

Project Name

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

Proponent

Spicers Retreats Hotels and Lodges Pty Ltd
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 Preparation

7 December 2021

Declaration of accuracy

I declare that all the information and documentation supporting this environmental return 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

Kira Klein

General Manager – Scenic Rim Trail

Spicers Retreats Hotels and Lodges Pty Ltd

8 December 2021

Document Preparation History:

Version No.	Date of Issue	Reviewed by	Issued by
V 1	08/12/2021	Kira Klein	Jillian Santry

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

2020/21 Annual Environmental Return

9 December 2020 – 8 December 2021



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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 by the Queensland Government 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 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) through Approval EPBC 2016/7847. 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.

Building approval under Section 63 of the *Planning Act 2016* was granted for the construction of the Woodcutters (now Timber Getters) and Amphitheatre ecocamps on 20th September 2019. The project commenced construction on 21 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 Environmental Return outlines key areas of works and activity in relation to Queensland Government approval conditions that are outlined in Table 1 of the *Scenic Rim Trail Management Plan (State): Scenic Rim Trail – Main Range National Park*. This Report assesses:

- Compliance with the Queensland Government conditions listed by Spicers and its contractors.
- Records of any unavoidable adverse impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) or Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) in the Main Range National Park (MRNP) and Gondwana Rainforest of Australia World Heritage property (GRAWHP), mitigation measures applied to avoid adverse impacts and rehabilitation work undertaken in connection with any unavoidable adverse impacts.
- Non-compliance with the Queensland Government approval conditions.
- Amendments to plans needed to achieve compliance with the Queensland Government approval conditions.

This Annual Environmental Return covers the period of 9 December 2020 to 8 December 2021.

4.0 CONDITION COMPLIANCE

4.1 Compliance

The status of compliance with the conditions of approval of the Queensland government are set out in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 Unavoidable Impacts on MNES and MSES

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 mitigation measures have been required or implemented as a result of unavoidable impacts on MNES or MSES.

4.1.3 Plan Amendments

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

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. State Approval Compliance Status – Active Conditions

No.	Condition	Status	Comment
1	The grantee must meet all of the conditions of their EPBC approval.	Compliant	
3	The Grantee will continue the monitoring plan outlined for the EPBC for the term of the Ecotourism lease.	Compliant	The results of monitoring during the reporting period are published on the approval holder's website at: https://spicersretreats.com/scenic-rim-trail/about-us/environmental-protection-biodiversity-conservation-response/
4	The Grantee must adhere to the Fire Management Plan.	Compliant	
5	The Grantee must brief all guests on the fire plan and evacuation procedure, prior to entering MRNP.	Compliant	Guests are briefed on the fire evacuation plan on arrival at Amphitheatre and Timber Getters Ecocamp by the lead guide.
6	Any tree removal must be in line with the QPWS procedural guide – risk management of hazardous trees and cannot be actioned without prior consent from the department.	Compliant	Tree removal associated with the construction of the Ecocamps was undertaken in accordance with QPWS protocols.
7	Environmental works and monitoring may need to be amended to align with any new Management Statement/Plan or World Heritage Management Framework if necessary.	Not applicable	No changes to existing Management Plans have been made since commencement of action.
10	The Grantee must ensure they maintain all proper registration of the All-terrain Vehicle (ATV) and provide up-to-date copies to the State.	Compliant	The ATV was registered 12 May 2020 and provided in the 2020 annual report. Updated & current insurance has been provided - refer Appendix 3 .
11	The Grantee must ensure all drivers of the ATV and other vehicles hold a current Queensland drivers licence or equivalent licence.	Compliant	
12	The Grantee must ensure the ATV used under this authority, are used in accordance with the manufacturer's operating and safety instructions, and owner's manual including the wearing of seatbelts and personal protective equipment.	Compliant	
13	The drivers of the ATV must not exceed a speed limit of 30 km/h speed limit when in MRNP.	Compliant	
14	The Grantee must ensure the use of all vehicles do not	Compliant	

	impede the access to the publicly available sections of the Scenic Rim Trail.		
15	The Grantee must ensure all vehicles are clean and free from any weed seeds or soil pathogens, prior to entering the National Park.	Compliant	Operational vehicles are gurnied to reduce risk of transfer.
16	The Grantee must ensure that all vehicles including the ATV are operated in a manner that minimises damage to roads, tracks and harm to the environment.	Compliant	QPWS have confirmed minimal track damage from the use of the ATV.
17	The Grantee must ensure the operation and maintenance of the ATV is in accordance with the department's procedural guide, 'use of all-terrain vehicles'.	Compliant	
18	QPWS reserves the right to amend the Commercial Activity Agreement (CAA) to reduce or stop ATV usage if there are reasonable grounds to do so, such as higher than expected damage to tracks.	Compliant	QPWS has not amended the CAA to reduce or stop ATV usage.
20	The Grantee must ensure the generator is operated at low dB levels (65dB9(A)) and is situated and operated in such a way to minimise impacts on native flora and fauna and other users of the area.	Compliant	Generators at both Ecocamps are Genelite GKM30S-1 and operate at maximum db level of 61dBA. The generators have not been required to top up the batteries this season.
21	The Grantee must ensure all hazardous materials are stored in accordance with the supplier or manufacturers guidelines and have any certificates and certifications that may be required.	Compliant	
23	The Grantee must ensure that buildings remain in a safe and habitable condition for the life of the Ecotourism Lease.	Compliant	QPWS have completed their annual site inspection of the camps and have not reported any issues.
Additional commitments under the Scenic Rim Trail Management Plan, State Version			
A1	QPWS to receive copies of all reports required under the EPBC 2016/7847 approval. Reports required within 60 business days of every 12-month anniversary of commencement of action	Compliant	All reports to State and Federal Government are submitted simultaneously to both levels of government. It was agreed the State reporting periods for SRTMP compliance would align with Federal periods. These reports will also be uploaded to the website on the same day as report submissions.
A2	Monitor riparian vegetation at the crossings of Dalrymple and Blackfellow Creek, annually, using fixed photo points.	Compliant	Fixed photo-point monitoring is included in the monitoring of riparian habitat conditions to fulfill conditions 8.d and 14.c.IV of EPBC 2016/7847. - Refer to Appendix 4

A3	Monitor transects established at representative sites along the existing and re-opened Winder management track, annually, to establish vegetation response to track construction and SRT operation.	Compliant	Four monitoring transects have been established at representative sites along the existing (two transects) and re-opened Winder management track (two transects). The results of this monitoring are reported in Appendix 6 .
A4	Monitor track erosion and vegetation response, at representative sites along the SRT.	Compliant	Natural Values Survey has been undertaken (agreed with QPWS) – refer Appendix 7 . Annual Trail Monitoring Photopoint Report has been undertaken - refer Appendix 8 .

Appendix 2. Ecology Reporting Summary - EPBC

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. Refer to appendix 4.
	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	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. 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. Refer to appendix 4.
	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>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. Refer to appendix 5.</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.</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 above Blackfellow Creek. Refer to appendix 4.</p>

Appendix 3. All-Terrain Vehicle Insurance

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

Appendix 4. Ecology Monitoring Report 2021

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

Appendix 5. Water Monitoring

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

Appendix 6. Vegetation Transect Survey

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

Appendix 7. Natural Values Health Check Report 2021

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

Appendix 8. Trail Monitoring - Annual Photopoint Audit

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-mXtwTrh02uoRN9vjsNdgRMB7FfdbEm/view?usp=sharing>