



RAVENSWOOD GOLD

Ravenswood Priority Living Area, Charters Towers, Queensland

Assessment Report submitted in support of carrying out activities in a Priority Living Area under the *Regional Interests Act 2014* (Qld) and *Regional Planning Interests Regulations* (Qld)

July 2022

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Assessment Report

1. Introduction

Ravenswood Gold Pty Ltd (**Ravenswood Gold**) has prepared this report to accompany the assessment application for a regional interests development approval (**RIDA**) required under Part 3 division 2 of the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (Qld) (**RPI Act**). This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the Assessment Application Form (version 3.1, dated 19 August 2019).

2. Project Description

2.1 The applicant

The applicant is Ravenswood Gold (formerly Mining Gold Investment Pty Ltd), the operator of the Ravenswood Gold Mine (**Ravenswood Mine**), under Environmental Authority EPML00979013 (the **EA**) (effective 11 March 2022). The EA authorises mining and processing of gold ore across 35 mining leases (**ML**) (Figure 1 - Ravenswood Gold Project Layout and Figure 2 – Ravenswood Gold mining tenements).

2.2 Project location

The Ravenswood Mine is located in the township of Ravenswood, approximately 130 km south of Townsville and 90 km east of Charters Towers, in northern Queensland. The Ravenswood Mine is situated within the Charters Towers Regional Council on the traditional land of the Birriah People.

2.3 Ravenswood gold mine

Mining runs deep in the township of Ravenswood, becoming a bustling gold rush town in the late 1800s. Since 1868, four million ounces of gold have been mined at Ravenswood with another four million still in resource. 2.7 million ounces are targeted to be mined over the next 14 years.

Ravenswood Gold has a special relationship with the gold mining town of the same name, with mining and the community working side-by-side for over 150 years. The current (modern) Ravenswood Mine was established 44 years ago by Mount Isa Mines Limited, and acquired two years ago by Ravenswood Gold, playing an active role in the community.

Ravenswood Gold works hard to be a great neighbour to the township of Ravenswood. Ravenswood Gold is committed to responsible and sustainable development and operations within the community through:

- Considering community aspects and impacts in all stages of operations and development.
- Taking all practicable steps to prevent or minimise impacts of the operations on the local community.
- Maintaining effective community and stakeholder engagement and management systems and practices.
- Compliance with the *Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017* (Qld) by maintaining a principally local and regional residential or drive-in drive-out workforce.
- Working to maintain a positive and open relationship with the local community and stakeholders through effective communication.
- Ensuring the local community are kept up to date on operations and any changes that may affect them.
- Fostering sustainable social and economic initiatives through the Tourism Directions plan, supporting local organisations with financial and other resources, and providing local sponsorship opportunities.
- Providing emergency medical support to community members in conjunction with the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
- Sourcing local and regional supplies and services where practicable.
- Ensuring all persons working on site are aware of and executing their responsibilities associated with community aspects.

- Involving the community, employees and business partners in continuous improvement of community and stakeholder engagement and management systems and practices.

In taking these steps and maintaining good neighbourly relations as a key driver in all of its operations, Ravenswood Gold ensures that its gold mine is a good example of the co-existence of mining and the community as contemplated in the North Queensland Regional Plan (**NQRP**).

2.4 Proposed Activities

Ravenswood Gold proposes to continue the operation of Ravenswood Mine in accordance with the activities authorised under the MLs and EA (**Activities**).

The total area the subject of this Application is 766 hectares (**ha**), as depicted at Figure 4 - Proposed Disturbance Footprint. Exempt resource activities were authorised on commencement of the PLA over the vast majority of the RIDA Area (approximately 651 ha). The RIDA Area also includes a further 115 hectares of additional disturbance, which is required to carry out the Activities.

3. Background Material

3.1 Priority Living Area

A Priority Living Area has been mapped over part of the Ravenswood Mine area (**PLA**) since March 2020 upon publication of the NQRP (Figure 3 – Ravenswood Priority Living Area).

The RPI Act prohibits the carrying out of a 'resource activity' within the PLA unless the person carrying out the activities holds or is acting under a RIDA for the activity, or an exemption otherwise applies.

Ravenswood Gold is exempt from the requirement to obtain a RIDA in respect of resource activities that were authorised as at March 2020 (section 24 RPI Act). The vast majority of activities authorised under the MLs and EA were approved for the purposes of section 24 prior to the declaration of the PLA. There are small additional areas that Ravenswood Gold has identified as being required for the continued ordinary operation of the Ravenswood Mine.

The overall proposed disturbance footprint for the Ravenswood Mine within the PLA is represented at Figure 4.

3.2 Assessment application

This assessment report has been prepared in satisfaction of the requirement at section 29 of the RPI Act. The assessment report has been prepared in consideration of the following published guidelines:

- (a) RPI Act Statutory Guideline 01/14: How to make an assessment application for a regional interests development approval under the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014. August 2019;
- (b) RPI Act Statutory Guideline 04/14: Carrying out resource activities and regulated activities within a Priority Living Area. May 2020 (**Guideline 04/14**);
- (c) RPI Act Statutory Guideline 06/14: Public notification of assessment applications. August 2019; and
- (d) RPI Act Statutory Guideline 11-16: Companion Guide. August 2019.

The assessment report sets out how the proposed activity will meet the of the *Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014* (Qld) (**RPI Regulation**).

4. PLA assessment criteria

The RPI Regulation provides that the *required outcome* for a PLA is that the location, nature and conduct of the activity is compatible with the planned future for the PLA stated in a planning instrument under the Planning Act.

To satisfy the required outcome, Ravenswood Gold must demonstrate compatibility with the *prescribed solution* as set out in the RPI Regulation, as follows:

The application demonstrates each of the following-

- (a) *the activity is unlikely to adversely impact on development certainty-*
 - (i) *for land in the immediate vicinity of the activity; and*
 - (ii) *in the priority living area generally; and*
- (b) *carrying out the activity in the priority living area, and in the location stated in the application, is likely to result in community benefits and opportunities, including, for example, financial and social benefits and opportunities.*

Guideline 04/14 provides guidance on how to address the prescribed solutions for PLAs. Ravenswood Gold has compiled this material into Tables 1 and 2 in Schedule 1, to set out in detail how this application satisfies the prescribed solution.

5. Pre-application discussions

5.1 Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

An initial pre-application meeting was held with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (**DSDILGP**) on 7 April 2022.

5.2 Local government

The RPI Regulation requires all applications for resource activities to be referred to the relevant local government as an assessing agency. Charters Towers Regional Council was consulted regarding this application during a meeting with Ravenswood Gold on 3 March 2022 and participated in the initial pre-application meeting that was held with DSDILGP on 7 April 2022.

6. Ravenswood Township

6.1 History of Ravenswood Township

The Ravenswood township was formed and exists as a direct result of gold mining. Mining has been carried out in Ravenswood for more than 150 years.

Due to the proximity of the Ravenswood Mine to the township, this community constitutes the main social area of influence. With a population of approximately 200 residents, the township has a rich mining heritage and was founded following the discovery of gold in 1868. Ravenswood's mining history has shaped the built environment, with many heritage listed buildings in the area.

6.2 NQRP

As noted above at paragraph 3.1, the NQRP mapped a PLA over the Ravenswood township in March 2020.

The NQRP stated that:

"As a historic gold mining centre, Charters Towers is an example of an urban centre established directly atop and around mining activities. This co-existence has caused no significant issues given the scale and characteristics of the mining activity. However, it is important to ensure that these land uses are appropriately balanced into the future and the potential impacts of any future intensification are not to the detriment of the community. This is the purpose of the PLAs."

The NQRP acknowledges the long history of co-located mining and township activities in the region. Ravenswood is a good example of the sustainable co-benefits of regional townships in close proximity to gold mining operations.

Specifically, the NQRP provides that:

- (a) *"Future opportunities within the mining and extractive resources industry include:*

- (i) *supporting the identification and extraction of precious metals and rare earth elements...*
- (ii) *investigating and promoting new technologies to improve the sustainability and capabilities of mining and resource extraction. Technological advancement will also help improve the viability of extracting existing mineral deposits in the region."*
- (b) The following was identified as a regional outcome – *"sustainably and efficiently manage the region's mineral, petroleum, gas and extractive resources, and facilitate the appropriate growth of resource activities and allied value-add industries that support them, in and beyond the region to meet the needs of existing and future communities."*
- (c) The following regional policies were identified in support of that regional outcome:
 - (i) *"Support future resource extraction and allied industries in the region, including technical minerals and rare earths, where appropriate environmental and social outcomes will result."*
 - (ii) *Protect mining and petroleum industries (and allied infrastructure corridors), where production permits have been granted, from incompatible land uses, such as the encroachment of urban development."*

6.3 Charters Towers Regional Town Plan

The Charters Towers Regional Town Plan (**Town Plan**) applies to the area of the Charters Towers Region, which includes Ravenswood township.

The Town Plan provides that Ravenswood continues to function as a township that *supports a local population employed mainly in **gold mining activities**, rural services and tourism related uses that reflect its **gold mining history**.*

Zones

Rural zone

Ravenswood Gold's mining operations are predominately located in the rural zone of the Town Plan. Mining and exploration activities occur in rural areas throughout the region, and are not incompatible with the rural zone.

The Town Plan provides that the purpose of the rural zone is to:

- (a) *provide for rural uses and activities; and*
- (b) *provide for other uses and activities that are compatible with:*
 - (i) *existing and future rural uses and activities; and*
 - (ii) *the character and environmental features of the zone; and*
- (c) *maintain the capacity of land for rural uses and activities by protecting and managing significant natural resources and processes.*

Ravenswood Gold's mine operations are also located in both the township and community facilities zone of Charters Towers.

Community facilities zone

The Town Plan provides that the purpose of the community facilities zone is *community-related uses, activities and facilities, including, education establishments, hospitals, transport and telecommunication networks and utility installations.*

The existing mining activities located within the community facilities zone are exempt as these activities were authorised prior to March 2020. The continuation of Ravenswood Gold's mine operations requires use of land within the community facilities zone. Land surrounding this area is used for mine operations and mine associated infrastructure. Given the extent to which mining operations already exist within and around the community facilities zoned area, the continued use of this land for Activities is consistent with the current land use.

Township zone

The Town Plan provides that the purpose of the township zone is to provide for:

- (a) *small to medium urban areas in a rural or coastal area; and*
- (b) *a variety of uses and activities to service local residents, including, for example, business, community, education, industrial, open space, recreation, residential or retail uses or activities; and*
- (c) *tourist attractions and Short-term accommodation, if appropriate for the area.*

Mining and exploration activities also occur in the township zone. Historically, there has been considerable disturbance to the surface land around the Ravenswood township and the Ravenswood Mine associated with early gold mining activities, pastoral activities and town growth. As provided above at paragraph 6.2, this region is an example of an urban centre established directly atop and around mining activities, where such co-existence has caused no significant issues. The Activities, to the extent they will be carried out within the township zone, are consistent with the current land use. Given the extent to which mining operations already exist within and surround the township zoned area, use of this area is no longer appropriate for the purpose of this zone.

Overlays

Under the Town Plan, the Ravenswood Mine is affected by the following overlays:

- Heritage Overlay (State Heritage Place);
- Regional Infrastructure Overlay (Ergon Electricity Voltage Line (above 66kv)); and
- the Natural environmental overlay (Regulated vegetation (category R)).

The impacts of the mining activities including identification of mitigation measures for impacts on heritage, existing infrastructure and the environment have been assessed and are regulated by EA EPML00979013. As provided at Schedule 1, Table 1, Ravenswood Gold also manages and mitigates the impacts that mining and exploration activities have on state heritage places.

Schedule 1 – Assessment criteria tables

1. Table 1: Prescribed solution (a)

Item	Impact criteria	Response to prescribed solution
<p>To understand whether an activity may adversely impact on development certainty, the applicant should undertake and submit an analysis that demonstrates the extent to which the activity would or would not:</p>		
a)	<p>Result in the loss of land available for urban development as identified in a local government planning scheme, development scheme or other applicable statutory planning instrument</p>	<p>The majority of the Activities will be carried out within the granted ML boundaries. As provided above at paragraph 6.3 of the Assessment Report, Ravenswood Gold's MLs are predominately located in the rural zone of Charters Towers, which is consistent with the proposed use of the land for mining and exploration activities.</p> <p>The Town Plan provides that the purpose of a rural zone is achieved through the overall outcomes, which include amongst others, that urban and residential expansion does not occur on the land in the rural zone.</p> <p>As urban development is not supported in the rural zone, to the extent Activities occur within this zone, no loss of land, identified as available for urban development by the Town Plan, will occur.</p> <p>Further, land surrounding the community facilities and township zones are already utilised for mining operations. Given the extent to which mining operations already exist within and surround the community facilities and township zoned area, subject land within these zones is already unavailable for urban development.</p> <p>Approving this application would result in no loss of land available for urban development as identified in a local government planning instrument.</p>
b)	<p>Prevent or delay the orderly expansion of planned urban development as identified in a local government planning scheme, development scheme or other applicable statutory planning instrument (for example, the life of the proposed resource activity may delay access to land and preventing its timely development)</p>	<p>For the reasons noted at item a) above, approving this application would not prevent or delay any expansion of planned urban development under the Town Plan.</p> <p>For the reasons noted at paragraph 6.2 of the Assessment Report, approving this application would be entirely consistent with the NQRP and would not prevent or delay any expansion of planned urban development identified in the NQRP.</p>

Item	Impact criteria	Response to prescribed solution
c)	Result in the discontinuation of an activity that is lawfully in existence under a local government planning scheme, development scheme or other applicable statutory planning instrument	For the reasons stated above at item a) above, approving this application will not result in the discontinuation of an activity that is lawfully in existence. Here, the activity that is lawfully in existence is the operation of the Ravenswood Mine.
d)	Increase the cost of planned development (for example, changes to the existing landform could make the land more difficult or costly to develop)	The Activities will not increase the cost of planned development as the Activities are a continuation of the existing mine operations.
e)	Damage or otherwise affect existing infrastructure (for example, structural damage cause by subsidence)	The Activities will not cause further damage or otherwise affect existing infrastructure.
f)	Result in additional demand on existing infrastructure or services (for example, town water)	The Activities will not result in additional demand on existing infrastructure or services.
g)	Negatively impact on the amenity of the PLA in general and on land in the immediate vicinity of the activity	<p>The proximity of the Ravenswood Mine to the Ravenswood township means that Ravenswood Gold operates to strict environmental standards as set out in the EA in order to mitigate impacts and protect residents from nuisance and disturbance from the mining operation.</p> <p>This application relates to the continuation of existing activities involving only incremental changes to the footprint of the existing Ravenswood Mine.</p> <p>Ravenswood Gold will continue to operate under the EA and be subject to the same standards in terms of noise, dust and vibration, etc.</p> <p>There will be no noticeable change to the amenity of the PLA generally or on land in the immediate vicinity of the Ravenswood Mine.</p>
To determine the impact on amenity, the proposed activity should be evaluated against the following factors:		
a)	the compatibility of the activity with surrounding activities	As discussed at paragraph 6.1 of the Assessment Report, and as acknowledged in the NQRP, the township was formed and continues to exist as a direct result of the Ravenswood Mine. Approving this application would cause an immaterial impact on the PLA and surrounding activities due to the history of the Ravenswood Mine and township, combined with location and continuation of existing operations and ancillary activities. The Activities comprise the continuation of the existing predominant land use, together with some incremental changes to footprint.

Item	Impact criteria	Response to prescribed solution
b)	the nature and scale of the proposed activity and the extent of its intrusion on the predominant character of the surrounding area	The landscape has been extensively modified by historical mining activities in Ravenswood, including both the small-scale workings that commenced in the late 1860's and the large-scale modern mining in recent decades. Given the degree of existing land disturbance and current land use, the Activities are in line with the predominant character of the surrounding area.
c)	the extent of change to the volume or nature of traffic on the roads in the PLA	The Activities will not change the volume or nature of traffic on the roads in the PLA as the activities are a continuation of the existing mine operations.
d)	the effect on the existing linkages between various parts of the PLA (for example, between residential areas and employment areas)	As stated above at item a), the Ravenswood township was formed and exists as a direct result of the Ravenswood Mine. The urban centre was established directly atop and around mining activities. As contemplated in the NQRP and Town Plan, this co-existence has caused no significant issues. Activities will have an immaterial impact on the existing linkages between various parts of the PLA and the mine will continue to co-exist with the town.
e)	changes to the outlook from key vistas, nearby sensitive uses (for example, residential areas) or public facilities (for example, parks) and tourist attractions	Given the nature of the Activities, there will be no material change to the outlook from key vistas, nearby sensitive uses, or public facilities and tourist attractions.
f)	the effect on the sense of place, local cultural heritage values and perceptions of safety	<p><i>Indigenous cultural heritage</i></p> <p>Ravenswood Gold has satisfied and will continue to satisfy its cultural heritage duty of care through the implementation of the cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) dated 26 June 2012 with the Birriah People (QUD 6244/1998), the determined native title holder for the area.</p> <p><i>Non-Indigenous cultural heritage</i></p> <p>There are a number of state heritage places registered within and in the vicinity of the Ravenswood Mine. Ravenswood Gold is party to various heritage agreements entered into under the <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992 (Qld)</i> (Queensland Heritage Act) and carries out its activities in accordance with heritage agreements, exemption certificates issued under those agreements, the environmental authority conditions and relevant management plans (including the Historic Heritage Management Plan (HHMP)) to ensure that the heritage values of the state heritage places are protected. Similarly, Ravenswood Gold has identified a number of local heritage sites across Ravenswood Mine. Local heritage assessed as being of moderate to high local significance have been documented, collected or salvaged in an archaeological program undertaken in 2019 and 2021 in accordance with</p>

Item	Impact criteria	Response to prescribed solution
		<p>the Department of Environment and Science approved Archaeological Research Design. All remaining local heritage has been assessed to be of low local significance and does not require further management actions.</p> <p>To mitigate impacts on future identified local heritage, Ravenswood Gold has prepared a discoveries procedure for the life of the mine to ensure compliance with archaeological requirements of the Queensland Heritage Act.</p>
g)	the visual prominence of the site	The landscape around Ravenswood township has been extensively modified by mining activities carried out since the gold rush and as such is highly disturbed. The Activities will have no or negligible noticeable effects on the visual prominence of the site or further impact on landscape values or visual amenity.
h)	proposed landscaping and enhancements	The landscape around Ravenswood township has been extensively modified by mining activities at carried out since the gold rush and as such is highly disturbed. The Activities will not result in a material change to the existing landscape.

2. Table 2: Prescribed solution (b)

#	Impact criteria	Response to prescribed solution
The applicant should submit an analysis of:		
a)	The economic and social benefits that will be associated with the additional workforce (during both the construction phase and operation phases)	Gold mining, as provided in the Town Plan, is one of the major economic drivers in Charters Towers. The mine has had a positive impact on the township on the basis of population and economic growth. Annually, Ravenswood Mine contributes over \$250,000 to the local community through the ongoing support of local organisations, donations, sponsorships, tourism development and community events. Additionally, Ravenswood Mine provides local medical services, town maintenance and local improvements projects, as stated at item b). Given the nature of the Activities, there will not be an increase in employment numbers however the Activities will result in a continuation of existing employment levels and positive social and economic impacts.
b)	Direct contributions (monetary or in kind) towards:	
	i. the improvement of trunk infrastructure (whether it be the capacity or the quality of the infrastructure)	Upgrades are being made to three intersections located in Ravenswood township and the water treatment plant. Culvert upgrades are in the process of being carried out to improve safety and wet weather access. Ravenswood Gold is also in the process of implementing a new environmentally friendly waste transfer station on behalf of Charters Towers Regional Council.
	ii. Public infrastructure (including public transport, health and education services, and cultural and social infrastructure such as parks, sport and recreation facilities, bikeways and walkways)	<p>Ravenswood Gold have relocated heritage listed school buildings and funded, at a cost of \$10 million, the construction of new school buildings, oval, multipurpose sporting facility. Similarly, the company established the golf course and club house in 1990s, as a rehabilitation project.</p> <p>Ravenswood Gold continues to contribute to the improvement of public infrastructure. Currently, Ravenswood Gold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assists with the upgrade of showground facilities, including improving the public camping ground's appeal and capacity for tourists by constructing a new kitchen and ablution facilities as part of a coordinated project with Charters Towers Regional Council. installed a public lookout to provide a safe viewing platform over mining operations. This development will include a carpark and safe walking access to the lookout, providing an opportunity to enhance the town's tourism appeal.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is developing the relocated miner's cottage and key historic artefacts from the Buck Reef West mining area into a public museum and heritage precinct, known as the 'Stockham House museum.' The museum will contain general history of the town and mining area, as well as the history of women on the goldfields (encompassing outcomes of a PhD study conducted on the local area).
<p>iii. A community initiative or facility (for example public artwork, community notice board, community centre)</p>	<p>Ravenswood Gold supports the Ravenswood Restoration and Preservation Association through regular donations and coordinated projects, such as sourcing a grant to upgrade to the township's Train Carriage Information Centre. The upgrade included renovations of the building, updating signage and the provision of a touch-screen advertising experiences that the town has to offer to visitors. Other coordinated project between the mine and the town have included installation of audio signs around town as an educational tool for local heritage and support of Ravenswood's Art Trail, which began in 2015 when the project was awarded an Animating Spaces grant from Artslink Qld.</p>

Schedule 2 – Maps and Plans

Figure 1 - Ravenswood Gold Project Layout

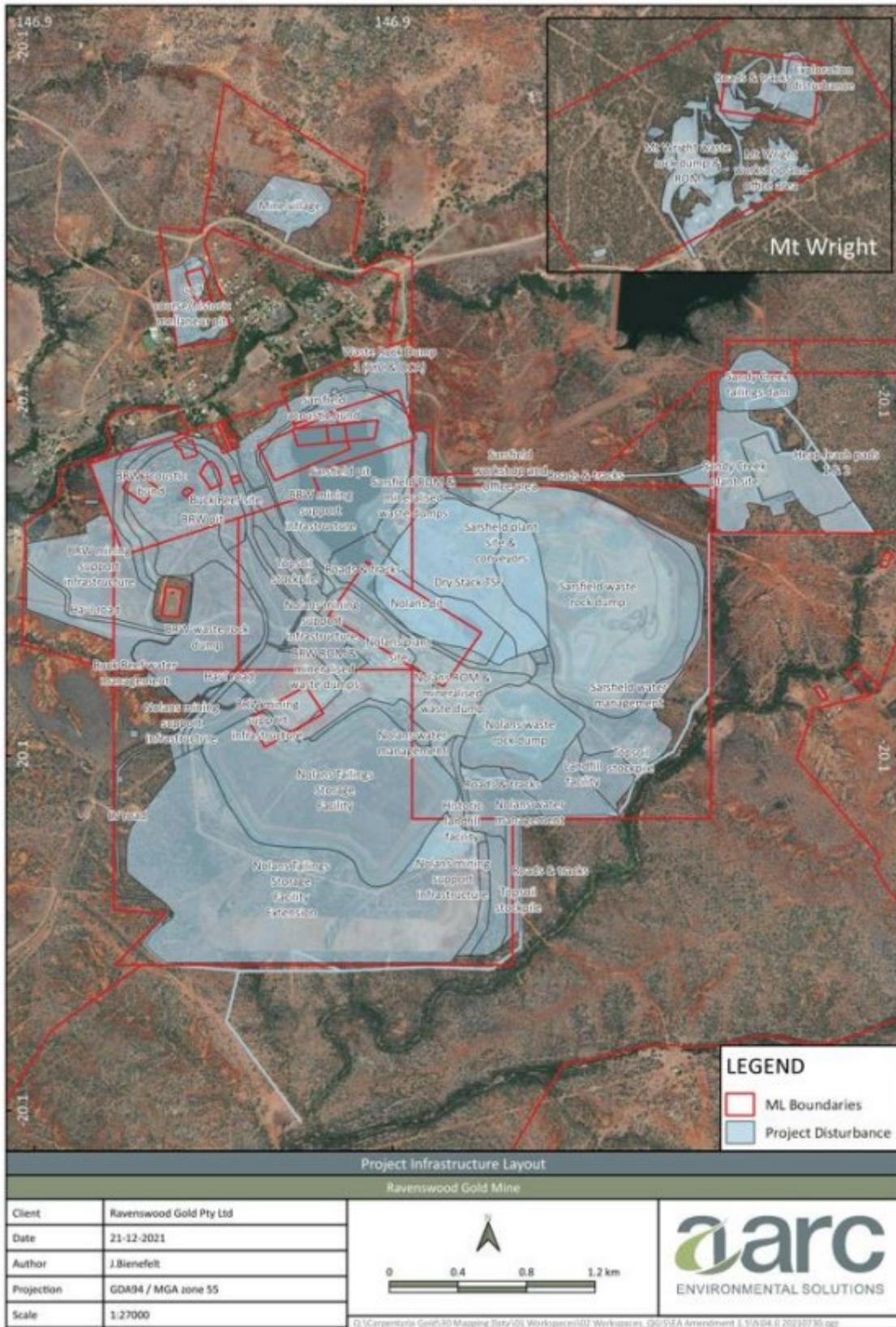


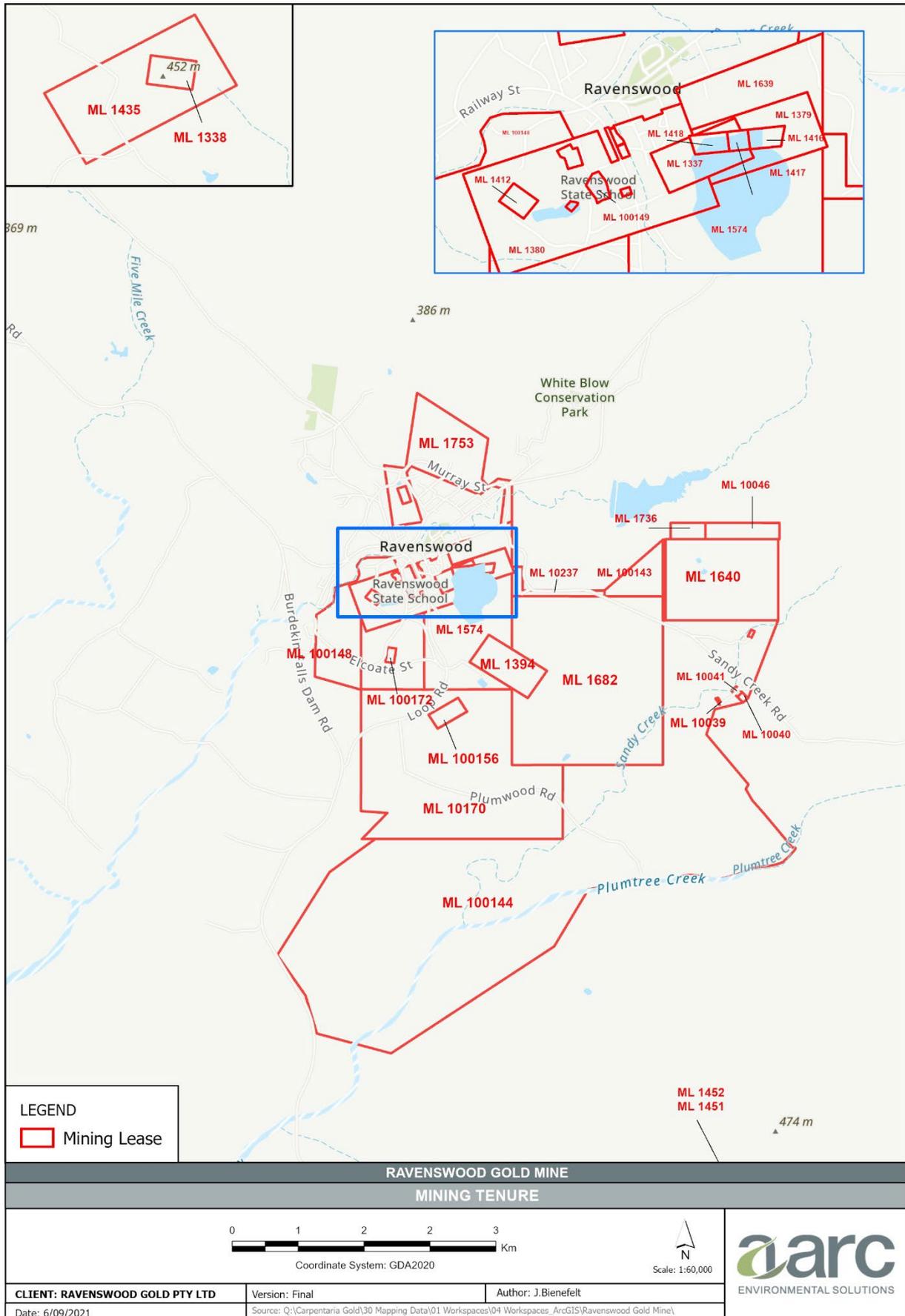
Figure 2 – Ravenswood Gold mining tenements


Figure 3 – Ravenswood Priority Living Area



Figure 4 - Proposed Disturbance Footprint

