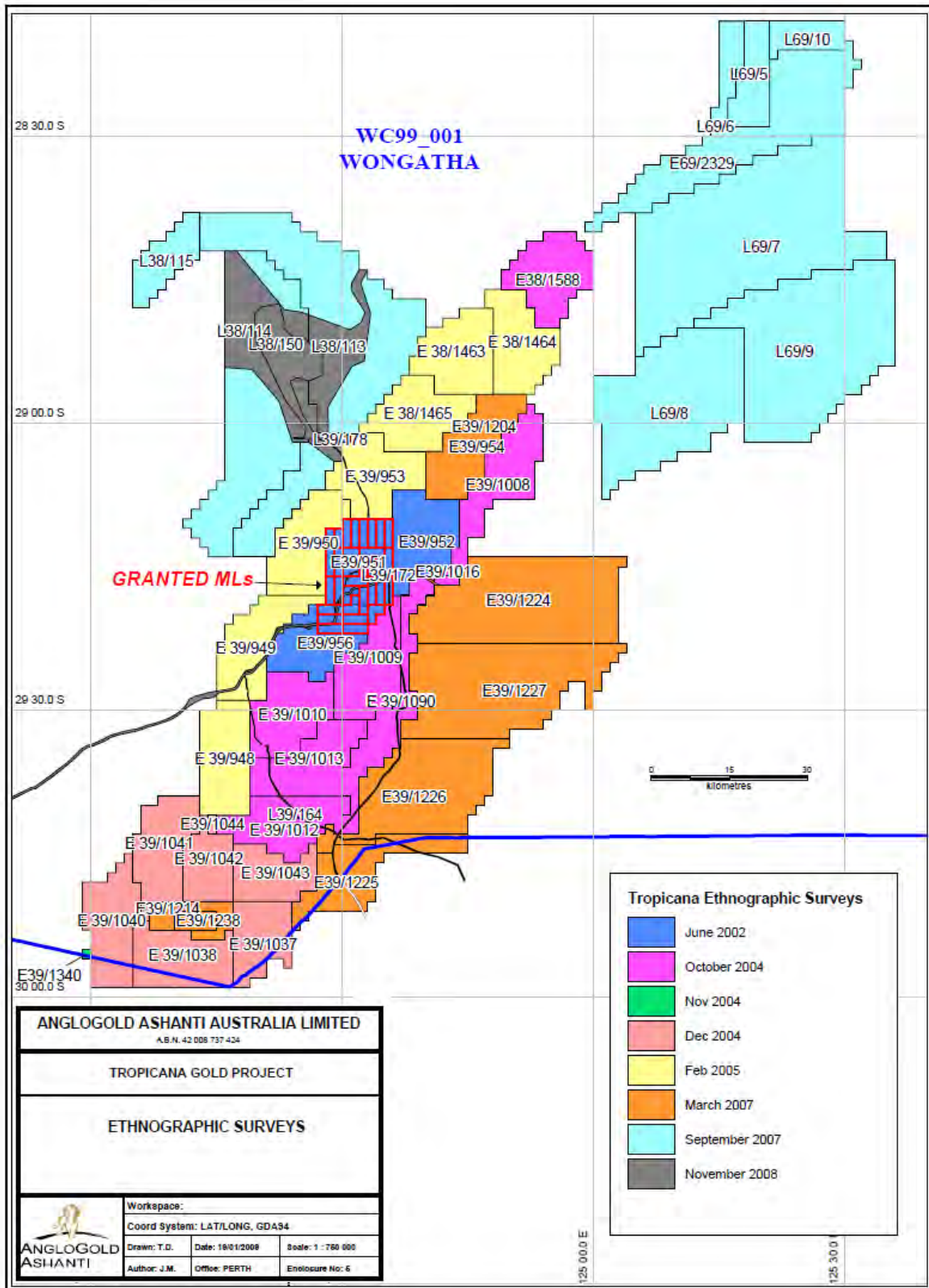


Figure 5: Areas of ethnographic survey over the wider Tropicana tenements

Only one of the 8 locations ('Tropicana 7') was reported to have cultural significance. This is site "Women's Rockhole", which is a vulviform gnamma that is both long and deep. Glendenning (2002: 27) states that "This site is, according to all of the informants, a women's site ... One of the women informants believed this site to be part of the Seven Sisters' Dreaming". There is, however, no indication in the report that any informant knew of mythological stories or songs associated with the gnamma or knew a name for it. In other words, it would appear that the site is inferred or believed to have cultural significance. Glendenning notes no restrictions regarding access to the site.

It should be noted that the site has been recorded in a subsequent ethnographic survey (Mathieu & Glendenning 2008) as well as in an archaeological survey (Mattner 2008). It was given the name "Women's Rockhole" during the 2008 ethnographic survey. It will be registered with the DIA in due course. This site is approximately 20km east-northeast of the Operational Area.

3.2 Machin April 2005 - desktop study covering western exploration tenements

Aboriginal heritage desktop report of Tropicana Project tenements E38/1464, E38/1463, E38/1465, E39/953, E39/950, E39/949, E39/948

Machin conducted a desktop investigation of 7 tenements situated adjacent to, but outside, the Operational Area. These 7 tenements form a contiguous block extending south-southwest from a point east of Lake Rason to the 'Plumridge West Track' (Figure 5). The tenements were:

E38/1464, E38/1463, E38/1465, E39/953, E39/950, E39/949 & E39/948

The proposed water pipeline route from the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area to the Operational Area passes through this belt of tenements.

Machin reviewed the available information from previous surveys by himself and Glendenning and checked the Register of Aboriginal Sites. This archival research established that no registered ethnographic sites were situated within the 7 tenements.

Five of the 8 locations recorded by Glendenning during a survey in 2002 (see section 3.1 above) are within the designated tenements. Three gnammas identified by Glendenning are within tenement E39/1465 and 2 of the sandalwood pullers' camps are within tenement E39/953. None of the locations is within or near the proposed water pipeline corridor.

Machin also contacted several Aboriginal representatives of the former Wongatha NTC group regarding the nominated tenements. The informants, members of prior field surveys to the area, confirmed that they knew of no additional ethnographic sites within these leases.

3.3 Chown & Mattner March 2007 - survey covering exploration & access tracks

Ethnographic survey of 7 exploration leases: E39/1204, E39/1238, E39/1214, E39/1224, E39/1225, E39/1226 & E39/1227 & 4 access road corridors: L39/164, L39/172 & Eastern Bypass & Independence Tracks

Seven tenements and associated access tracks were surveyed over 4 days in March 2007 by anthropologist R. Chown, together with five Aboriginal representatives from the former Wongatha NTC group. The informants were selected by the NEIB Heritage Committee. John Millikan represented AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd.

As stated in the title, the survey area comprised 7 tenements and 4 access roads:

Tenements: E39/1204, E39/1238, E39/1214, E39/1224, E39/1225, E39/1226 & E39/1227
Roads: 'Eastern Bypass Track', 'Independence Track', L39/164 & L39/172

All 7 of the exploration tenements are outside of the Operational Area. These do not need to be considered further here. Similarly, 2 of the access tracks surveyed are outside of the operational Area and will not be considered further.

Of relevance to the study area are 2 of the tracks. Lease L39/164 covers the proposed Cable Haul Road access road option, extending south from the Tropicana Project to the Transcontinental Railway Line. The portion of this route within the Wongatha NTC area was surveyed in March 2007. At the time this was known as the 'Eastern Bypass Track' but there was no track in the Wongatha NTC land to follow, only spinifex covered plain and sand dunes.

The survey covered a corridor more than 5km wide and approximately 92km long from the Cable Haul Road to the Tropicana exploration camp. Access was limited, with the survey party viewing parts for the proposed track from intersections with existing tracks. In particular, the survey party viewed the alignment of the proposed access road from its intersection with the 'Plumridge West Track' and saw approximately 10km of the northern end by following gridlines and during inspections of archaeological sites close to the route. The entire route was also viewed on large plans and satellite photographs that showed the homogenous landscapes and vegetation of the area. The informants stated that there were no ethnographic heritage sites within the corridor.

Another of the tracks surveyed in March 2007 was known as the 'Independence Track', which corresponds to a portion of lease L39/185, which is the Pinjin access road option. The Independence Track extends west-southwest from the Operational Area for approximately 31km to reach the east-west 'Plumridge West Track'. The most easterly 17km of the Independence Track corresponds with the most easterly 17km long section of the proposed Pinjin access road option (L39/185). The remainder of this Pinjin access road option was completed in late 2008 (see below).

For the survey, a corridor 1km wide was surveyed for the full length of the 'Independence Track' from the 'Plumridge West Track' to the Tropicana exploration camp. The survey was achieved by driving along the existing access track. No sites of cultural or historic significance were reported in or near the proposed access road option.

Indeed, no ethnographic sites were identified during the survey of the 4 access road corridors or on the 7 exploration tenements; either within or near the survey areas.

3.4 Chown & Mattner September 2007 - survey covering Water exploration areas and borefield access tracks

Ethnographic survey with Wongatha representatives of 9 water exploration tenements: L38/113, L38/114, L39/178, L69/5, L69/6, L69/7, L69/8, L69/10 and E69/2329 & access tracks at Tropicana Project, Great Victoria Desert

This survey by Chown was conducted on 17th September 2007 with six Aboriginal spokespersons selected by the NEIB Heritage Committee to represent the former Wongatha NTC group. Two staff from AngloGold Ashanti Australia were also present: Warren Steward and Simon Tucker.

The 9 tenements and 2 of the tracks were all associated with planned water exploration:

L38/113, L38/114 & L39/178 (the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area);

L69/5, L69/6, L69/7, L69/8, L69/10 and E69/2329 (the Officer Basin water exploration area, near Neale Junction);

'Spackman Track' (an east-west track linking Lake Rason Road to Neale Junction); and

'McKays Creek Track' (leading north from Lake Rason Road to the 'Spackman Track').

Two of the 4 tracks designated for the survey had been included in the previous survey in March 2007; namely, the 'Eastern Bypass Track'; and the 'Independence Track'. They were not revisited during this survey.

The water exploration tenements were situated in 2 groups, and fell entirely within the former Wongatha NTC area (Figure 4). The contiguous group of 3 tenements referred to here as the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area cover a portion of Lake Rason in the north and extend south to a point approximately 20km west of the Operational Area. The Lake Rason Road (or Laverton-Tropicana Road) passes through the northern section of these tenements.

The 6 contiguous tenements for the Officer Basin water exploration area are situated west and southwest of Neale Junction, between 40km and 130km northeast of the Operational Area, on the southwest edge of Neale Junction Nature Reserve. (It may be noted that these tenements have now been surrendered by the JV.)

The survey was conducted by driving along roads or tracks to visit the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area and to view some of the designated tracks. Some southern parts of the Minigwal Trough tenements had been previously inspected during an earlier survey (Machin 2004) and were not revisited. The Officer Basin tenements near Neale Junction were not visited due to access problems; for example, poor tracks and slow travel times. These were reviewed by looking at satellite images and plans. This was also the case for the more distant portions of the Minigwal Trough tenements, which were not accessible from tracks. It may be noted that these tenements were revisited and resurveyed in late 2008 (Mathieu & Glendenning 2008), by which time more access tracks allowed for more comprehensive coverage.

No ethnographic or historical sites were identified by the informants in the 3 tenements of the Minigwal Trough or the 6 tenements near Neale Junction, nor were sites identified on the tracks.

The Aboriginal representatives noted an artefact scatter within tenement E38/1464, but no cultural significance was attributed to this scatter. This was later recorded by archaeologists as archaeological site "McKays Creek Scatter 1".

3.5 Mathieu & Glendenning December 2008a - survey covering the Pinjin Access Road option

A report of an ethnographic survey of a proposed Pinjin Station to Tropicana Camp Road.

Three tenements covering the proposed 230km long Access Road from Pinjin Station to the Operational Area were survey over 2 days in November 2008. The tenements are: L31/56, L31/57 and L39/185 (see Figures 3 & 6).

Six Aboriginal spokespersons were selected by the NEIB heritage Committee. They are all representatives of the former Wongatha NTC group. The anthropologist was Dr Christine Mathieu and representing AngloGold Ashanti Australia were John Millikan, Shane Gibson and Colin Judge.

The survey was achieved by driving between Pinjin Station and the TGP along existing roads and tracks which intersected with the proposed Access Road route at widely spaced points. Two of the informants accompanied by Dr Mathieu, subsequently flew along the route at a low altitude to inspect the entire corridor from the air.

No ethnographic or historical sites were identified during the survey and no previously known sites are registered on or near the route. All of the informants stated that the proposed road would not affect any sites.

3.6 Mathieu & Glendenning December 2008b - survey covering the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area and water pipeline to Operational Area.

A report of an ethnographic survey of a proposed water borefield and pipeline project at Tropicana.

This survey was a follow-up to a survey in 2007 (Chown & Mattner 2007), at which time the Aboriginal informants requested that they revisit the Water Supply Area when it was better defined (and access improved). The surveyed area is within tenements: L38/113, L38/114, L38/150 and L39/178 (see Figures 4 & 6).

Six Aboriginal spokespersons were selected by the NEIB Heritage Committee. They are all representatives of the former Wongatha NTC group. The anthropologist was Dr Christine Mathieu and representing AngloGold Ashanti Australia were John Millikan, Shane Gibson and Colin Judge.

The survey party drove from the Tropicana exploration camp north-north-west along the Lake Rason Road to the Minigwal Trough area and then drive into the proposed borefield area along several exploration tracks.

No ethnographic or historical sites were identified during the survey. No registered or previously known sites are within or near the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area and the informants were satisfied that no sites would be affected by development of the borefield.

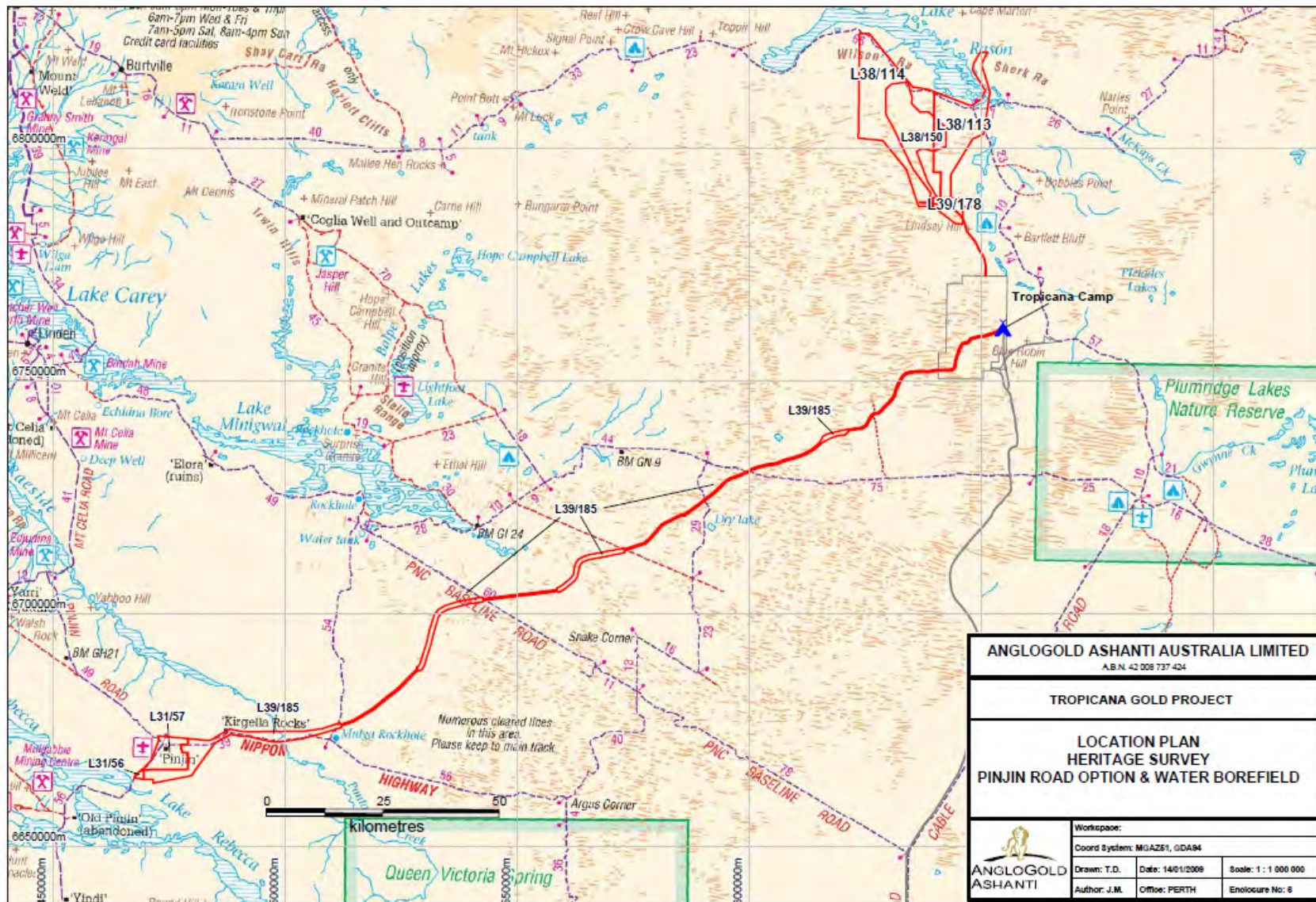


Figure 6: Pinjin Access Road Option & Minigwal Trough Water Supply

4.0 DISCUSSION

The first ethnographic survey conducted in 2002, prior to intensive exploration, covered all of the Tropicana Gold Project Area (TGP), as well as land to the northeast and southwest. All 31 mining tenements within the Operational Area were included in that survey. No ethnographic or historic sites were identified within or close to the Operational Area.

Two subsequent surveys in 2007 covered proposed water exploration tenements near Lake Rason (Minigwal Trough) and near Neale Junction (Officer Basin), as well as portions of proposed access roads, including the Pinjin option and the Cable Haul Road option. Another survey in 2008 completely covered the proposed Pinjin Access Road, as well as the Minigwal Trough Water Supply Area. No ethnographic or historic sites were identified within the water supply tenements or the access road corridors.

The ethnographic surveys conducted to date over the TGP and neighbouring areas have involved key representatives from the former Wongatha Native Title Claimant (NTC) group. The North East Independent Body (NEIB), on behalf of the Wongatha NTC, has nominated the appropriate heritage spokespersons for the surveys.

During the surveys, some of the spokespersons recounted stories illustrating their historical and personal knowledge of the region gained through work and travel there in past decades. They also identified several gnammas and several sandalwood pullers' camps in the general vicinity of the TGP and in the wider area. While this confirms their local knowledge, none of the spokespersons have demonstrated a knowledge of the mythological landscape of the Tropicana district or been able to recount mythological stories for this country.

Only 2 culturally significant sites ("Women's Rockhole" and "Men's Stone Arrangement") have been reported by the Wongatha spokespersons in the Tropicana tenements and both are reasonably remote from the TGP Operational Area, Water Supply Area and Access Roads.

The site "Women's Rockhole" is a large gnamma considered to be culturally significant for women. One woman informant thought it was associated with the Seven Sisters Dreaming. This site is situated at least 20km east-northeast of the Operational Area. It is contained in a square 2km by 2km, defined by coordinates: 666690me 6773870mn and 668690me 6771870mn.

The site "Men's Stone Arrangement" was discovered during archaeological work and visited by several of the male spokespersons, who identified it as a ceremonial site of cultural significance to men. It was thought this site should be restricted to men. This site is approximately 36km east-northeast of the Operational Area. It is contained in a square 2km by 2km, defined by coordinates: 673350me 6790650mn and 675350me 6788650mn.

Those senior representatives of the former Wongatha NTC group involved in the numerous surveys have been kept apprised of exploration progress in the Tropicana area during their visits to the TGP, at which time they often stayed in the Tropicana exploration camp. A recent visit to the Operational Area in 2008 included inspections of a sample of archaeological sites as part of preliminary discussions for the development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the TGP.

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