



Department of Planning and Environment

Ms Brittany Golding
Environmental Assessment Officer
Department of Planning and Environment

Our ref: DOC22-413307
Sender's ref: SSD-5285-MOD1

Via Major Projects Portal: PAE-43452065

8 June 2022

Dear Ms Golding

Subject: Balranald Mineral Sands Mine MOD 1 - Extension of underground mining trial (SSD 5285 MOD 1)

Thank you for your referral dated 24 May 2022 seeking comment from the Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) on the above project.

BCD has reviewed the documentation provided.

In order to assess the appropriateness of the excise areas as offsets for the proposed clearing for Mod 1, BCD requires detail from additional on-ground Biodiversity Assessment Method surveys that have not been provided in the Supplementary Biodiversity Assessment Report.

Detailed comments are provided in **Attachment A**.

If you have any questions about this advice, please contact Michael Todd, Senior Conservation Planning Officer via rog.southwest@environment.nsw.gov.au or 03 5021 8915.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Fisher'.

Andrew Fisher
Senior Team Leader Planning
South West Branch
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Department of Planning and Environment

ATTACHMENT A – BCD comments on Balranald Mineral Sands Mine MOD 1 - Extension of underground mining trial (SSD 5285 MOD 1)

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While BCD is satisfied with the approach of offsetting the Mod 1 area with areas excised from the currently approved footprint, the Supplementary Biodiversity Assessment Report lacks sufficient detail to support this approach. At the time of the report there has only been one Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) survey completed in the Mod 1 area and no surveys in the excised areas.

The context of the excise areas needs to be considered in relation to surrounding vegetation. According to the assessment, within the Mod 1 area is a patch of PCT159 - Old Man Saltbush shrubland mainly of the semi-arid (warm) climate zone (south western NSW), surrounded by PCT154 - Pearl Bluebush low open shrubland of the arid and semi-arid plains. This combination, but especially the old man saltbush shrubland, provides preferred habitat for the threatened bird species, Redthroat (*Pyrrholaemus brunneus*).

Ideally, the replacement excised areas, in particular the assumed PCT159 area, will also provide suitable habitat for the Redthroat. It would be preferable to demonstrate that the excised area is surrounded by suitable habitat and is not an isolated remnant patch.

While it is understood that further BAM surveys have been conducted in May 2022 these results are not presented in this report. It is therefore not possible for BCD to assess the appropriateness of the areas being used to offset the Mod 1 clearing.