

*Environmental Protection Act 1986*

Section 43A

**NOTICE OF DECISION TO CONSENT TO AMEND A REFERRED PROPOSAL  
DURING ASSESSMENT**

**PERSON TO WHOM THIS NOTICE IS GIVEN**

(a) Alcoa of Australia Limited (ABN: 93 004 879 298)  
181-205 Davy Street  
BOORAGOON WA 6154

**PROPOSAL TO WHICH THIS NOTICE RELATES:**

Pinjarra Alumina Refinery Revised Proposal  
Assessment No. 2253

Pursuant to s. 43A of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) gives approval to the assessment of the proposal being completed in respect of the proposal as amended in accordance with the proponent's request:

- Increase clearing extent by 2,652 hectares, resulting in an overall clearing extent of 9,273 hectares within a 41,403 hectare development envelope.

The amended proposal content document is attached.

**EFFECT OF THIS NOTICE:**

1. The assessment of the proposal is to be completed in respect of the proposal as amended in accordance with the decision set out in this notice.
2. The proposal as amended in accordance with this notice is taken to have been referred to the EPA under s. 38 of the EP Act.

**RIGHTS OF APPEAL:**

There are no rights of appeal under the EP Act in respect of this decision.



**Prof. Matthew Tonts**  
**Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority**  
CHAIR

24 June 2022

**Attachment 1- Amended proposal content document**

## Summary of reasons for decision – request to amend a referred proposal during assessment under s. 43A of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*

**Proposal title:** Pinjarra Alumina Refinery Revised Proposal

**Environment Online Reference Number:** N/A

**Date request to amend referred proposal under s. 43A received:** 19-05-2022

**Proponent:** Alcoa of Australia Limited

**Proposal referral date:** 05-06-2020

**Level of assessment:** Environmental Review – Public Environmental Review, 8-weeks

### Existing referred proposal:

The referred proposal is a significant amendment to the existing Pinjarra Alumina Refinery proposal which is already approved and being implemented under Ministerial Statement No 646.

The referred proposal currently comprises the following primary components:

- an increase in alumina production at the Pinjarra Alumina Refinery from 5.0 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) to 5.25 Mtpa; and
- mining of no more than 6,621 hectares (ha) of native vegetation within a 41,403 ha development envelope at the Huntly mine. The mining is proposed in the Myara North and Holyoake regions, for the purpose of supplying the Pinjarra Alumina Refinery and for export to third party customers.

The existing referred proposal is at the draft environmental review stage of assessment.

### Short description of amendment(s) sought:

The proposed amendment is the inclusion of 2,652 ha of clearing at the Huntly Mine for the purpose of supplying bauxite to the Kwinana Alumina Refinery.

The clearing for supply of bauxite to the Kwinana Refinery was always planned to be undertaken by the proponent, however, was excluded from the original referred proposal on the basis it would instead be authorised under Alcoa's State Agreement and the *Alcoa-Huntly and Willowdale Mine Sites Exemption Order 2004*.

After consultation with the EPA, Alcoa now proposes to include this clearing as part of the referred proposal, so that the proposal which is assessed by the EPA and subject to a public review process includes all clearing at the Huntly Mine. The proponent has stated this will allow consistency of the State approvals processes which apply at the Huntly mine and ensure consistency with the Huntly Mine transition referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC 2022/09204). This referral is currently with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for consideration.

Assessment of the clearing required to supply bauxite to Kwinana Alumina Refinery in addition to the clearing already included in the proposal to supply Pinjarra and third-party export, increases the total clearing for the Huntly Mine component of the Revised Proposal from 6,621 ha to 9,273 ha. The proposed amendment would be contained within the 41,403 ha mine development envelope of the Revised Proposal, which is currently under assessment by the EPA.

**Decision:**

Amendment(s) to proposal as set out in attachment 1 is approved

**Environmental factors relevant to amendment:**

- Flora and vegetation: key values of significant flora species, and ecological communities, threatened/priority ecological communities, old growth forest areas, and significant vegetation.
- Terrestrial fauna: key values of significant fauna, migratory species, aquatic fauna, short range endemic invertebrate fauna and Commonwealth listed species.
- Inland waters: key values of public drinking water supplies, water dependent ecosystems, Peel Yalgorup System Ramsar site, hydrological regimes, ground and surface water, streams, reservoirs, tributaries, and brooks.
- Social surroundings: key values of Aboriginal heritage, European heritage, tourism, recreation, and amenity.
- Terrestrial environmental quality: key values of soil profiles and land units, natural drainage regimes and groundwater.
- Air quality: key values of human health, flora and vegetation and terrestrial fauna.
- Greenhouse gas emissions: key values of GHG emissions, including in the context of, and when combined with, GHG emissions from the existing Pinjarra Alumina Refinery proposal which is already approved and being implemented under Ministerial Statement No. 646.

**Summary of likely changes to environmental impacts from proposed amendment**

Amendment sought	Changes to environmental impacts
<p>Change to clearing extent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Increase in size by 2,652 ha</li></ul>	<p>The 2,652 ha of clearing the Huntly Mine for the purpose of supplying bauxite to the Kwinana Alumina Refinery was always intended to be undertaken by the proponent. However, as it was proposed to occur under Alcoa’s State Agreement and clearing exemption process, the proponent excluded it from the proposal which was originally referred to the EPA for assessment.</p> <p>The EPA requested the proponent include all proposed clearing at the Huntly mine in the proposal, regardless of its intended use, so all potential and cumulative impacts of the mining could be considered together.</p> <p>Therefore, while there is no change in actual on ground clearing or environmental impacts as a result of clearing for bauxite supply to the Kwinana Refinery being included in the referred proposal, there is a change in the scope of the proposal which the EPA is assessing.</p> <p>The proposed amendment will mean the EPAs assessment process will need to consider likely increased impacts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Flora and vegetation through removal of additional species and communities</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Terrestrial fauna through removal of habitat</li> <li>– Inland waters through increased turbidity and runoff</li> <li>– Terrestrial environmental quality through increased runoff, soil salinisation and erosion</li> <li>– Air quality through increased dust emissions</li> <li>– Social surroundings through changes to visual amenity, tourism, and recreational values</li> <li>– Greenhouse Gas through increased emissions as a result of clearing,</li> </ul> <p>The EPA considers each of these impacts may be significant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ from the amendment on its own</li> <li>○ in context of existing proposal</li> <li>○ with cumulative impacts</li> <li>○ all 12-significance consideration(s) in the <i>Statement of environmental principles, factors, objectives and aims of EIA</i> (EPA 2021) are relevant to the proposed amendment.</li> </ul> <p>The EPA considers the additional and cumulative impacts of the amendment will be considered during the public environmental review period (8 weeks) of the ERD which is already required for the existing referred proposal - subject to a review of the Environmental Scoping Document, to ensure the potential impacts are adequately considered, understood and assessed.</p> <p>The EPA also considers it would be preferable for the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of all mining at the Huntly mine to be considered through a single environmental review process, rather than separately under different processes.</p>
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**Holistic assessment**

The EPA has considered how assessing an increase in clearing at the Huntly mine may affect the EPA's holistic assessment. The increase in clearing extent has the potential to impact on all key environmental factors – removal of flora and vegetation may result in the removal of fauna habitat, as well as impact on inland waters through changes in hydrology, groundwater and turbidity. The increase in clearing may in turn cause an increase in dust and greenhouse gas emissions during the clearing process and impact on visual amenity and recreational/tourism values and social surroundings.

**Summary of consultation**

There has not been any consultation on the proposed amendment. The EPA is satisfied that the Public Environmental Review (8-weeks) will allow consultation of the impacts of all clearing at the Huntly mine, including clearing from the amendment and cumulative and holistic impacts.

**Summary of consideration of amendment**

The EPA has considered whether, if the proposal were already approved, the amendment would be a significant amendment. This has included considering the likely significance of:

- Effects of the proposed amendment on its own

- Effects of the proposed amendment in the context of the existing referred proposal
- Cumulative environmental impacts
- Holistic impacts.

The EPA considers the impacts may be significant and should be considered as part of the Public Environmental Review, 8-weeks.

The EPA has considered whether it has sufficient information about the proposed amendment to be able to reasonably proceed with assessment of the amended proposal with or without performing any additional functions at this stage. The EPA considers that assessment of additional and cumulative impacts of all clearing at the Huntly mine as part the EPAs Public Environmental Review (8-week) process will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of both the assessment process and public review process, subject to a review of the Environmental Scoping Document to ensure the impacts are adequately dealt with.

The EPA considers the amended proposal will still be substantially the same character as the existing referred proposal.

***Approval subject to additional functions***

The EPA considers the amended proposal to be substantially the same character as the existing referred proposal. The EPA considers that the amendment may be a significant amendment if the proposal were already approved. The EPA considers it can reasonably proceed with assessment of the amended proposal, including any significant additional impacts, if it performs additional functions related to the amendments.

The additional functions which the EPA has decided to perform are:

- Review and revise the Environmental Scoping Document, to ensure additional, cumulative and holistic impacts are adequately considered, understood and assessed.
- The EPA will also review and revise the Environmental Scoping Document to take account of amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* - in force since October 2021

**Attachments**

- Amended Proposal content document

**Appeals:** Decision not appealable.



**Prof. Matthew Tonts**

CHAIR

Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority

**Date:** 24 June 2022