

Notice

Environmental Protection Act 1994

Information request

This information request is issued by the administering authority under section 140 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to request further information needed to assess an amendment application for a site-specific environmental authority.

To: AIC Copper Pty Ltd
Suite 3, 130 Hay Street
SUBIACO WA 6008

ATTN: Nicholas Jones - Nick.Jones@aicmines.com.au

Your reference: EPML00818113 | A-EA-AMD-100814094

Our reference: 101/0008685 | C-EA-100814134

Further information is required to assess an amendment application for environmental authority

1. Application details

The amendment application for a site-specific environmental authority was received by the administering authority on 4 February 2025.

The application reference number is: A-EA-AMD-100814094

Land description: Mining Lease (ML) 90064, ML90080, ML90086 and ML90155.

2. Information request

The administering authority has considered the abovementioned application and is writing to inform you that further information is required to assess the application (an information request).

The information required is specified in Appendix 1 attached to this notice.

3. Actions

The abovementioned application will lapse unless you respond by giving the administering authority -

- (a) all of the information requested; or
- (b) part of the information requested together with a written notice asking the authority to proceed with the assessment of the application; or
- (c) a written notice –
 - i. stating that you do not intend to supply any of the information requested; and



- ii. asking the administering authority to proceed with the assessment of the application.

Should the information request require an EIS process or applicant to submit a progressive rehabilitation and closure (PRC) plan then it must be completed and submitted.

A response to the information requested must be provided by 31 October 2025 (the information response period). If you wish to extend the information response period, a request to extend the period must be made at least 10 business days before the last day of the information response period.

The response to this information request or a request to extend the information response period can be submitted to the administering authority by email to ESCairns@des.qld.gov.au.

If the information provided in response to this information request is still not adequate for the administering authority to make a decision, your application may be refused as a result of section 176 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, where the administering authority must have regard to any response given for an information request.

4. Human rights

A human rights assessment was carried out in relation to this decision and it was determined that the decision is comparable with human rights.

5. Review and appeal rights

You may apply to the administering authority for a review of this decision within 10 business days after receiving this notice. Information about your review rights is attached to this notice or search 'DESI Internal review and appeals' at business.qld.gov.au. This information is guidance only and you may have other legal rights and obligations.

If you require more information, please contact the administering authority on the telephone number listed below.

T.Gibbs

Signature

1 May 2025

Date

Teale Gibbs
Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science
and Innovation
Delegate of the administering authority
Environmental Protection Act 1994

Enquiries:
Minerals Business Centre
PO Box 7230, Cairns QLD 4870
Phone: (07) 4222 5352
Email: ESCairns@des.qld.gov.au

Attachments

[Information sheet: Internal review and appeals](#) (ESR/2015/1742)

Appendix 1: Additional information required for proposed PRC plan

Item	Relevant section	Matter	Information Request
1	Section 3.3.3 - Hydrogeology of the application supporting document (page 96) Section 4.5 – Boundary Conditions Appendix A – Ground water model report of Appendix K - Groundwater Assessment (Page 1367)	The groundwater is assessed to be recharged via precipitation. It is also noted that recharge occurs where the geological unit's outcrop or there is a downward seepage of recharge water from overlaying units. Section 4.5.1 of the report indicates that the historical rainfall with average of 434mm/yr was applied in the steady state model. The recharge factor was calibrated to a very low rate 1.43E-07. This assumes 52.2mm/yr recharge and equates 12% of the average historical rainfall. However, the recharge rate in both steady state and transient models were considered zero. It is understood that this may be justified by the proposed engineering of a lined tailings storage facility (TSF) which would prevent infiltration. In the absence of any real monitoring data to justify this prediction, precautionary principle would suggest the inclusion of a reduced recharge factor (e.g. due to factors such as partial failure in the lined TSF, cracks or edge infiltration, etc) as opposed to disabling the recharge in the model. Given that the historical recharge rate is also calculated as per the average rainfall, this is considered suitable for steady state conditions. However, to support the transient simulations or assess a time-sensitive operation such as TSF filling, the assumption of a constant average rainfall/recharge may not adequately reflect the seasonality variability. Particularly, it is evident that strong seasonal recharges occur periodically in shallow alluvium.	Provide: – a more robust assessment by comparing the key model outputs under both reduced recharge scenario and the disabled recharge scenario; – an updated transient model that considers the seasonal recharge over time; and – a revised calibration of the model taking into consideration the above matters, in addition to available seasonal data collected to date.
2	Section – 3.3 of Appendix C Eloise Copper Mine Tailings Dam 5 Design Report (page 515)	The report notes there is a likelihood of potential shallow flow path (less than 6m depth) for seepage offsite. This is despite current TSF conditions and the groundwater mounding beneath the TSF and while the groundwater model does not show any potential surface expression. The predicted likely flow path offsite has not been explored further.	Provide: – details (e.g. direction, distance, rate, etc) of the predicted flow path for seepage offsite; and – justification for no surface expressions despite likelihood of shallow seepage flow path.

3	Section 4 – Hydrogeology Appendix K - Groundwater Assessment (Page 1320) Section 3.7.1 – Ground water levels Appendix A – Ground water model report of Appendix K - Groundwater Assessment (Page 1361)	It is noted that no local hydraulic testing has been conducted in the Gilbert River Formation. The yield information is taken from the Eloise Borefield with hydraulic conductivity of 0.6m/day. The reliability of the data from the neighbouring areas such as the Eloise Borefield without an assessment of the input/s questions the predictions of the model. For example, it is not clear how far the subject bore/s from the Eloise Borefield are compared with the TSF areas (i.e. a few kilometres assumed based on the registered bores). For a site-specific model, site -specific inputs are expected, unless there is strong evidence that the formation continuity has not changed between the site and the Eloise Borefield and there are plans for site-specific testing in the target formations. The report states that the drawdown and depressurisation within the Gilbert River Formation and Proterozoic basement were locally caused by the mining activity. Deep water levels are anticipated to be reduced due to the dewatering and water supply pumping. This suggests that the hydraulic conductivity within both formations may have been locally influenced.	Provide details on: – how the hydraulic conductivity inputs across various formations in the site has been verified. – how was uncertainty in the hydraulic parameters accounted for in the model. – in the absence of local testing, how the range of variability considered in the model. – how this was qualified in terms of the potential impacts on the model predictions.
4	Section 1.4.1.3.3 of the application supporting document	Table 15 of the application identifies that the proposed post mine land use (PMLU) for the tailings storage facility (TSF) is 'consistent with surrounding environments with comparable locations within 5 KM of the TSF' and Table 16 of the application states 'suitable analogue locations are present within 5 km, and directly visible from the TSF'. However, the location of the proposed analogue site for the native ecosystem PMLU, ECM6, provided in the application is located approximately 25 km from the site.	Provide clarification on where there are comparable locations within 5 km of the TSF and justification for not selecting a suitable analogue site within this area.
5	Appendix I erosion assessment summary memo	The erosion assessment summary memo included the results of a Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) model that identified a ground cover of 75% or greater would produce acceptable erosion results (<10t/ha/y). These results were further used for the landform evolution model (LEM) where it was recommended that a 'modified soil' consisting of 75% rock by volume is applied to a depth of 0.5 m on the embankments of the TSF to achieve a suitable erosion rate of 5 t/ha/y.	Provide: – further evidence to justify the proposed use of cover of rock, litter and ground cover vegetation where the LEM erosion assessment recommends 75% rock cover to a depth of 0.5 m; and

		Section 4.1.12.10.1 of the application supporting document identifies that a functional cover of combined rock, litter and ground cover greater than 75% is to be used on the embankments for the rehabilitation criteria which is not consistent with the recommendations from the LEM assessment. In addition, while the memo included the results of LEM and WEPP models, the input parameters were omitted from the report.	– the parameters used in the erosion models.
6	Appendix E best practice options for Eloise Copper Mine tailings dam rehabilitation	Section 1.2.1.2 of Appendix E identifies that the ground cover of the analogue site, ECM6, proposed to replicate the TSF consists of 39.5% of rocks larger than 50mm and 40.5% of green vegetation. The report further recommends that the rock armour will require a planned mixture of rocks of specific size for erosion protection, to replicate visual structure and pattern of the analogue sites and provide sufficient soil matrix to support targeted vegetation. The LEM erosion assessment identifies that a rock cover of 75% is required for effective long term erosion control and further information is required to justify the suitability of the proposed analogue site where the rock cover is 39.5%.	Provide: – additional information that supports the proposed analogue site's ability to be replicated on the TSF with a 75% rock cover; or – propose an alternate PMLU that satisfies the erosion stability requirements identified in the LEM erosion modelling.
7	Section 1.4.1.1.1 of the application supporting document	The application proposes to amend Table G2 of the environmental authority (EA) however, Table 5 of the application provided for inclusion in the EA is consistent with Table G1, final land use and rehabilitation and rehabilitation approval schedule and not Table G2 landform design.	Provided an updated table that includes changes to the landform design for inclusion into Table G2 of the EA.
8	Section 1.4.1.1.1 of the application supporting document	Table 3 of the application, Amendment to EA Table D2 - TD5 Raise, proposes changes for inclusion into Table D2 Basic Details of Regulated Dams of the EA, with stage 2 identifying that the spill way level will be at 190.6 mAHD and a maximum depth of dam at spillway of 10 m. This is inconsistent with measurements provided in Table D2 of the EA where the current spillway level is lower at 186.5 mAHD however, the max depth of dam at the spillway is higher than proposed at 12 m.	Provide clarification on the depth of TD5 at the spillway and the inconsistencies in the depths proposed in the application.