

EPBC Approval Number

2016/7847

Project Name

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

ProponentTHRL Pty Ltd trading as Spicers Scenic Rim Trail
ABN 22 137 592 593**Action**

Spicers Retreats Hotels and Lodges Pty Ltd (Spicers) has developed a 53 km multi-day walk from the privately-owned Thornton View Nature Refuge to the privately-owned Spicers Peak Nature Reserve, via the Main Range National Park and Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area. The walk, named the Scenic Rim Trail, follows a series of existing tracks in the Park connected by a new series of tracks established by Spicers. Two eco camps have been constructed in the Park (outside of the World Heritage Area).

Date of Submission

07 May 2024

Declaration of accuracy

In making this declaration, I am aware that sections 490 and 491 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) make it an offence in certain circumstances to knowingly provide false or misleading information or documents. The offence is punishable on conviction by imprisonment or a fine, or both. I declare that all the information and documentation supporting this compliance report is true and correct in every particular. I am authorised to bind the approval holder to this declaration and that I have no knowledge of that authorisation being revoked at the time of making this declaration.

Signed



Kira Klein

General Manager – Scenic Rim Trail

Spicers Retreats Hotels and Lodges Pty Ltd

Document Preparation History:

Version No.	Date of Issue	Reviewed by	Issued by
2022/23 Version 1	07/05/2024	Claire Prest	Kira Klein

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

Approval EPBC 2016/7847

2022/23 Annual Compliance Report

9 December 2022 – 8 December 2023



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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 2022 to 8 December 2023 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 2022 to 8 December 2023.

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	Guides are required to report gps locations, condition and evidence of erosion along trail to Operations Manager. The Operations Manager is responsible for reporting key sightings to the General Manager. 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 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	Guides are required to report gps locations, condition and evidence of new or existing invasive species of weeds, pests or pathogens along trail to Operations Manager. Operations Manager responsible for reporting key sightings to Senior Ranger in Charge.

			Refer to appendix 3 - Natural Values Report, which reports the findings of weeds and has been shared with the Department of Environment and Science in Queensland.
14.a.ix	Minimise the impact of artificial light and noise on the Hastings River Mouse at Timbergetters 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 Timbergetters 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 Timbergetters Ecocamp compared to the baseline population established under condition 8.a.;	Compliant	The 2022 survey is the first occasion that Hastings River Mouse has not been captured in the environs of the Timber Getters / Woodcutters Ecocamp; however, the zero captures from 400 trap nights in 2022 is little different from the single capture from 400 trap nights during the baseline survey. Due to the naturally low and variable trapping rates for this species, there is no evidence of a significant impact of the Project on Hastings River Mouse relative abundance in the vicinity of the ecocamp based on the monitoring data to date. 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.;	Only 1 of required 2 studies completed	Fleay's Frog - Only 1 of 2 required surveys was completed in this reporting period due to permit delays. BAAM's permit to survey in Main Range National Park expired on 02/03/2023. BAAM approached the Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES) on 16/01/2023 to renew the permit but was advised that a new permit application was required; this new permit was issued on 27/03/2023 and BAAM was instructed by DES not to undertake any survey activities during the intervening period between the original permit expiring and the issuance of the new permit. Consequently, BAAM was not authorised to undertake a second survey for adult frogs prior to the typical cessation of Fleay's Frog calling activity after the end of March.

		Compliant	<p>For the survey completed 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 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>
	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	Compliant	<p>There is no discernable trend between control sites and impacted sites; The thirteen relatively high results in the last four years above the WQO for TN and Total Phosphorus are across both control and potentially impacted sites, as well as at locations monitoring creek crossings and Ecocamps; and there is no increase in Nitrogen or Phosphorus over time. No corrective action required.</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.	Compliant	<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. There was evidence of Feral Pig activity downstream of the Blackfellow Creek; 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 third year of operation is not attributable to the Project. No corrective action required as QPWS already has Pig traps operational on the Winder Track above Blackfellow Creek.</p>
Annual Compliance Reporting			
22	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	Late submission	<p>The 2022/2023 report was published on 07/05/2024, which is outside of the 60 days of the 12 month anniversary. Studies had been completed however the report was delayed and secondary internal checks have now been implemented to ensure compliance.</p>

	<p>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.</p>		<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.</p> <p>https://scenicrimtrail.com/about/environmental-protection-and-biodiversity/</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	<p>No incident or non-compliance with the conditions has been identified.</p>

Scenic Rim Trail Condition Reports 2022/2023 Reporting Period

Appendix 2. Vegetation Transect Survey - Re-opened Winder Trail

scenicrimtrail.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/0435-005TM4-Winder-vegetation-transect-survey-technical-memo_2023-2.pdf

Appendix 3. Natural Values Health Check Report 2023

scenicrimtrail.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/0435-005TM4-Winder-vegetation-transect-survey-technical-memo_2023-2.pdf

Appendix 4. Ecology Monitoring Report 2022/2023

[SRT-Ecological-Monitoring-Report-2023_Version-1-1.pdf \(scenicrimtrail.com\)](#)

Appendix 5. Water Monitoring Report 2022/2023

scenicrimtrail.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2023_Water-Quality-Report.pdf