

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Release Date: 21st March 2023

Katanning Landcare has grave concerns about the environmental impacts of a proposed gold mining operation at Badgebup, Katanning.

Katanning Landcare has met with AusGold twice, and our analysis of the information presented to date is that the proposed operation will be inconsistent with the values of our Landcare-minded community, and does not represent the way that Katanning has prioritized local land management for more than 30 years.

It is of extreme importance that the people of Katanning are aware of the expected detrimental impacts of the mine on biodiversity, agricultural land and the large amounts volunteer labour and public funds that have been expended protecting important habitats, all of which are at risk.

Carnaby's Cockatoos Under Major Threat

Of overwhelming concern is the irreparable impact that the proposed mine will have on the Endangered species, the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus latirostris*.

The Carnaby's are an iconic species of the Katanning area, where they spend half of each year breeding in local woodlands. The Badgebup area is recognised as one of the most significant breeding sites for Carnaby's Cockatoos in the world, with clear overlap between habitat and the proposed mining operations.

For breeding, Carnaby's Cockatoos require very large Eucalypt tree hollows, found only in trees over 150 years old. Carnaby's feed on plants, mainly Banksias, Hakeas, Grevilleas and introduced pine trees. The further they have to fly to find food and water, the higher risk the birds face. The female remains in the nest with the chicks, while the male flies to get food for his family, if he can find food and water within 6km the chicks are more likely to survive. Carnaby's must have suitably co-located breeding and feeding habitat – which will be compromised by the minesite.

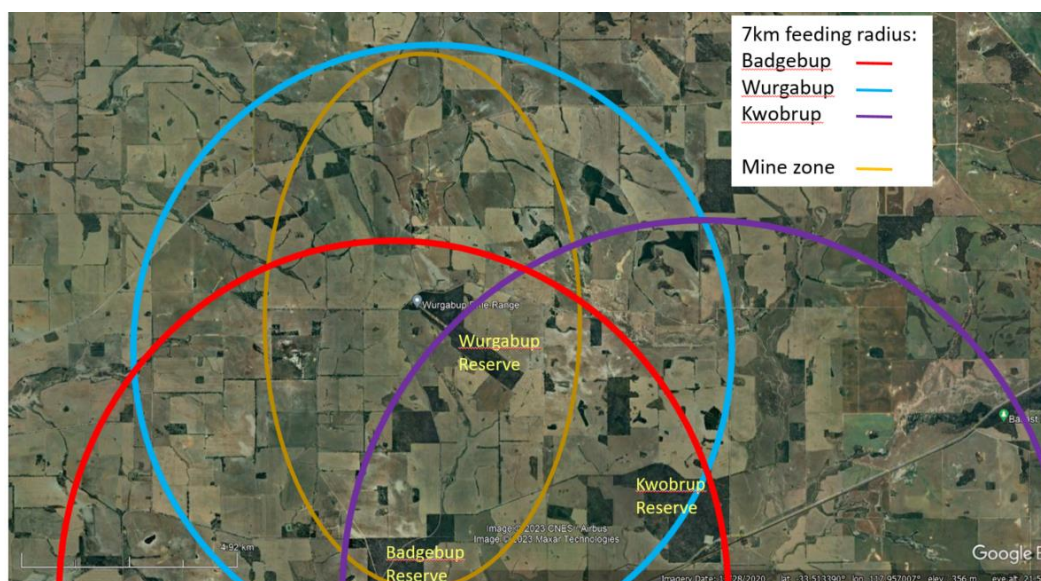


Figure 1: The overlap of the 7km fly-zone for Carnaby's Cockatoos from their key Reserves, with the approximate mine site footprint (yellow). The intersection of these should be cause for **major concern** in our community. Base image: Google Earth

AusGold has indicated that they will clear most of the off-reserve vegetation in the landscape –important Carnaby’s feeding and nesting places – such as roadside reserves, creeklines, paddock trees and on-farm revegetation and remnant vegetation. The Carnaby’s will have their access to food dramatically cut, and when the impacts of noise and light pollution and changed access to water associated with the mining operation are also considered, there is extreme risk to the Carnaby’s Cockatoos.

A 2017 [report](#) commissioned by AusGold clearly articulated that in reference to mining operations at Badgebup “This species may be impacted by loss, degradation or fragmentation of their breeding or foraging habitat, and disturbance to nesting sites”, and that “any clearing of foraging habitat has a high risk of a significant impact on the species”.

It greatly concerns Katanning Landcare that AusGold has essentially ignored its own report, in not forewarning the Katanning community about this fact.

Other Species at Risk from the Mine

Wheatbelt Eucalypt Woodlands are listed as a Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act (1999).

The AusGold mining operation will see clearing applications lodged to clear Wheatbelt Eucalypt Woodlands, at a landscape scale far beyond what contemporary agriculture will do, with obvious environmental impact.

Conservation-listed Red-tailed Phascogales (*Phascogale calura*) live in Katanning, with significant community effort for over a decade to protect them. The 2017 report commissioned by AusGold confirms Katanning Landcares’ knowledge that suitable habitat for Red-Tailed Phascogales is found within the mine area, and these small mammals are likely to be present there. Widespread destruction of their habitat at Badgebup, and interference with their hunting and breeding due to night-time noise and light pollution, poses a terrible risk to this nocturnal species.

Carnaby’s Cockatoos and Red-Tailed Phascogales are not the only species under threat at Badgebup. Direct habitat destruction, the impacts of noise and light pollution (especially critical for species that hunt at night, such as owls and bats, or rely on sound for social and breeding structures, such as some frogs), changed hydrology and/or increased traffic will detrimentally – and avoidably – impact our valuable local biodiversity.

Katanning Landcare is gravely concerned about the likely long-term environmental damage that will be caused by the AusGold Badgebup mine going ahead.

Katanning Landcare strongly encourages our community to become aware of the environmental and agricultural risks posed by the mine, and to engage in robust, informed conversations about the potential consequences, and how they align with our local identity and values. Katanning Landcare is looking forward to working constructively with all stakeholders on this matter.

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