



Media Statement

9th July 2018

EPA recommends approval for BHP's long-term mining plan in the Pilbara

A strategic mining proposal for the Pilbara, by resources giant BHP, has been recommended for approval by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

BHP Billiton Iron Ore Pty Ltd's *Pilbara Expansion-Strategic Proposal* sets out the miner's operations in the region for the next 50-100 years, including new iron ore mines, the expansion of existing mines and associated infrastructure.

EPA Deputy Chair Robert Harvey said the Authority had given the strategic proposal careful consideration over the past six years, including impacts to fauna, flora, surface and ground water, air quality and social surrounds.

"The benefit of assessing a strategic proposal is that we are able to take a bigger picture view of the potential environmental impacts the proposals may have," Mr Harvey said.

"Through the assessment process the EPA was able to consider the cumulative impacts of BHP's future proposals, rather than assessing impacts on a case-by-case basis, as individual mines or developments are proposed.

"The EPA's environmental impact assessment on BHP's strategic proposal released today, outlines the conditions that may be applied to each development, including environmental management plans, a greenhouse gas management plan and a mine closure plan."

Under the *Environmental Protection Act (1986)*, a strategic proposal identifies one or more future proposals that may, individually or in combination, have a significant effect on the environment.

Mr Harvey said the proponent would still be required to refer individual proposals outlined in the strategic document as derived proposals to the EPA to determine if they meet the high environmental standards set by the strategic assessment. Each referral will be released for public comment.

"Once a derived proposal is referred to the EPA, the Authority will determine if there is any significant new information, or if there has been a significant change in the relevant environmental factors, since the strategic proposal was assessed, that would require the reassessment of the issues raised by the referred proposal."

The EPA's report to the Minister for Environment is now open for a two-week public appeal period, closing 23 July 2018. Appeals can be made at www.appealsconvenor.wa.gov.au.

The Minister for Environment will make the final decision. EPA Report 1619 is available at www.epa.wa.gov.au.

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