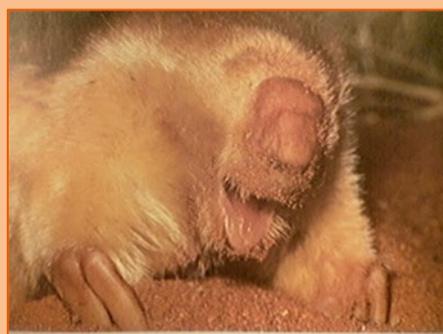


Tropicana Joint Venture - 2023 Exploration Compliance Report EPBC 2008/4463

2023 Exploration Compliance Report EPBC 2008/4463



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AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd is the Manager of the Tropicana Joint Venture and is acting as agent severally for each of the Joint Venturers in their respective percentage interests in the Joint Venture from time to time, with such interests currently being AngloGold Ashanti Australia Limited 70% and AFB Resources Pty Ltd (Regis Resources Ltd) 30%. The obligations and liabilities of the Joint Venturers are several only, in accordance with their respective percentage interests.

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1 Background

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Project Name: | Tropicana Joint Venture |
| Exploration Tenements: | E39/1012, E39/1013, E39/1990, |
| POW Numbers: | REG ID 78050 (POW_190219), REG ID 83913 (POW_191215), REG ID 92777 (POW_201224), REG ID 103777 (POW_220314) |
| Tenement Holder: | AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd / AFB Resources Pty Ltd (Regis Resources Ltd). |
| Report Period: | 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023 |

1.1 EPBC Referral No: 2008/4463 and Approval

In September 2008 it was identified that proposed exploration activities by AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd (AGAA) in the Great Victoria Desert may impact two matters of national environmental significance as listed in the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), these being (i) Listed Threatened Species and Ecological Communities and (ii) Listed Migratory Species. The proposed exploration activities (EPBC Referral Area) were referred in September 2008 to the Federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) (now Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)). DSEWPaC determined the proposed activities to be a “Controlled Action” requiring Federal assessment via an instrument to be determined at a later date, depending on the status of the proposed activities under State Legislation.

In February 2010 the proposed activities were referred to the State Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) under Section 38 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* to enable a level of assessment to be determined. The EPA set a level of assessment of “Not Assessed – Public Advice Given” with the recommendation that a Conservation and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) be developed in consultation with then Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), now Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER).

A CEMP was prepared for the proposed exploration activities in consultation with the DEC Environmental Management Branch. The plan identified the existing environmental values, potential impacts from the proposed exploration activities and the management and mitigation of those potential impacts. The CEMP, dated 17 December 2010, was approved by DSEWPaC and DEC in January 2011. On the 27th of October 2011 approval was granted to AGAA to begin exploration activities within the EPBC referral area subject to several conditions.

AGAA formally communicated the start of works in the area on the 10th of April 2012, however DSEWPaC informed the company of its requirements to have in place an approved Southern Marsupial Mole Monitoring Program. This led to a request for variations of the EPBC conditions, which were approved, together with the Monitoring Program, on 19 February 2013.

The planning of the drilling programs for the EPBC Referral area commenced thereafter, making 19 February 2013 the 'commencement of the action' under the EPBC conditions. After this date, works were conducted under consolidated Programmes of Work (POW's) which are approved by the Environmental Division of the Western Australian Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS).

AGAA is committed to all conditions outlined and will continue to work with the DCCEEW, DBCA and DMIRS. This report is made available to the public as part of AGAA's environmental values and in accordance with Condition 7 of the approved Variation to Conditions, which states:

“Within three months of every 12 months anniversary of the commencement of the action, the person taking the action must make public a report on their website addressing compliance with the conditions of this approval over the previous 12 months. Including implementation of any management plans specified in the conditions.”

1.2 Location, Climate and Landscape

The EPBC Referral area lies approximately 220 km southeast of Laverton and 330 km northeast of Kalgoorlie on the western edge of the Great Victoria Desert as shown in Figure 1. The Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve lies immediately to the northeast of the exploration area and the Queen Victoria Springs Nature Reserve lies to the southwest.

The EPBC Referral area is primarily situated within the Great Victoria Desert bioregion (GVD) with the northern section entering the Central subregion (GVD2) and with the southern tip extending into the Shield subregion (GVD1). As such its climate can be described as arid, with hot summers and cool winters and an average rainfall of 200-300 mm annually.

The area's landforms consist of salt lakes, lake derived dunes, aeolian sand dunes and sand plains, and redder soils occasionally with outcropping rocks. The landscape is predominately tree steppe of *Eucalyptus gongylocarpa*, *E. youngiana* and mulga over hummock grassland dominated by *Triodia basedowii*. Native desert pines (*Callitris* spp.) cover the sandy areas, while Mulga woodlands occur through the red soils and outcrop areas. The salt lakes are dominated by chenopods (*Atriplex* spp and *Maireana* spp.).

The western portions of the EPBC Referral Area extends into the Yellow Sandplain Vegetation of the Great Victoria Desert with Diverse Vertebrate Fauna Priority 3 Priority Ecological Community (PEC) (Figure 1). It has been described as undulating yellow sandplain with an open upper stratum of *Eucalyptus gongylocarpa*, with or without a diverse mallee stratum of *E. youngiana*, *E. mannensis*, *E. platycorys*, over a sparse, though diverse shrubs over hummock grasses, *Triodia desertorum* or *T. scariosa*. Very high vertebrate diversity and unusual combinations of species (mixture of south-western and arid inter zones).

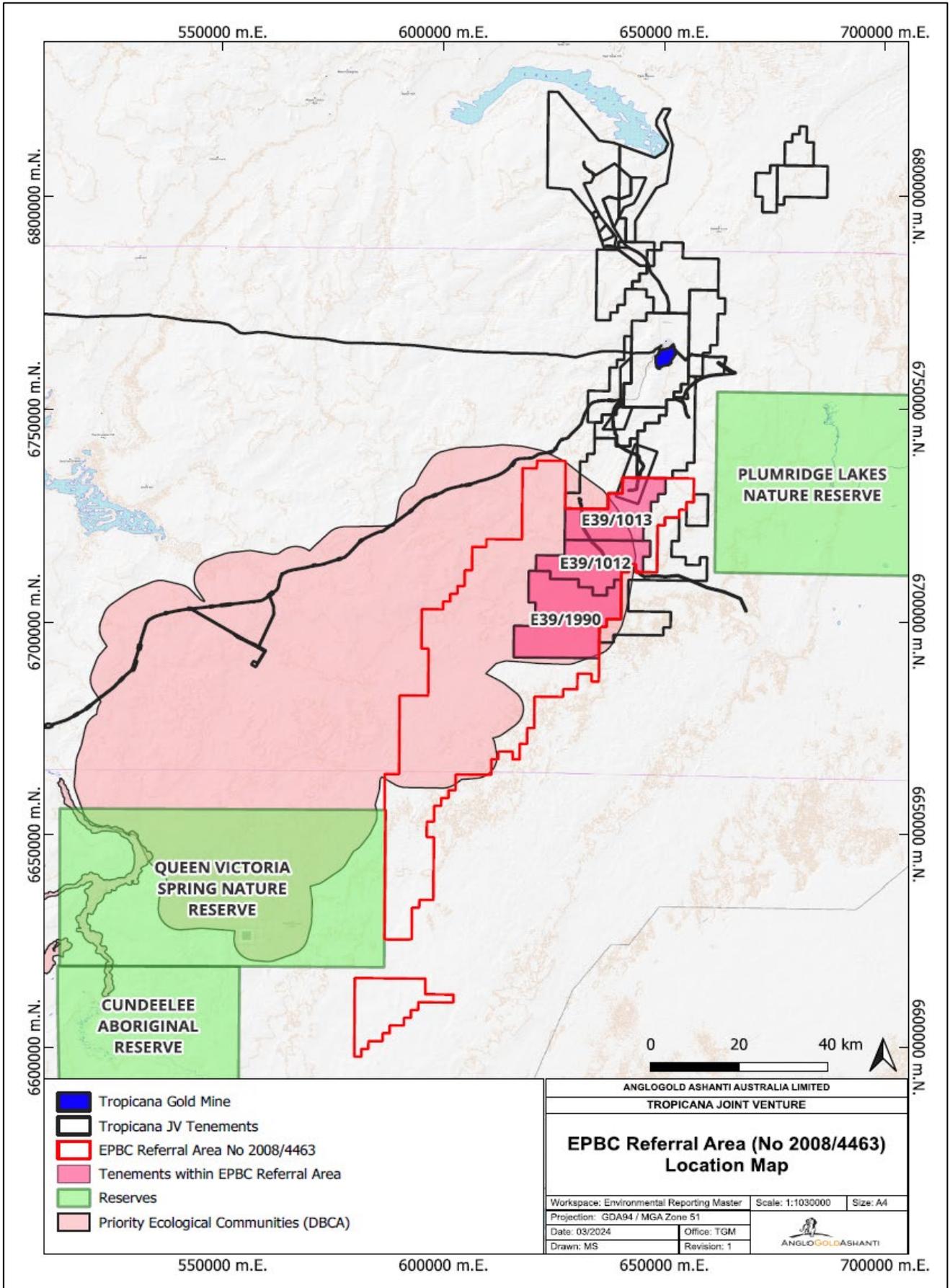


Figure 1: EPBC Referral Area (No 2008/4463)

1.3 Tenement and POW Details

At the time of approval of EPBC Referral No: 2008/4463, all tenements within the EPBC referral area were held with AngloGold Ashanti Australia Ltd (AGAA) as the Manager of the Tropicana Joint Venture. AGAA was acting as agent severally for each of the Joint Venturers in their respective percentage interests of AGAA 70% and Independence Group NL Ltd (IGO) 30%. In May of 2021 AFB Resources Pty Ltd (Regis Resources Ltd) acquired IGO's 30% interest. Accordingly, the subsequent Variation (approved 21/09/2021) to EPBC Referral No: 2008/4463 also identified both AGAA and AFB Resources as 'Person to whom the approval is granted'.

1.3.1 Tenements within the EPBC Referral Area

At the end of the current reporting period, AGAA held three (3) tenements within the EPBC Referral Area (Table 1). Since the original EPBC referral, AGAA has surrendered or partially surrendered several tenements. During the last reporting period no changes to tenements occurred. Several POW's (REG ID 78050 (POW_190219) (expired 18/02/2023), REG ID 83913 (POW_191215), REG ID 92777 (POW_201224) and REG ID 103777 (POW_220314)) have been approved over all three of the current AGAA tenements in the referral area.

Table 1: AGAA tenement status and within the EPBC Referral Area

| Tenements | Date of Grant - Surrender | Status |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| E 39/1012 | 18/05/2004 - Current | Active |
| E 39/1013 | 18/05/2004 - Current | Active |
| E 39/1990 | 30/03/2017 - Current | Active – Partially Relinquished |
| E 39/1989 | 20/03/2017 – 16/03/2022 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1038 | 18/03/2005 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1040 | 18/03/2005 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1041 | 18/03/2005 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1042 | 18/03/2005 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1043 | 18/03/2005 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1044 | 18/03/2005 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1214 | 08/05/2007 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/1763 | 20/03/2014 - 16/03/2015 | Surrendered |
| E 39/948 | 17/09/2003 - 27/12/2016 | Surrendered |

1.4 Definitions

In reading this report, reference should be made to the following definitions contained within the EPBC Referral Approval and Variation to Conditions Attached to Approval enacted by the DCCEEW in relation to EPBC 2008/4463.

The EPBC Act is the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The Minister means the minister administering the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and includes a delegate of the minister.

The Department means the Australian Government Department administering the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

To commence the action means any preparatory works required to be undertaken including clearing vegetation, the erection of any onsite temporary structures and the use of heavy duty equipment for the purpose of breaking the ground for mining, buildings or infrastructure.

Disturbance includes the clearance of native vegetation, construction of access tracks, establishment of drillpads and sumps or any other supporting infrastructure for exploration activities.

Clearance of native vegetation includes the cutting down, felling, thinning, logging, removing, killing, destroying, poisoning, ringbarking, uprooting or burning of native vegetation.

Exploration drilling includes activities that require the clearing of vegetation to facilitate access prior to undertaking any work, such as Aircore Drilling, RC Drilling and Diamond drilling.

National Malleefowl Monitoring Database means that national database for the monitoring of Malleefowl available on the internet at <http://database.malleefowlvictoria.org.au/Start.aspx>

Adjacent: means any Malleefowl mounds immediately outside the 100 metre buffer area as identified in approval condition 2 (d) and Sandhill Dunnart habitat immediately outside the 50 metre buffer area as detailed in approval condition 4 (b) and located within Group 2 and Group 3 tenement areas as shown in figures at Attachments A and B.

Targeted exploration program: An area which, having been geologically assessed for prospectivity, warrants on ground exploration. Typical activities potentially include ground disturbing work such as drilling programs, and /or less invasive activities such as surface geochemical sampling and ground based geophysical surveys. Such programs will represent the location of any ground disturbance, such as drill lines, drill hole locations and associated works, and any required access/egress tracks.

2 EPBC Act Compliance

This report presents the *EPBC Act* conditions, under which AGAA are permitted to conduct exploration activities on existing exploration tenements in the Great Victorian Desert bioregion, collectively known as the EPBC Referral Area.

2.1 Condition 1

Condition 1 reads:

Within 14 Days after the commencement of the action, the person taking the action must advise the Department in writing of the actual date of commencement.

Reference should be made to the EPBC Compliance Report 2013 available at:

<http://www.tropicanaJV.com.au/irm/pdf/82c61241-fd7f-4e9f-bdb7-3983e0df83c6/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

2.2 Condition 2

Condition 2 reads:

*In order to protect the Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), the person undertaking the action must implement the following mitigation measures;*

- a. *Undertake a monitoring program of Malleefowl mounds identified within the Malleefowl Preservation Group report dated November 2009, on an annual basis during the Malleefowl breeding season (September through to March), starting within the year exploration drilling commences. The monitoring program must be undertaken in accordance with the National Manual for the Malleefowl Monitoring System (2007)*

A survey of Malleefowl mounds identified by AGAA within active tenements was conducted in December 2023. The survey was completed on the 31st of December 2023, by the Tropicana Gold Mine (TGM) Environmental Officer and the Environmental Vacation Student. This data was collected in accordance with the National Manual for the Malleefowl Monitoring System. The data was collated and submitted for entry into the National Monitoring System Database on the 2nd of January 2024.

- b. *Prior to the commencement of each targeted exploration program, undertake inspection for evidence of Malleefowl mounds. Where evidence is observed, undertake a further targeted survey for Malleefowl and mounds within the area of observations and surrounding suitable habitat within one month of the initial inspection, in accordance with the Department's Survey Guidelines for Australia's Threatened Birds (DEWHA 2010).*

AGAA's standard practice as documented in the Environmental and Heritage Notification Work Instruction is to conduct an Environmental Inspection of the proposed drilling and associated activities area, for the presence of flora and fauna of environmental value, including Malleefowl. The inspection is undertaken prior to any works taking place on the ground. An Environmental Inspection Notification (EIN) Report is prepared for each proposed drilling program. The drill program is modified to minimise environmental impact and to ensure any required buffers are implemented.

- c. *Submit the results of the inspection, monitoring program and targeted surveys to the National Malleefowl Monitoring Database within two months of completion of each activity.*

A survey of Malleefowl mounds identified by AGAA within active tenements was conducted on 31st of December 2023, with survey results submitted for entry into the National Malleefowl Monitoring Database on the 2nd of January 2024. When conducting the survey, consideration was also given to the duration of the breeding season which runs approximately from September to March.

- d. Prior to the commencement of any targeted exploration activities, establish a buffer zone of a minimum of 100 metres around any identified mounds, including those identified in the targeted survey in condition 2(b) that occur adjacent to each targeted exploration area, as identified in Attachment A. No disturbance must occur within the buffer zone.*

AGAA use positional data within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to record all threatened fauna sightings and the locations of both active and inactive Malleefowl mounds. This system allows a 100-metre buffer to be added around any Malleefowl mound identified within the EPBC Referral area and prevents any works being planned or undertaken within the buffered area.

The field crew who carries out clearing works to prepare for the drill program and associated activities are provided with the positional data and maps with required buffers delineated. Digital positioning data is also collected by the field crew during clearing activities which allows AGAA to verify compliance to buffer zone requirements.

2.3 Condition 3

Condition 3 reads:

In order to protect the Southern Marsupial Mole (SMM), the person undertaking the action must implement the following mitigation measures:

- a. Installation of access tracks along sand dunes must be avoided;*

AGAA used aerial photography to identify sand dunes within the Fraser Region and purchased GIS data of their locations. The EIN process described in 2.2 (b) requires the spatial data containing sand dunes to be analysed when creating proposals of drill collars and tracks, with an Environmental Officer undertaking an on-ground inspection of the proposed area by light vehicle and/or on foot to ensure avoidance.

AGAA avoid the installation of any tracks upon sand dunes due to their environmental significance and also the impracticality for traversing exploration drill rig equipment because due to the safety risk of vehicle and rig rollover.

- b. Access tracks must be designed and installed to minimise impacts on SMM habitat including minimising the use of soft-sandy uplands, and position tracks in areas between dunes;*

In 2014 AGAA engaged the services of Dr Joe Benshemesh to provide environmental expertise in relation to the habitat and behaviours of the SMM. The advice given as documented in the SMM Program approved by DAWE (now DCCEEW) is that prime habitat is located in the upper crest of the sand dunes.

Details of the SMM habitat outlined in the SMM Program are provided in the EPBC Compliance Report 2014 available at:

<http://www.tropicana.jv.com.au/irm/pdf/ab5fef11-fcdb-4275-8c44-1ae05a69cc99/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

AGAA has determined prime SMM habitat to be within 40 m of the crest of sand dunes. Using the Tropicana internal GIS system a 40 m buffer has been placed around all sand dunes ensuring no work is planned or conducted within this area. The process is managed in accordance with the Environmental Inspection Notification Procedure described in 2.2 (b).

- c. *By the end of October 2012, submit a SMM monitoring program to the Minister for approval. The program must include details of a progressive monitoring strategy to monitor the potential impacts from exploration drilling on prime SMM habitat and evidence of the SMM population, and details of targeted surveys within suitable SMM habitat areas adjacent to the proposed exploration program;*

The SMM Monitoring Program was developed in liaison with Dr Joe Benshemesh and submitted to DoE for approval on 14 December 2012. The program was approved by DoE on 19 February 2013.

Details of SMM survey works are provided in EPBC Compliance Report 2013 at:
<http://www.tropicana-jv.com.au/irm/pdf/82c61241-fd7f-4e9f-bdb7-3983e0df83c6/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

- d. *The approved SMM Monitoring Program must be implemented,*

The SMM Monitoring Program was implemented in 2013, as described in 3c. The Program stipulates that a baseline survey of 200 monitoring trenches must be completed within 2 years. The first stage of the monitoring program was undertaken in November 2013 with 100 trenches completed. The second stage was completed in June 2014. The data for both stages of the baseline survey was collated and provided to Dr Joe Benshemesh in December 2014. The results and analysis of the surveys was completed by Dr Joe Benshemesh in January 2015 and submitted to the DAWE (now DCCEEW) on the 19th February 2015.

The survey reports are available in Appendix D in the EPBC Compliance Report 2014 available at:
<http://www.tropicana-jv.com.au/irm/pdf/ab5fef11-fcdb-4275-8c44-1ae05a69cc99/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

In accordance with the SMM monitoring program (Section 6.2) AGAA committed to undertake further monitoring programs in the event of an escalation of exploration impact. Specifically, if exploration is increased from low impact reconnaissance exploration drilling to medium impact prospect exploration and resource definition drilling, additional monitoring is required. This condition applies if the work is within 20m of the 40m buffer zone around sand dunes. The objective of the follow up survey is to study the effects of the more intense drilling on marsupial moles as a precaution. To date no escalation in impact has been undertaken, thus further monitoring of SMM has not been required under the conditions.

Section 11 of the SMM Monitoring Program recommends that AGAA re-evaluate the monitoring program and give due consideration if any new information that may come to hand regarding SMM habitat, behaviours and/or populations. On the 3rd of December 2015 the Federal Minister removed the Southern Marsupial Mole from the 'Endangered' category listing in the *EPBC Act*. The Federal Threatened Species Scientific Committee demonstrated that the species was no longer deemed to be in immediate danger of extinction. Dr Joe Benshemesh's extensive surveys undertaken between 2004 and 2010 revealed that the SMM are widespread and common throughout much of their known range and concluded that there was no evidence of an ongoing decline (Threatened Species Scientific Committee 2015).

In light of the change in conservation status of the SMM Mole, consideration should be given to the value for additional surveys if more intense drilling were to occur in the EPBC referral area in the future.

- e. *Areas identified as prime Southern Marsupial Mole (SMM) habitat, including those identified through the targeted surveys and monitoring programs required under condition 3 (c), must be avoided, including through establishment of a buffer zone of a minimum of 40 metres around any SMM habitat. The buffer zones must be established and managed in accordance with the approved SMM monitoring program.*

The Environmental Inspection Notification process described in 2.2 (b) is used to identify sand dunes within the proposed drilling program area. Positional data is gathered and entered into the Tropicana AGAA internal GIS system, including establishing a 40m buffer. As described in 2.2 (d), the field crew utilise the positional data to ensure that tracks or other areas are not cleared within the buffer area. Accordingly, prime SMM habitat remains undisturbed.

2.4 Condition 4

Condition 4 reads:

In order to protect the Sandhill Dunnart, the person undertaking the action must implement the following mitigation measures;

- a. *Implement the avoidance measures detailed in Section 6 of the Tropicana Joint Venture Group 2 and Group 3 Exploration Areas Conservation and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) dated 14 December 2010, as relevant to the Sandhill Dunnart. Where these measures cannot be implemented, the person undertaking the action must undertake a detailed monitoring program and follow up monitoring for the duration of the exploration activities. The monitoring program must target those Sandhill Dunnart habitats identified in the Sandhill Dunnart assessment undertaken by GHD in 2009 (reported in GHD report, Sandhill Dunnart habitat assessment, Group 2 & 3 tenements, dated July 2010) and are located adjacent to areas of exploration activities within Group 2 and Group 3 tenements as identified at Attachment B.*

Reference should be made to EPBC Compliance Report 2013 available at: <http://www.tropicana-jv.com.au/irm/pdf/82c61241-fd7f-4e9f-bdb7-3983e0df83c6/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

Sandhill Dunnart habitat assessment and mapping was conducted by GHD in 2009. A spatial layer displaying these identified habitats was created and stored on the AGAA GIS system. All proposed drill programs that were planned to occur within these buffer zones were amended to ensure avoidance. As exploration activities were amended to avoid Sandhill Dunnart habitat in 2020, a 'detailed monitoring program' was not required.

- b. *Prior to the commencement of any targeted exploration activities, establish a buffer zone of a minimum of 50 metres around any identified Sandhill Dunnart habitat and 100 metres around all confirmed habitat based on the results of the monitoring program in condition 4(a). No disturbance must occur within the buffer zones.*

AGAA has implemented the required 100 metre buffers around those Sandhill Dunnart habitats identified by GHD that are within the EPBC Referral Area using the internal GIS system. Any identified habitats were avoided, with buffers added to the AGAA internal GIS system.

2.5 Condition 5

Condition 5 reads:

The results of the inspections, targeted surveys and monitoring programs in conditions 2, 3 and 4 must be made available publicly on the Tropicana JV website in accordance with condition 7.

Malleefowl Monitoring

Results of the inspection, monitoring program and targeted surveys for Malleefowl were submitted to the National Malleefowl Monitoring Database on the 2nd of January 2024. The data is available at: <http://database.nationalmalleefowl.com.au/Start.aspx>

Southern Marsupial Mole Monitoring

The results of the Southern Marsupial Mole survey have been analysed by Dr Joe Benshemesh and a report prepared. The key findings were provided in Appendix D in the EPBC Compliance Report 2014 available at:

<http://www.tropicana-jv.com.au/irm/pdf/ab5fef11-fcdb-4275-8c44-1ae05a69cc99/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

Sandhill Dunnart Monitoring

Prior to undertaking any ground disturbing works, the AGAA Environmental Officers undertake both a desktop and on-ground assessment of the area for environmental values. The risk review is captured in an Environmental Inspection Notification (EIN) Report and modifications made to the program to avoid Sandhill Dunnart Habitat.

2.6 Condition 6

Condition 6 reads:

The person taking action must, within 12 months of the commencement of the action, complete and submit to the Minister for approval a detailed Rehabilitation Plan for the progressive rehabilitation and revegetation of the project area.

This Rehabilitation Plan must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- a. *the desired outcomes/objectives of implementing the plan;*
- b. *details of the vegetation communities to be re-established and the timing of progressive rehabilitation;*
- c. *criteria to determine success of re-establishment of vegetation communities;*
- d. *a process to progressively report to the Department the rehabilitation management actions undertaken and the outcomes of those actions, and the mechanisms to be used to identify the need for improved management;*
- e. *a description of the potential risks to successful management and rehabilitation on the project site, and a description of the contingency measures that would be implemented to mitigate these risks; and*
- f. *details of parties responsible for reviewing and implementing the Plan.*

The approved Rehabilitation Plan must be implemented.

On 5 December 2014, AGAA received approval of the Rehabilitation Review and Management Plan for Exploration (Great Victoria Desert) Version 3 (The Rehabilitation Management Plan) from the Department of the Environment, in accordance with Condition 6.

All rehabilitation in the EPBC Referral Area has been undertaken in accordance with the Rehabilitation Management Plan. All track and drill site rehabilitation has been documented and recorded in databases detailing the location, date and level of rehabilitation completed.

Monitoring sites have been established in areas where rehabilitation has been completed on AGAA managed tenements within the EPBC area. AGAA is committed to monitoring these sites on an annual basis to establish revegetation success for the life of the tenure being held and managed by AGAA. The Southern Traverse air core drill programme conducted in 2018 and early 2019 resulted in the disturbance to some established rehabilitation monitoring sites. During 2020, existing air core tracks were utilised for follow up diamond and RC drill programmes.

In 2024 monitoring points for exploration rehabilitation will be established to cover all landscape units. This will be done in consultation with AGAA Exploration.

2.7 Condition 7

Condition 7 reads:

Within three months of every 12 months anniversary of the commencement of the action, the person taking the action must publish a report on their website addressing compliance with the conditions of this approval over the previous 12 months, including implementation of any management and monitoring programs as specified in the conditions. Non-compliance with any of the conditions of this approval must be reported to the Department at the same time as the compliance report is published.

This report serves to fulfil this condition. This and previous reports are available at:

<http://www.tropicanaajv.com.au/irm/archive/annual-environmental-compliance-reports.aspx?RID=665>

Should further information be required please contact the Tropicana's Environmental Management Team directly through tgmenvironment@anglogoldashanti.com

2.8 Condition 8

Condition 8 reads:

Upon the direction of the Minister, the person taking the action must ensure that an independent audit of compliance with the conditions of approval is conducted and a report submitted to the Minister. The independent auditor must be approved by the Minister prior to the commencement of the audit. Audit criteria must be agreed to by the minister and the audit report must address the criteria to the satisfaction of the Minister.

During the reporting period, the Minister did not issue any direction to require an independent compliance audit.

2.9 Condition 9

Condition 9 reads:

If the person taking the action wishes to carry out any activity otherwise than in accordance with condition 7, the person taking the action must submit for the Minister's written approval a revised version of any such plan. The varied activity shall not commence until the Minister has approved the

varied plan in writing. If the Minister approves such a revised plan, that plan must be implemented in place of the plan originally approved. Unless the Minister has approved the revised plan, then the person taking the action must continue to implement the plan originally approved.

AGAA conducted all exploration activities within the EPBC Referral Area in accordance with Condition 7.

2.10 Condition 10

Condition 10 reads:

If the Minister believes that is necessary or convenient for the better protection of the listed threatened species and communities to do so, the Minister may request the person taking the action make specified revisions to the plans approved pursuant to these conditions and submit the revised plan for the Minister's written approval. The person taking the action must comply with any such request. The revised approved plan must be implemented. Unless the Minister has approved the revised plan then the person taking the action must continue to implement the plan originally approved.

No revisions to the approved plans were requested by the Minister during the reporting period.

2.11 Condition 11

Condition 11 reads:

If, at any time after 5 years from the date of this approval, the person taking the action has not commenced the action, then the person taking the action must not substantially commence the action without the written agreement of the Minister.

Work formally commenced in February 2013 after approval was granted to the EPBC Condition Variation.

2.12 Condition 12

Condition 12 reads:

The person taking the action must maintain accurate records substantiating all activities associated with or relevant to the conditions of approval, including measures taken to implement the management plans required by this approval, and make them available upon request to the Department. Such records may be subject to audit by the Department or an independent auditor in accordance with section 458 of the EPBC Act, or used to verify compliance with the conditions of approval. Summaries of audits will be posted on the Department's website. The results of audits may also be publicised through the general media.

AGAA maintains all records associated with exploration activities within the EPBC Referral Area. These records can be provided to DCCEEW upon request.

3 Conclusion

This report serves to meet the requirements of Condition 7 of EPBC Approval No 2008/4463. AGAA is compliant with all conditions of the EPBC approval.

This report will be published on the Tropicana JV website (<http://www.tropicana.jv.com.au/irm/archive/annual-environmental-compliance-reports.aspx?RID=665>) in accordance with Condition 7.

4 References

AGAA 2013 *Australia Exploration Groups 2 and 3 EPBC Compliance Report 2013*

<http://www.tropicanajv.com.au/irm/pdf/82c61241-fd7f-4e9f-bdb7-3983e0df83c6/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

AGAA 2014 *Australia Exploration Groups 2 and 3 EPBC Compliance Report 2014*

<http://www.tropicanajv.com.au/irm/pdf/ab5fef11-fcdb-4275-8c44-1ae05a69cc99/AUSTRALIA-EXPLORATION-GROUPS-2-AND-3-EPBC-COMPLIANCE-REPORT.pdf>

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DCCEEW, 2022. *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. Australian Government, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc>