

## 7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND OFFSETS

### 7.1 SUSTAINABILITY

The Western Australian Government has released a Sustainability Strategy for Western Australia: *Hope for the Future: the Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy* (Government of Western Australia, 2003). The strategy includes a vision for the State's mining industry and some key actions are:

- Work towards the assessment of projects using sustainability criteria.
- Foster local community involvement, particularly Aboriginal communities, pastoralists and local shires.
- Establish a transparent process to enable community awareness of the day-to-day regulatory system for the resources industry.
- Implement strategies that support the use of local employment in mining ventures, particularly using regional centres as employment hubs and encourage mining companies to maximise their purchasing of goods and services within the mine regions.

Following changes to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*, the EPA now requires all formal environmental impact assessments to address the principles of sustainability. The application of the principles of sustainability to the Project is summarised in Table 2.2.

While the Project involves the mining of a finite resource and the use of fuel resources that may one day be depleted, the Project will be planned, constructed, operated and decommissioned in a manner that meets the principles of sustainability. Midwest, in managing impacts across the triple bottom line of Social, Economic, and Environmental concerns, will address sustainability principles in a number of ways including:

- establishing sustainability principles in purchasing and contracting;
- ensuring efficient energy and water use;
- minimising waste and encouraging recycling; and
- providing for industry and community partnerships.

Management commitments in relation to these principles have been provided within the EMP and Closure Plan.

Midwest Corporation has also embraced the EPA's principles of environmental protection as part of the Project's engineering and design. The environmental objective of the Project's design, in order of priority, is to:

- completely avoid the impact if possible;
- substitute with a lesser impact;

- include rehabilitation and engineering solutions to reduce the degree and risk of impact;
- design operational controls and emergency response around reduction of impact consequences; and
- provide primary environmental offsets for the impact.

Investigations have been conducted by Midwest on all aspects of the Project to gather baseline data and to determine the types and degree of the environmental impacts of the Project. Agreement from relevant agencies was obtained for the investigation methods as part of the proposal's consultation process.

Several opportunities for impact avoidance and minimisation have been identified and implemented as part of the proposal's design phase. These have been described in previous sections of this document and include:

- design of mine plan to consider final landform design, conservation and rehabilitation needs;
- use of Koolanooka pit waters for dust suppression to reduce the volume required to be extracted from established bore fields;
- use of rail transport as required under the Transport Co-ordination Act;
- selection of site disturbance areas to best avoid clearance of vegetation; and
- improvement to rehabilitation and aesthetic quality of previously created waste dumps.

## 7.2 OFFSETS

Midwest will seek to provide appropriate environmental offsets for residual impacts that can not be avoided. Selection of environmental offsets will be in accordance with recommendations contained in the EPA Position Statement No 9 – Environmental Offsets, and with EPA Guidance Statement No 19 – Environmental Offsets, and will be determined by Midwest with further advice from the DEC. The decision framework for the use of environmental offsets (EPA, 2006) is outlined in Figure 7-1.

Midwest is open to discussion regarding offsets for the 4.46 ha of Project disturbance on the Koolanooka TEC, the 3.14 ha being potentially impacted within the dust buffer zone area of influence, the disturbance to priority species within the proposed conservation area at Mungada. However, Midwest does not believe that other project impacts warrant offset consideration. Possible contributing offsets acceptable to Midwest include:

- research or conservation funding for DEC related management in the local area;
- involvement with rehabilitation projects in farmland areas near the mine site or Shire of Morawa; and
- direct assistance with control of feral goats (by reduction programs or fencing), other feral species and weed eradication programs.

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There is the potential for Midwest to support and collaborate with local and regional bodies, such as the regional natural resource management body, the Northern Agricultural Catchment Council. As the Project area falls within the Yarra Yarra subregion, Midwest has the capability to participate in the activities of the subregional group of this body.

A number of other projects such as Hidden Treasures (DEC) and Bush Brokers (WWF) are operating in the area to identify and protect areas of conservational significance. Midwest is will consider contributing to identified projects as part of a negotiated offsets agreement.

To enable Midwest to accurately determine the required scale of offsets required, the final offset package will not be considered until all public comment and feedback related to the project has been received.

An indication of the scale of offset associated with this DSO proposal can be found in the EPA GS19. In this a new road was developed from Tom Price to Karratha via the Millstream – Chichester National Park. This development also affected TEC areas, similar to the effects of this DSO project and offsets applied in this case included rehabilitation of nearby disturbed areas, the development and repair of fencelines, and funding of weed control initiatives.

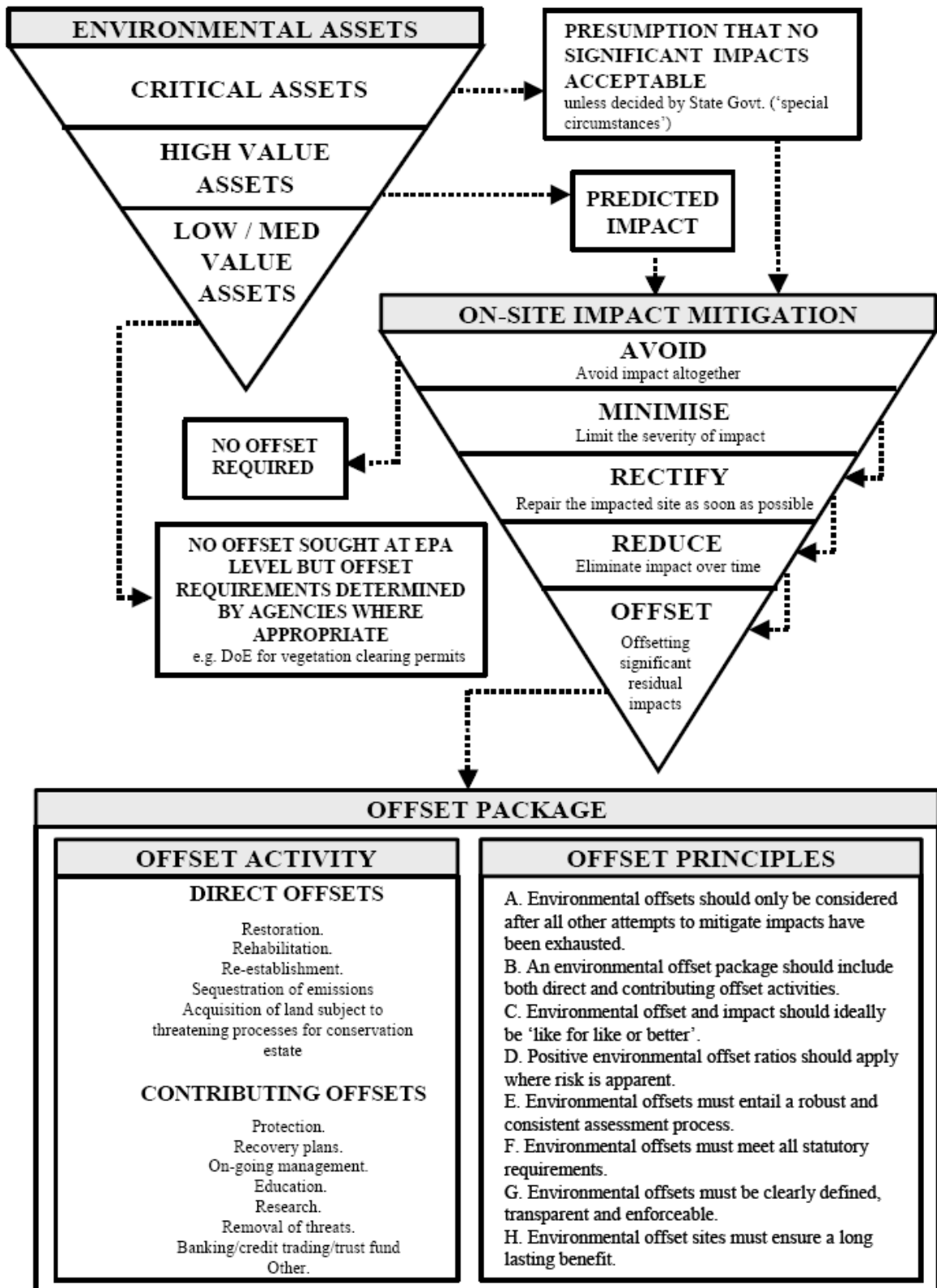


Figure 7-1 : Decision Framework for the use of Environmental Offsets.



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