

Scenic Rim Trail- Thornton Trailhead to Spicers Canopy Nature Reserve, Queensland

Approval EPBC 2016/7847

2020/21 Annual Compliance Report

9 December 2020 – 8 December 2021



Table of Contents

PURPOSE	1
BACKGROUND	1
SCOPE	1
CONDITION COMPLIANCE	2
Compliance	2
Unavoidable Impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance	2
Mitigation Measures	2
Plan Amendments	2

Table of Appendices

Appendix 1: Commonwealth EPBC 2016/7847 Compliance Status – Active Conditions

Table of Terms and Abbreviations

ALA	Atlas of Living Australia
BAAM	Biodiversity Assessment and Management Pty Ltd
BDCP	Baseline Data Collection Plan
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
GRAWHP	Gondwana Rainforest of Australia World Heritage property
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance

PWaSM	Plan for Wastewater and Sewage Management
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
SRT	Scenic Rim Trail - Thornton Trailhead to Spicers Canopy Nature Reserve
SRTMP	Scenic Rim Trail Management Plan
SWMP	Sewage and Wastewater Monitoring Plan

1.0 PURPOSE

This document sets out the status of compliance with the conditions imposed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) through Approval EPBC 2016/7847 within the required reporting period of 9 December 2020 to 8 December 2021 for the Scenic Rim Trail (SRT) - Thornton Trailhead to Spicers Canopy Nature Reserve, Queensland (the Project).

2.0 BACKGROUND

On 18 January 2019, the Minister for the Environment and Energy (now Minister for Agriculture, Water and the Environment) (the Minister) approved the construction and operation of the Scenic Rim Trail subject to conditions under the EPBC Act. The Minister, through EPBC 2016/7847, approved the proposed action of:

To construct and operate a five to six day supervised bush walk trail and four associated campsites from Mt Mistake to Spicers Peak Nature Refuge, within and adjacent to the Main Range National Park, Queensland.

The controlling provisions to which EPBC 2016/7847 relates are:

- World Heritage Properties (sections 12 and 15A, EPBC Act).
- National Heritage Places (sections 15B and 15C, EPBC Act).
- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A, EPBC Act).

The conditions of Approval EPBC 2016/7847 were varied by the Minister on 2 July 2019, to delete conditions 8, 9, 14, 16, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 32 attached to the approval and substitute with the conditions specified in the variation, and again on 10 March 2020, to delete attachments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 attached to the approval and substitute with the attachments specified in the variation.

The Action commenced on 16 September 2019 and construction was completed in April 2020. Commercial operation of the walking trail commenced on 21st June 2020.

3.0 SCOPE

This Annual Compliance Report outlines key areas of works and activity in relation to EPBC 2016/7847. This Report assesses:

- Compliance with the conditions listed within EPBC 2016/7847 by Spicers and its contractors.
- Records of any unavoidable adverse impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), mitigation measures applied to avoid adverse impacts on MNES and rehabilitation work undertaken in connection with any unavoidable adverse impacts on MNES.
- Non-compliance with the conditions of EPBC 2016/7847.

- Amendments to plans needed to achieve compliance with the conditions of EPBC 2016/7847.

This Annual Compliance Report covers the period of 9 December 2020 to 7 December 2021.

4.0 CONDITION COMPLIANCE

Condition 22 of EPBC 2016/7847 states:

Within 60 business days of every 12 month anniversary of commencement of the action, or as otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minister, the approval holder must publish a report on its website addressing compliance with each of the conditions, and any data, reports and analyses arising from the implementation of the SRTMP and BDCP and any other management plans as specified in the conditions. Documentary evidence providing proof of the date of publication and non-compliance with any of the conditions of this approval must be provided to the Department at the same time as the compliance report is published. Reports must remain on the website for the life of this approval. The Minister may provide written consent to the approval holder to cease reporting under this condition if satisfied additional reports are not warranted. Note: The first compliance report may report a period of less than 12 months so that it and subsequent compliance reports align with the similar requirement under state approval.

4.1 Compliance

The status of compliance with each condition under EPBC 2016/7847 is set out in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 Unavoidable Impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance

World Heritage Properties and National Heritage Places

No known unavoidable impacts have occurred to World Heritage Properties or National Heritage Places during the reporting period.

Listed threatened species and communities

No known impacts on listed threatened species and communities are considered attributable to the Scenic Rim Trail Project during the reporting period.

4.1.2 Mitigation Measures

No additional mitigation measures have been required or implemented as a result of unavoidable impacts on MNES.

4.1.3 Plan Amendments

No amended plans have been resubmitted to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) as a result of an identified non-compliance or a request made by DAWE.

4.1.4 Commonwealth EPBC 2016/7847 Compliance Status – Active Conditions

All conditions relating to the construction and requirements stipulated to be completed prior to commencement were detailed in the 2020 annual report.

4.1.5 Baseline Data 8A

The approval holder must not implement any onsite disposal of sewage or wastewater until the Minister has approved a Sewage and Wastewater Monitoring Plan (SWMP).

An application for the approval for dispersal of sewage or wastewater has **not** yet been lodged and **no** onsite disposal of sewage or wastewater has been implemented.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Commonwealth EPBC 2016/7847 Compliance Status – Active Conditions

Scenic Rim Trail Management Plan			
14.a.ii	Minimise, manage and remediate erosion along the Scenic Rim Trail;	Compliant	Annual photo monitoring of key points along the trail is undertaken by Spicers guides - refer Appendix 2 and 3 . TrailWorx (the original trail builders) peer reviewed the monitoring report. Identified remediation work will be scheduled in the ongoing maintenance program.
14.a.iii	Reduce the risk of spread of existing vertebrate pests, weeds and pathogens, including chytrid fungus;	Compliant	Operational vehicles are gurnied to reduce the risk of spread. A boot washing station was installed in 2020 and is maintained by the Spicers property manager. Weeds at camps within the leased area have been removed by hand throughout the year.
14.a. iv	Reduce the risk of introduction and establishment of new vertebrate pests, weeds and pathogens, including chytrid fungus;		
14.a. v	Control any new and existing weeds and pathogens outside of the Main Range National Park along the Scenic Rim Trail and at any camps;		
14.a.vi	Ensure trail guides are trained to identify any new or existing invasive species of weeds;	Compliant	Trail guides receive training on weed identification via our extensive field guide manuals.

14.a.vii	Report any new or existing invasive species of weeds, pests or pathogens to the Queensland Government agency responsible for the management of the Main Range National Park;	Compliant	<p>Guides are required to report gps locations, condition and evidence of new or existing invasive species of weeds, pests or pathogens along trail to Lead guide. Lead guide responsible for reporting key sightings to Tim Wood Senior Ranger in Charge.</p> <p>Refer to appendix 4 - Natural Values Report, which reports the findings of weeds and has been shared with the Department of Environment and Science in Queensland.</p>
14.a.ix	Minimise the impact of artificial light and noise on the Hastings River Mouse at Woodcutters Ecocamp	Compliant	No external lights other than marine environment approval solar powered amber deck dot lights along walkways are installed at both Ecocamps.
14.a.x	Remove food waste and litter from the Scenic Rim Trail and at Woodcutters Ecocamp and Amphitheatre View Wilderness Ecocamp to outside of the GRAWHP and Main Range National Park	Compliant	All rubbish including food waste is removed from the Ecocamps at the end of each walk and disposed of outside of Main Range National Park. Rubbish is stored within sealed waste containers whilst at camp.
14.c	Specify the details of a 10-year annual ongoing monitoring program (including methodology, effort, timing, frequency and responsibilities) capable of predicting and detecting:	Compliant	The SRTMP required under conditions 10-13 has specified the details of a 10-year annual ongoing monitoring program under Sections 9, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5 and 9.6 of the SRTMP.
	i. a decrease of the population of Hastings River Mouse at the Woodcutters Ecocamp compared to the baseline population established under condition 8.a.;	Compliant	The trapping rate for Hastings River Mouse increased between baseline and operation phase surveys in habitat surrounding Woodcutters Ecocamp but decreased at the control site. Therefore no evidence of a decrease in the abundance of the Hastings River Mouse attributable to the project. No corrective action required.
	ii. a decrease of the population of Fleay's Frog and Mountain Frog at each crossing of the new trails at Blackfellow Creek and Dalrymple Creek compared to the baseline population established under condition 8.b.;	Compliant	<p>Fleays Frog - Frog and tadpole abundance decreased significantly between baseline and each of the construction and operation periods at both downstream 'impact' and upstream 'control' sites at Dalrymple Creek, but not Blackfellow Creek. However, there was no significant change in frog or tadpole abundance between the downstream and upstream transects at either Blackfellow Creek or Dalrymple Creek, indicating no significant impact under the BACI design. No corrective action required.</p> <p>Mountain Frog - Frog calling activity decreased significantly between baseline and operation periods at both downstream 'impact' and upstream 'control' sites at Blackfellow Creek and</p>

			<p>at the control site at Lookout Road. The absence of significant change in frog calling activity between the downstream and upstream transects at either site, together with the decline being consistent between Blackfellow Creek and the control site at Lookout Road indicate no significant impact under the BACI design. No corrective action required.</p>
	<p>iii. changes in water quality compared to the baseline established under condition 8.c. at either crossing of the new trails at Blackfellow Creek and Dalrymple Creek; and</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>At Blackfellows creek crossing Total Phosphorus at the potentially impacted site SW08 had a higher than <u>median value</u> for the study than the baseline. No locations were above maximum concentration levels from the baseline study.</p> <p>As noted by Moreton Environment and Health, comparison median values is only possible after 3.5 years or 7 events worth of monitoring.</p> <p>It was reported that the levels of nutrients in Dalrymple creek system demonstrates that the baseline data may be too conservative, and that the potential impacts of background variations in nutrient levels from rogue cattle in the Main Range National Park requires further consideration.</p> <p>There should be a reassessment of baseline study data and the data collected in 2021 in locations SW01, SW02, SW03, SW04, SW05, SW06 relevant to the control site.</p> <p>It is important to note that the comparison of median values is only possible after 3.5 years. The proposal is to review <u>median value</u> baseline data once the 3.5 years (7 events) has been recorded.</p>
	<p>iv. a decrease of riparian habitat quality at either crossing of the new trails at Blackfellow Creek and Dalrymple Creek compared to the baseline established under condition 8.d.</p>	<p>Compliant</p>	<p>There was no evidence of damage to riparian vegetation or evidence of feral animal activity within 100 m upstream or downstream of the Dalrymple Creek crossing.</p> <p>There was evidence of Feral Pig activity downstream of the Blackfellow Creek crossing during the 2020/21 surveys; otherwise, no damage to riparian vegetation detected. Feral pigs were active in Blackfellow Creek during the baseline surveys, so the Feral Pig activity during the first year of operation is not attributable to the Project.</p> <p>No corrective action required as QPWS already has Pig traps operational on the Winder Track</p>

			above Blackfellow Creek.
Annual Compliance Reporting			
22	<p>Within 60 business days of every 12 month anniversary of commencement of the action, or as otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minister, the approval holder must publish a report on its website addressing compliance with each of the conditions, and any data, reports and analyses arising from the implementation of the SRTMP and BDCP and any other management plans as specified in the conditions.</p> <p>Documentary evidence providing proof of the date of publication and non-compliance with any of the conditions of this approval must be provided to the Department at the same time as the compliance report is published. Reports must remain on the website for the life of this approval. The Minister may provide written consent to the approval holder to cease reporting under this condition if satisfied additional reports are not warranted. Note: The first compliance report may report a period of less than 12 months so that it and subsequent compliance reports align with the similar requirement under state approval.</p>	Compliant	<p>Documentary evidence providing proof of the date of publication and non-compliance with any of the conditions of this approval were provided to the Department on 7 December 2021.</p> <p>https://spicersretreats.com/scenic-rim-trail/about-us/environmental-protection-biodiversity-conservation-response/</p>
Reporting non-compliance			
23	<p>The approval holder must notify the Department in writing of any: incident; non-compliance with the conditions; or non-compliance with the commitments made in plans. The notification must be given as soon as practicable, and no later than 2 business days after becoming aware of the incident or noncompliance. The notification must specify:</p>	Compliant	No incident or non-compliance with the conditions has been identified.

Scenic Rim Trail Condition Reports

Appendix 2. Trail Photopoint Annual Audit

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-mXtwTrh02uoRN9vjlsNdgRMB7FfdbEm/view?usp=sharing>

Appendix 3. Vegetation Transect Survey - Re-opened Winder Trail

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FP30b6R-eMGjUX_7le-jNQ5VSjsncKzu/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 4. Natural Values Health Check Report 2021

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S9n2f10pGO4C1CCkkafbVPYy_NlbztjY/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 5. Ecology Monitoring Report 2021

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b-4MRoXo7xyhcstofy0_lfr0Meo_6y0a/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 6. Water Monitoring Report 2021

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19SuGaWgdZy07NrWWS0A8Po2riv9aUu7B/view?usp=sharing>