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 application for a proposed PRC plan.*

To: QNI Resources Pty Ltd, QNI Metals Pty Ltd
1 Greenvale Street,
YABULU QLD 4818

Email:
George.lukacs@qni.com.au;
judy.h.osborne@gmail.com

ATTN: George Lukacs; Judy Osborne

Our reference: EPML01624913; 101/0001664

Further information is required to assess an application for a PRCP schedule

1. Application details

The application for a proposed PRC plan was received by the administering authority on 17 February 2022.

The application reference number is: EPML01624913

Land description: ML5866, ML5864

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 requested is specified in Attachment 1 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

Queensland Government

(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.

A response to the information requested must be provided by 5 October 2022 (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.

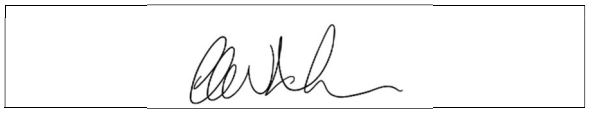
The response to this information request or a request to extend the information response period can be submitted to the administering authority by email to ESCairns@des.qld.gov.au.

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 compatible with human rights.

If you require more information, please contact Michelle Ramsay on the telephone number listed below.



Signature

31/03/2022

Date

Chris Wake
Department of Environment and Science
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

Attachment 1: Additional information requested for proposed PRC plan – QNI Resources Pty Ltd & QNI Metals Pty Ltd – Brolga Mine

Attachment 1: Additional information required for proposed PRC plan

Item	Relevant section (Proposed PRC plan and/or PRCP Guideline)	Matter	Information Request
Rehabilitation Planning Part			
1	PRC plan Cover Page	The proposed PRC plan cover page does not include all environmental authority holders for EA EPML01624913, QNI Metals Pty Ltd is missing.	Provide a revised PRC plan that includes all EA holders of EA EPML01624913 on the cover page of the PRC Plan.
2	PRC plan Appendix 2	EA EPML01624913 attached in Appendix 2 of the PRC plan is a superseded EA. The current EA has an effective date of 23/6/2021.	Provide revised PRC plan that includes a copy of the updated EA in Appendix 2 of the PRC Plan.
3	PRC plan Table 4-5 Description of rehabilitation activities for each rehabilitation area, Section 6.1.3 Soil and capping material assessment and Section 6.1.9.4 Soil spreading and seeding practices	The PRC plan indicates there are topsoil dumps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 which will be utilised for rehabilitation of areas and a subsoil layer applied at a minimum of 0.5m depth and 100mm of topsoil overlying will be applied to all areas. Information on following is unclear: • The volume of topsoil at each topsoil dumps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. • The volume of topsoil and subsoil required for each rehabilitation area.	Provide a revised PRC plan with details of the volumes, source and locations of topsoil and subsoil to be used on rehabilitation areas.

		• Whether the topsoil reserve on ML5866 is sufficient for rehabilitation activities. • The source of topsoil for any disturbed areas around the water bores in RA24. • Where subsoil is to be sourced and if there is sufficient reserve for rehabilitation activities on site, particularly is material contained in the screening stockpile, ROM and Waste Rock Dump are unsuitable for the intended purpose. • It is not apparent in the planning part which area will receive topsoil from topsoil dump 4.	
4	PRC plan Section 8.0 Monitoring and Maintenance, Appendix 3 Brolga Rehabilitation Management Standard Section 8.2 Reference Sites	The Rehabilitation Management Standard refers to three reference sites that will be established for the areas to be rehabilitated to grazing land and one reference site established for the conservation area. It is unclear where the reference sites are located.	Provide a revised proposed PRC plan that clearly identifies where the reference sites are located and provide justification for their selections as being suitably representative.
5	PRC plan Section 6.3 Voids	The PRC plan indicates that three residual voids will remain on ML5866 - Pit 1, Pit 2 Extension and Pit 8. It is proposed these dams will have a post mining land use of grazing and it is assumed cattle will access stored water via ramps into the pits. It is unclear if all residual voids will need safety berms and fencing, particularly with regards to the steep slope gradients of these features.	Provide a revised PRC plan describing whether residual voids will need safety berms and fencing and where necessary add rehabilitation milestone criteria to the PRCP schedule.
PRCP Schedule			
6	PRCP schedule - Rehabilitation Areas	Refinement of the rehabilitation areas is required in the proposed PRCP schedule including (but not limited to):	Provide a revised proposed PRC plan that: • Assigns Milestone completion dates of 10 December for each

	(Section 4.1 PRCP Guideline)	• Milestone completion dates must be 10 December of the relevant year to provide a consistent reporting period (refer to Section 4.1 step 7 of the PRCP Guideline). • Disturbance areas are inconsistent in Table 2-1, Table 4-2 of the Rehabilitation planning part and the PRCP schedule. For example, Table 2-1 identifies Dam 4 as having an area of 1,900 square metres, but RA21 states the total rehabilitation area size is 0.17ha. Table 4-2 allocated an area of 3.56ha to Pit 2, but RA2 states a total rehabilitation area as 3.02ha. • Where multiple milestones will be completed within a single 12-month period, the schedule does not need to be broken into shorter time frames (i.e. multiple columns). For example, at RA1, the first two columns should be amalgamated to show completion of RM1 – RM5 within a single period of time (30 April 2024 – 10 December 2024). • On a number of Rehabilitation Areas, the cumulative area available is different to the total rehab area size. For example, at RA3, the Total Rehabilitation Area is stated as being 3.56ha, but the total cumulative area is 3.02ha. • RA17 and RA18 are inconsistent with Table 4-2 of the Rehabilitation planning part as RA17 includes front pad, topsoil Dump 4 and Table 4-2 has RA17 only as front pad and RA18 including topsoil dump 4. • The Rehabilitation planning part indicates only partial disturbance of the mining leases associated with RA22 (Brolga) and RA23 (Canoona) has occurred as part of the mining activities. By definition, a Rehabilitation Area can only include those areas disturbed by mining that require progressive rehabilitation. Remaining, undisturbed land must be indicated on the Final site design as having a PMLU but cannot be incorporated into a Rehabilitation Area or assigned Rehabilitation Milestones where no progressive rehabilitation is required.	relevant year in the PRCP schedule. • Assigns consistent disturbance areas in both the Rehabilitation planning part and the PRCP schedule. • Aggregates multiple milestones due in the same 12-month time period into a single column entry in the PRCP schedule. • Ensures the cumulative area available in an RA is the same as the total rehabilitation area. • Consistently describes which mine domains are featured in RA17 and RA18. • Includes only those areas that have been disturbed by mining activities in the schedule as part of RA22 and RA23.

7	Rehabilitation Milestones (Section 4.1 PRCP Guideline)	Requirements for rehabilitation milestones are set out in Section 4.1 of the PRCP Guideline. Refinement of the proposed PRCP Schedule is necessary to meet these requirements, including: • As proposed, RM4 (Landform non-polluting) provides for an opportunity to check the landform has maintained its integrity after surface preparation works and prior to revegetation activities. Table 4-3 of the Rehabilitation planning part indicates that RM4 will likely overlap with RM3. As explained in Section 4.1, Step 5 of the PRCP Guideline, each rehabilitation milestone must be supported by milestone criteria that facilitate achieving subsequent rehabilitation milestones. It is recommended that the criteria proposed in RM4 are incorporated into RM3, RM4 is deleted, and sufficient time allocated in the schedule for completion of RM3. • As proposed, RM7 and RM8 have a very similar set of milestone criteria and purposes (identified in Table 4-3 of the Rehabilitation planning part). A set of Reference milestones are provided in Appendix 3 of the PRCP Guideline, and it is noted that the Reference Milestone 'Achievement of post-mining land use to stable condition' effectively represents both the proposed RM7 and RM8. It is recommended that RM7 and RM8 are amalgamated into a single Rehabilitation Milestone and sufficient time allocated in the schedule. • The dates by which milestones must be completed must allow for sufficient time to have elapsed. This is necessary to complete the activities associated with each milestone and also to ensure achievement of each milestone criterion can be demonstrated. Particularly with regards to the later milestones where vegetation will be established, a number of vegetative outcomes achieved to demonstrate self-sustaining and resilient vegetation communities, no development or presence of active erosion, achievement of surface and groundwater quality etc. For a number of Rehabilitation Areas only 3 – 4 year time periods have been allocated to complete achievement of all milestones necessary for the progressive rehabilitation of a Rehabilitation Area.	Consider the matters raised and where appropriate, provide a revised PRC Plan that: • Incorporates criteria from RM4 into RM3 and deletes RM4 from the schedule. • Merges RM7 and RM8 into a single Rehabilitation Milestone. • Ensures sufficient time is allocated for each Rehabilitation Milestone to be achieved.

		• The Rehabilitation planning part indicates (Table 4-3) that the nontronite stockpile will require a 2-year period between bulk earthworks (RM2) and topsoil application (RM3) to allow settlement and consolidation of recently applied rock material to the landform. This time period is not proposed in the PRCP schedule.	
8	Milestone criteria	• Some criteria fail to meet SMART principles. For example – o RM2 'site otherwise geotechnically stable' and 'no significant erosion features present'. It is unclear how these criteria will be measured and demonstrated as being achieved. o RM5 – the criterion regarding revegetation of pasture areas with pasture grasses should either list species to be seeded or refer to the list provided at Section 6.1.9.1 of the Rehabilitation planning part. o RM5 – no specific criteria are present to demonstrate revegetation of forest and sparse woodland areas. o RM8 – the criterion regarding Land Suitability Class should identify the minimum suitability class achieved (e.g. Class 4 or better). Achievement of this criterion should also be certified by an appropriately qualified person. o RM8 – the criterion that refers to achieving water quality targets as identified in the EA should clearly state either the actual EA condition or list the water quality targets.	Review milestone criteria and provide a revised PRCP schedule that ensures criteria meet SMART principles.