

EPA recommends exclusion zones for proposed Worsley expansion

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has stepped up rehabilitation and offset requirements in its report on South32's proposed expansion of the Boddington Bauxite Mine and Worsley Refinery.

Today the independent EPA published its recommendation that the proposal may be implemented subject to strict conditions which include exclusion zones around rivers, streams and significant flora and fauna.

During the assessment the EPA took the unusual step of giving stakeholders and community groups extra time to comment on the proposal, bringing the consultation timeline to 10 weeks. Nearly 700 submissions were received and the proponent's response to these totalled over 720 pages and 80 appendices.

The public environmental review over more than five years assessed the proposal's impacts to flora and vegetation, terrestrial fauna, terrestrial environmental quality, inland waters, greenhouse gas emissions, social surroundings and air quality. Over this period South32 reduced its proposed native vegetation clearing footprint to 3855ha — a significant change to the 7119ha originally proposed.

"While this now equates to less than one per cent of the Northern Jarrah Forest when combined with its existing approved operations, the proponent has employed substantial mitigation measures to avoid and minimise impacts on significant flora and fauna," the EPA said in its report.

"The EPA considers rehabilitation of the Northern Jarrah Forest was a key aspect of this assessment and believes the recommended conditions will achieve an environmental outcome that sees the improved restoration of forest values."

The EPA report also recommends a comprehensive 12,000ha offsets package which ensures no net loss in significant fauna habitat as well as regional scale benefits including improved ecological linkages and environmental buffers.

The EPA's Worsley Mine Expansion – Revised Proposal report to the Minister for Environment is now open for a three-week public appeal period, closing 29 July 2024. Appeals should be directed to the [Office of the Appeals Convenor](#). The Minister for Environment will make the final decision on the proposal. EPA Report 1768 can be found on the [EPA website](#).

EPA Media Contact: Jenni.Storey@dwer.wa.gov.au 0434 734 997