

Our ref: DOC21/623312-15

Your ref: DA374-11-00-Mod-7

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Dear Rose-Anne

Subject: Sunrise Mine Modification 7 – Design Changes

Thank you for your email dated 22 July 2021 to the Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (BCS) inviting comments on the Sunrise Mine Modification 7.

The Sunrise project is a nickel, cobalt and scandium open cut mining project near the village of Fifield in Central West NSW. BCS understands that the modification involves changes to the approved mine and processing facility, accommodation camp, rail siding and road transport activities.

Assessment of biodiversity impacts is adequate at the rail siding site and a BDAR is not required

BCS notes that the development of the railway siding on the Bogan Gate Tottenham railway is proposed to be relocated approximately 500 metres south of the approved location. It will include the addition of an ammonium sulphate storage and distribution facility. Changes associated with the rail siding will require a surface development area larger than what has been previously approved. It is proposed that the project would forego clearance in the approved rail siding surface development as part of the modification.

Section 7.17 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* requires that a biodiversity development assessment report (BDAR) is required for modifications unless the authority determining the application for modification is satisfied that the modification will not increase the impact on biodiversity values.

The *Appendix F Biodiversity Review* report compares the biodiversity values at the approved railway siding site with the new proposed site. The review states:

- the area to be cleared is lower at the proposed rail siding site (2.9 hectares), compared to the approved site (3.3 hectares)
- the same plant community type is present at both sites (PCT 244)
- biodiversity credits that would be generated if offsets were required are lower at the proposed rail siding site (80 ecosystem credits) compared to the approved site (96 ecosystem credits).

BCS is satisfied that there will be an overall reduction in the area of native vegetation cleared, and a reduction in the biodiversity credit obligation at the proposed new rail siding location compared to the approved site. Therefore, the proposed new site will not result in an increased impact to biodiversity values, and therefore a BDAR is not required. In addition, given that the same PCT is being impacted at both sites, the existing revegetation requirement outlined in Schedule 3 Condition 32 of the development consent is sufficient.

BCS understands that the Scotson Lane road upgrade extension will not require clearing of native vegetation. If clearing is required, this may result in the need for a BDAR to be prepared.

Finally, BCS expects that the footprint of the approved mine and processing facility, as displayed in relevant figures in Appendix 2 of the development consent, will be amended to remove the previously approved rail siding site and replace it with the proposed site.

The modified accommodation camp facility will not result in additional surface disturbance

It is noted that the accommodation camp will increase from 1,000 personnel to 1,900 personnel and additional facilities will be constructed as outlined in Figure 14 of the *Modification Report Main Report and Appendices* report. Section 3.4.2 of the report states that the modification will not change the accommodation camp surface development area. BCS is satisfied that this component of the project modification does not require a BDAR.

The accommodation camp water pipeline alternative alignment may require a BDAR

Section 3.4.2 of the *Modification Report Main Report and Appendices* report states that the project modification includes an option for an alternative alignment of the last section of the accommodation camp water pipeline. No discussion has been provided in the report regarding whether this alternative alignment would require the clearing of native vegetation. If this alignment option is progressed, and clearing of native vegetation is required, a BDAR may be required.

Additional information is required on the increased treated wastewater irrigation area

Section 3.4.3 of the *Modification Report Main Report and Appendices* report states that the project modification will increase the size of the treated wastewater irrigation area due to the increased wastewater volume. Figure 14 displays the additional irrigation area. No discussion has been provided in the report regarding whether the irrigation area is comprised of native or non-native vegetation, or the additional area (hectares) that will be impacted by the wastewater irrigation.

Section 3.4.3 of the report states that irrigation of the wastewater will be undertaken in accordance with the *Environmental Guidelines Use of Effluent by Irrigation*. Section 4.10 of the guidelines state that separation distances and buffer zone management should be considered to ensure the protection of native vegetation. Therefore, the proponent should provide additional information to confirm whether native vegetation will be cleared to allow for the irrigation to occur, or whether native vegetation will be impacted by the irrigated wastewater. In either scenario, impacts to native vegetation should be assessed through the preparation of a BDAR.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please contact Helen Knight, Conservation Assessment Data Officer, via helen.knight@environment.nsw.gov.au or (02) 6883 5327.

Yours sincerely



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10 August 2021