Exploration Mining Management Plan User Guide

11 January 2019
### Acronyms

You will find the following acronyms in this document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Full form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAPA</td>
<td>Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABN and ACN</td>
<td>Australian Business Number and Australian Company Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEC</td>
<td>Association of Mining and Exploration Companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIC-ABR</td>
<td>Australian Securities and Investments Commission – Australian Business Register</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENR</td>
<td>Department of Environment and Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPIR/</td>
<td>Department of Primary Industry and Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>Exploration Licence</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPBC</td>
<td><em>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Minerals Council of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Mineral Lease</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMA</td>
<td><em>Mining Management Act</em></td>
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<td>MMP</td>
<td>Mining Management Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTA</td>
<td><em>Mineral Titles Act</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOBS</td>
<td>Site of Botanical Significance</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCS</td>
<td>Site of Conservation Significance</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRIKE</td>
<td>Spatial Territory Resource Information Kit for Exploration</td>
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Purpose

This user guide has been developed to provide guidance and support to individuals and companies (the Operator) completing the Application for Authorisation and preparing a Mining Management Plan (MMP), in order to undertake mineral exploration in the Northern Territory (NT). The guide also clarifies the additional information necessary to obtain an Authorisation under the *Mining Management Act* (MMA).

Regulatory Requirements

Before undertaking any mining activity (exploration) in the NT, the following documentation must be submitted for assessment to the Department:

I. Application for Authorisation
II. Mining Management Plan
III. Security Calculation

This applies to any exploration activities likely to cause substantial disturbance (e.g. land clearing, drilling, etc.). An Operator is required to hold a mineral title granted under the *Mineral Titles Act* (MTA), or be appointed Operator by the owner of a mining site under the MMA, prior to submitting an Application for Authorisation, MMP and security calculation to the Department. These documents contain Project information to enable full assessment by the Department against the requirements of the MMA.

The MMP and supporting information must be reviewed and, if necessary, amended by the Operator every 12 months as specified in your Authorisation. If on review the MMP needs amending, the Operator is to submit the amended MMP to be assessed on or before the anniversary of the Authorisation. However, if on review the MMP does not need amending, the Operator is required to advise the DPIR in writing on or before the anniversary of the Authorisation.

If changes to an approved MMP are proposed, an updated MMP in the form of an amendment must be submitted and approved prior to proposed amended mining activities commencing.

The information requested in the following sections are required under the MMA.

I. Application for Authorisation

The Authorisation provides the Operator with approval to undertake the work detailed in the MMP for the period specified, and subject to the conditions, in the Authorisation.

The Application for Authorisation form submitted to the Department WILL NOT be made public. Please note that the Application for Authorisation form is also used for extractive and mining related activities, however this guide is only applicable to applications for exploration activities.

Section 1 – Project Details

The applicant must select the appropriate checkboxes in this section:

- ‘New Authorisation’ – for applications under Section 36(1) of the MMA. For instance, where there is a new Project and/or the ACN/ABN related to an existing project changes.
- ‘Variation of Authorisation’ if the applicant holds an existing Authorisation and proposes changes to the approved activities (e.g. exploration), mining interests, Operator’s name and/or project’s name.
- ‘Exploration’ is for mining activities that involve exploratory work, such as drilling and costeans, and fall within an Exploration Licence (EL). Note: exploration activities can occur on a Mineral Lease (ML) on the existing Authorisation.
• The Project name is required to identify which project the Authorisation pertains to and the Authorisation number for existing Authorisations.

Section 2 – Operator Details

This section is required to ensure contact details are kept current in the Department’s database.

• Include name of Operator as shown on the ASIC-ABR register or the applicant’s name in the case where an ACN number does not exist.
• Include ACN and ABN numbers if both available.
• Include the main business street and postal address.
• Include the contact details (name and title position) of the nominated contact in which the Department will deal with for all matters related to the Authorisation/Project.
• Include the nominated contact phone number and email address. An alternative contact can be included should the nominated contact be temporarily unavailable.

Section 3 – Declaration

This application must be signed and dated by a senior representative of the company who has the appropriate level of Authority to do so. This ensures the Operator is accountable for the information provided in the application.

II. Mining Management Plan

The MMP is the primary tool for managing compliance with the MMA. The MMP clearly sets out all the environmental and legal obligations that must be met by the Operator. The MMP, excluding any commercial in confidence material, WILL BE made public. The department considers commercial-in-confidence material to include:

• Security estimates and calculations
• Commercial contractual information
• Confidential agreements

Following approval of the MMP the Operator is required to make the MMP, with the agreed commercial-in-confidence information removed, available to the public within 14 days of approval. The Operator must provide a website link to the MMP on the company website or request that it be published on the DPIR website.

The MMP template can be adjusted to suit each operation. However, the omission of information requested will impede on the assessment process. Therefore, the applicant is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested to the Department and/or provide justification if information cannot be supplied.

Section 1 – Project Details

Some of the information requested in this section has already been provided in the Application for Authorisation. The Application for Authorisation and the MMP are two separate documents, and operator/project identifying information is required to link the two documents. Furthermore, this information must be included in the MMP as required under the MMA. In this section, provide the following information:
• Project name, existing Authorisation number and Operator name consistent with the details provided in the Application for Authorisation.
• A brief description of how to access the project site from the nearest town or community.
• The commodity(s) that are being explored for.
• The type of mining activities that will be undertaken as per the box checked in the Application for Authorisation or Variation of Authorisation (i.e. exploration).
• Include the proposed start and finish dates for the activities proposed in the MMP. Include any other date considered relevant to the operations (e.g. Stages). Note: the MMP is not limited to a yearly period. Works can be outlined for a maximum of four years.

Mining Interests, Land Ownership and Organisational Structure

• List the mining interests (titles), the titleholder name/s, the expiry date and the property name/land holder (e.g. pastoralist, Aboriginal land trust, and freehold land) for each title.
• Include organisational structure/table that provides details of key positions and names of those with responsibility and accountability for the mining activities detailed in this MMP. Delete/add those that may or may not be relevant.

Section 2 – Operator Self-Assessment of Environment

The Operator is responsible for identifying all environmental risks and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. Follow the steps outlined in the assessment tables. Evidence of consultation and the resulting management plans, must be provided as an appendix to the MMP.

• Step 1: Check for threatened species. It is likely a threatened species will show up in all reports. Therefore, the Operator must undertake a likelihood analysis, which looks at the likelihood of the species or its habitat occurring at or near the site. If the analysis results in a high likelihood, then a “Significant Impact Assessment” should be undertaken, which may require consultation with the DENR – Flora and Fauna Division. The Matters of National Environmental Significance - Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1, contain information in relation to undertaking a likelihood analysis and significant impact assessment.

Useful resources

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<tr>
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<th>Web address</th>
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• Step 2: Determine if declared weeds have been reported in the project area. Contact the relevant landholder/s and DENR – Weeds Branch to determine if weeds are present and what management actions are required to control/manage the weeds. It is the responsibility of the owner and occupier of land to eliminate or control declared weeds.

Useful resource

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</table>
• Step 3: Note the Government is proposing to amend the exemption of water licencing under the Water Act for mining activities, including exploration. This section will be updated in light of any changes in the future.

• Step 4: Determine if the project is likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

**Useful resources**

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• Step 5: Seek advice from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) to determine if sacred sites exist with the project area. Relevant Land Councils may also need to be contacted if operating on Aboriginal Land. Evidence of an Authority Certificate or Register Search are not required, however, locations of sacred sites or exclusion areas should be shown on maps appended to the MMP.

**Useful resource**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Web address</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aapant.org.au/">http://www.aapant.org.au/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Step 6: Conduct a search of the archaeological and heritage databases to determine if there are any sites within the project area. Evidence of archaeological and heritage searches are not required, however, locations of sites should be shown on maps appended to the MMP.

**Useful resource**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Web address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NT Heritage Register</td>
<td><a href="https://nt.gov.au/property/land/heritage-register-search-for-places-or-objects">https://nt.gov.au/property/land/heritage-register-search-for-places-or-objects</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please contact a Mining Officer if assistance is required in completing Section 2 of the MMP.

**Section 3 – Amendments**

This section should list the changes made since the last MMP submission. Where no new activities are proposed, but completion of prior approved activities are planned, an amended MMP is not required.

**Section 4 – Activities Proposed**

Details of the proposed activities should be outlined in the Table provided. For projects with numerous titles, columns can be added in the existing table or additional table/s included. These details assist Mining Officers in making an accurate assessment of the security bond.
• Include the proposed activities for the next period. Multiple work programs can be included for up to four years as a staged approach. Only a security bond for the first stage is required until the Operator is ready to commence the next stage.

• Ensure bulk samples pit have been approved under the Mineral Titles Act. Contact Mineral Titles should bulk sample pits be proposed.

• Proposed activities such as exploration declines, shafts and pits, are not authorised activities under an Exploration Licence (EL). These activities may be authorised on a Mineral Lease (ML), however the Mining Management Plan for Mining Activities must be submitted for assessment.

Section 5 – Previous Disturbance (for existing Authorisation only)

The information contained in this table provides details of previous exploration activities carried out since the last approved MMP.

Section 6 – Environmental Management

These are the Department’s minimum environmental standards for exploration activities. By checking each box, the Operator agrees to adopt these standards while conducting exploration activities on a project area.

Should the Operator choose not to follow the Department’s minimum standards, justification and alternate measures must be provided. Omitting information required for assessment will impede the process as further information will be requested.

Section 7 – Remediation and Closure

These are the Department’s minimum standards for remediation and closure of the proposed activities. By checking each box, the Operator agrees to adopt these standards following exploration activities on a project area.

Should the Operator choose not to adopt the Department’s minimum standards, justification and alternate measures must be provided. Omitting information required for assessment will impede the process as further information will be requested.

Section 8 – Required Attachments

All the required attachments, if applicable, must be submitted as appendices to the MMP. Should one of the attachments not be included, justification must be provided. Omitting information required for assessment will impede the process as further information will be requested.

Please provide the following:

• The security calculation spreadsheet, ensuring the information included reflects the disturbance outlined in the MMP. Should any of the information included in the spreadsheet contradict those of the MMP, explanation will be required prior its assessment and acceptance.

• A completed ‘Nomination of Operator form’, if the title holder is not the Operator of the site as shown on Section 1 ‘Mining Interests and Ownership’ of the Mining Management Plan.

• An excel spreadsheet detailing all the proposed hole IDs and coordinates; or, coordinate details of the polygon of the proposed project works area(s). A preferred format is presented in a template available on the DPIR website.
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- Mapping data (kml, shape or track log file) of the camp site and of the existing tracks that will be used to access the site and of those that will be created; ensure a clear distinction between the existing and the proposed tracks.
- A topographic map including the work area/s showing all known current and proposed disturbances, title boundaries, drill holes, tracks, rehabilitated areas, camp sites, sacred/heritage sites, and environmental constraints.
- A remediation register as per the template provided on the DPIR website must be attached to the MMP (for existing Authorisations). This register is a valuable tool when assessing security in order to track remediation work. Should evidence of remediation work submitted to the Department be satisfactory, security can be partially refunded before the closure of the project.
- Before and after photographs of completed works are required to demonstrate successful remediation of the site. Failure to supply these may result in security bond not being returned due to lack of evidence.
- A Radiation Management Plan, if the target commodity is a radioactive mineral (e.g. uranium or thorium), or exploration activities are proposed in an area known to contain or is likely to intersect radioactive minerals, or exploration activities where elevated levels of naturally occurring radioactive material may result in workers and the public receiving radiation doses exceeding the recommended annual limit of 1mSv/annum.

Section 9 – Declaration

The submitted MMP must be signed and dated by a senior representative of the company who has the appropriate level of authority to do so. The reason for this is to ensure the senior representative of the company is aware of the information provided in the MMP, and implications for the operation and regulation of the activities.

III. Security Bond Calculation

The security calculation tool provided on the Department’s website must be completed for any new activity proposed. Please check the Department’s website regularly for any updates on the security calculation tool prior to completing it.

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The proposed activities as stated in "II. Mining Management Plan" must be included in the calculation.

Should a partial security refund be requested, evidence of remediation is required to be submitted and clearly identified in the security calculation. The Department may retain part of the security amount for post closure purposes, which will be released after remediation has been deemed successful and the project has been closed out by the Department. The security bond will only be fully refunded when all outstanding remediation works are completed by the Operator and a Certificate of Closure is issued.