

Appendix D Standard Criteria

THE STANDARD CRITERIA

The Standard Criteria is provided in Schedule 4 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, as follows:

- (a) the principles of ecologically sustainable development as set out in the 'National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development' (NSED);
- (b) any applicable environmental protection policy;
- (c) any applicable Commonwealth, State or local government plans, standards, agreements or requirements;
- (d) any applicable environmental impact study, assessment or report;
- (e) the character, resilience and values of the receiving environment;
- (f) all submissions made by the applicant and submitters;
- (g) the best practice environmental management for activities under any relevant instrument, or proposed instrument, as follows—
 - (i) an environmental authority
 - (ii) an environmental management program
 - (iii) an environmental protection order
 - (iv) a disposal permit
 - (v) a development approval
- (h) the financial implications of the requirements under an instrument, or proposed instrument, mentioned in paragraph;
- (a) as they would relate to the type of activity or industry carried out, or proposed to be carried out, under the instrument;
- (i) the public interest;
- (j) any applicable site management plan;
- (k) any relevant integrated environmental management system or proposed integrated environmental management system; and
- (l) any other matter prescribed under a regulation.

National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development

The Objectives and Guiding Principles of the National Strategy are as follows:

- To enhance individual and community well-being and welfare by following a path of economic development that safeguards the welfare of future generations;
- To provide for equity within and between generations;
- To protect biological diversity and maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems;
- Decision making processes should effectively integrate both long and short-term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations;
- Where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- The global dimension of environmental impacts of actions and policies should be recognised and considered;
- The need to develop a strong, growing and diversified economy which can enhance the capacity for environmental protection should be recognised;
- The need to maintain and enhance international competitiveness in an environmentally sound manner should be recognised;
- Cost effective and flexible policy instruments should be adopted, such as improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms; and
- Decisions and actions should provide for broad community involvement on issues which affect them.

Mining Sector

The NSESD also outlines broad challenges and provides a framework to meet the challenges for each major sector. The challenge for the mining sector (Part 2 Chapter 5) is: 'To further develop the mining industry in a way which manages the renewable and non-renewable resources on which it depends in an efficient manner which is also consistent with the principles of ESD'.

The NSESD outlines the following two objectives to meet the challenge:

- 1) to ensure mine sites are rehabilitated to sound environmental and safety standards, and to a level at least consistent with the condition of surrounding land; and
- 2) to improve community consultation and information, improve performance in occupational health and safety and achieve social equity objectives.

Summary

The Objectives and Guiding Principles of the NSESD and the Standard Criteria from the EP Act 1994 can be summarised into six relevant categories:

- Intra-generational equity;
- Inter-generational equity;
- Precautionary Principle;
- Biodiversity Conservation;
- Integration of Economic and Environmental Interests; and
- Holism.

Intra-generational equity

The Project incorporates the principle of intra-generational equity through ongoing community consultation and associated agreements / compensation with current land users. Intra-generational equity ensures that all current generation land users still have rights and interests in relation to the Project site.

Throughout the Project planning stage, all interested and affected parties and relevant government departments were consulted and provided with copies of public reports regarding the Project proposal. From this, comments and submissions received were incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the EIS. In addition, agreements and compensation packages were negotiated where appropriate. This also complies with community consultation criteria contained in the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* in that relevant submissions and public interest were taken into account in decision making process for the Project.

Further information on the consultation process is contained in the Community Consultation Report (Appendix E).

In addition to the Community Consultation Program, a separate Indigenous Cultural Heritage Access Agreement and Cultural Heritage Management Plan are currently being negotiated between the Proponents and the Mitakoodi and Mayi People. These strategies ensure that current Indigenous users of the site are able to continue their cultural practices where possible, are involved in the decision making process with regard to Indigenous Cultural Heritage values of the Project site, and are duly compensated for any losses that may occur.

During Project construction and operation, complaints registers will be maintained to document the concerns of the public in relation to air quality, noise, vibration, transport or other impacts from the Project. Complaints will be investigated and the appropriate mitigation strategies employed to ensure minimal impact on the public.

Inter-generational equity

The Project incorporates aspects of inter-generational equity through rehabilitation of the Project site during the life of the Project and after decommissioning of the mine. Inter-generational equity ensures that future generations can enjoy the features and resources of the landscape that presently exist.



Inter-generational equity seeks to protect resources so as not to diminish the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Post mining land uses seek to recreate the environment prior to mining and detailed baseline studies undertaken ensure this environment is well understood prior to commencement of the Project. Where possible the site will be rehabilitated to the standard of the natural environment in the region prior to mining.

With the nature of the mining industry not all aspects of the resources of the site will be available for future use however the rehabilitation plan seeks to recreate the landscape to the best possible level during and post mining.

Precautionary Principle

The Precautionary Principle is inherent in this proposal due to the nature of an Environmental Impact Statement. Environmental studies are undertaken to ensure that risks to the environment posed by the Project (small and large-scale) are considered over both the long and the short term, and the best possible methods are adopted to mitigate these risks, this being the foundation of the precautionary principle.

The precautionary principle also encompasses the concept that if there is limited information available on an impact, caution should be exercised to limit the effects of the unknown. The Project incorporates this concept by conducting baseline studies to gather all necessary information prior to mining, then undertaking ongoing monitoring of environmental conditions during construction, operation and decommissioning to enable continual improve of mining practices. This will aid in maintaining a level of caution and limiting adverse impact of the Project on the existing landscape.

Biodiversity Conservation

Biodiversity Conservation is a principle of ESD policy considered in the Project proposal. Baseline studies for terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna were undertaken, and ecologically significant species and ecosystems have been considered. The legislation and EPA guidelines below were used to assess the biodiversity within the Project site and the wider region:

- *Vegetation Management Act 1999;*
- *Vegetation Management Regulation 2000;*
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992;*
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999;* and
- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency Biodiversity Status.

Disturbance to the identified vegetation communities will be minimised where practicable, particularly within the identified Endangered Regional Ecosystem through which the proposed haul road will cross. Disturbed areas are to be revegetated with species native to the area at the conclusion of mining. This will encourage pre-existing ecosystems to reform and maintain biodiversity in the Project site at decommissioning. Monitoring of rehabilitation performance against pre-agreed standards will be undertaken to ensure the success of chosen rehabilitation strategies.



A monitoring program will be implemented to monitor for any impacts associated with the Project and its activities to the Purple-necked Rock-wallaby, which is listed as Vulnerable under Schedule 3 of the *Nature Conservation and (Wildlife) Regulation 2006*.

In addition to this, management strategies to assist in the removal of pest species identified under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* are included in this proposal and this will aid in conserving the biodiversity of the area.

Integrating Economic and Environmental Interests

The concept of integrating environmental, economic and social interests in project management is one of the main objectives of the National Strategy for ESD. A mining proposal may be initiated by pursuing economic goals; however by completing an Environmental Impact Study the ecological and social values of the site are considered alongside the economic values.

The Project will add significantly to the Queensland and Australian Economies by increasing trade of metalliferous resources. In addition to the Project is a part of the mining industry as a whole, which greatly contributes to the ongoing strength of the Australian economy. The mining industry pays significant government royalties for the right to mine in Australia, and a flow-on effect from increased expenditure on related goods and services underpins many smaller regional communities. This contributes to a strong national economy, which the government can choose to redistribute to meet societal needs in accordance with the guiding principles outlined in the NSESD.

Holism

By taking a holistic approach to project management, the Project will ensure the ESD principle will become part of the Exco culture.