

Dr Grant Wardell-Johnson
5 Campbell St
Kensington, WA 6051
March 3, 2016

Troy Collie
Mt Gibson Iron Ltd
West Perth

Dear Troy

Final Peer Review comments on Ecologia (2015)

During January 2016, I completed an initial peer review of 'Mount Gibson Mining Iron Hill Flora and Vegetation Assessment and Floristic Analysis'. Those comments have since been considered by Mount Gibson Mining and the authors, and this letter represents my final comments and recommendations for the review.

The authors of the consultancy report prepared by 'ecologia environment' (Ecologia) include the Project Manager, Mr Shaun Grein, and the botanists Dr Matthew Macdonald and Mr John Grantham. I regard this as an appropriate team to be carrying out biodiversity assessments of the region.

The project manager has been involved in multiple botanical surveys at Mount Gibson Ranges and in the surrounding area, and I consider him an experienced project manager of botanical field surveys and environmental assessments.

The two botanists have considerable experience in flora and vegetation assessments in the immediate area of Mount Gibson, as well as more broadly in other BIF ranges of the Yilgarn Craton, such as Helena and Aurora Range, Mount Jackson Range, Koolyanobbing Range and Weld Range. Dr Macdonald has wide experience concerning surveys of threatened and priority plant taxa in Western Australia and elsewhere, including *Darwinia masonii*.

My initial advice relating to parts of the content of the Ecologia (2015) report have largely been addressed in the final report. Notably, the issue of survey during autumn and recognition of the limitations concerning geophytes and other herbaceous perennials and annuals has been noted, and explained adequately. A list of species used and not used in pattern analysis has now been presented, as has a list of voucher specimens.

Troy Collie

3rd March 2016

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I requested a fuller analysis in relation to extrinsic environmental data of the relatively large (167 quadrats) quadrat-based dataset. However, I also noted that these collective data have multiple sources, limiting this opportunity within the planning period of the program.

I noted that the need for further analysis of what became reported as Floristic Group K is likely to add value to the overall picture concerning the occurrence of vegetation with the Mt Gibson PEC. Although Floristic Group K consists of three distinct groups within the broader analysis, it may be warranted in the future to provide a separate analysis of these quadrats within this Floristic Group. This may be appropriate outside the assessment period for this project.

I noted that an additional 30 quadrats are now also available for analysis (having been collected in spring 2015), including full extrinsic data compatible in space with the 17 quadrats collected by Ecologia at Iron Hill. A more complete analysis of these 47 quadrats with associated extrinsic data may be of interest, though it is not critical to this project.

I note that the regional floristic analysis prepared by Dr Eddie van Etten may be better in an appendix, as it detracts from the immediate work carried out by the consultants at the fine and local scales.

Overall the final report prepared by the consultants is an acceptable flora and vegetation assessment able to be used for impact assessment of this extension to an existing mining project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Wardell-Johnson', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Dr Grant Wardell-Johnson