

***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) Tellus Holdings Ltd (ABN: 97 138 119 829)  
151 Castlereagh Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

**PROPOSAL TO WHICH THIS NOTICE RELATES:**

Sandy Ridge Facility – Alignment of Gate Waste Acceptance Tonnage  
Assessment No. 2309

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:

Change of the waste cell design including:

- A reduction in depth of the capillary break layer from 4 metres (m) to 1m (reduction by 3m)
- Increase in capacity for waste storage in cells.

A figure of the amended waste cell design 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.

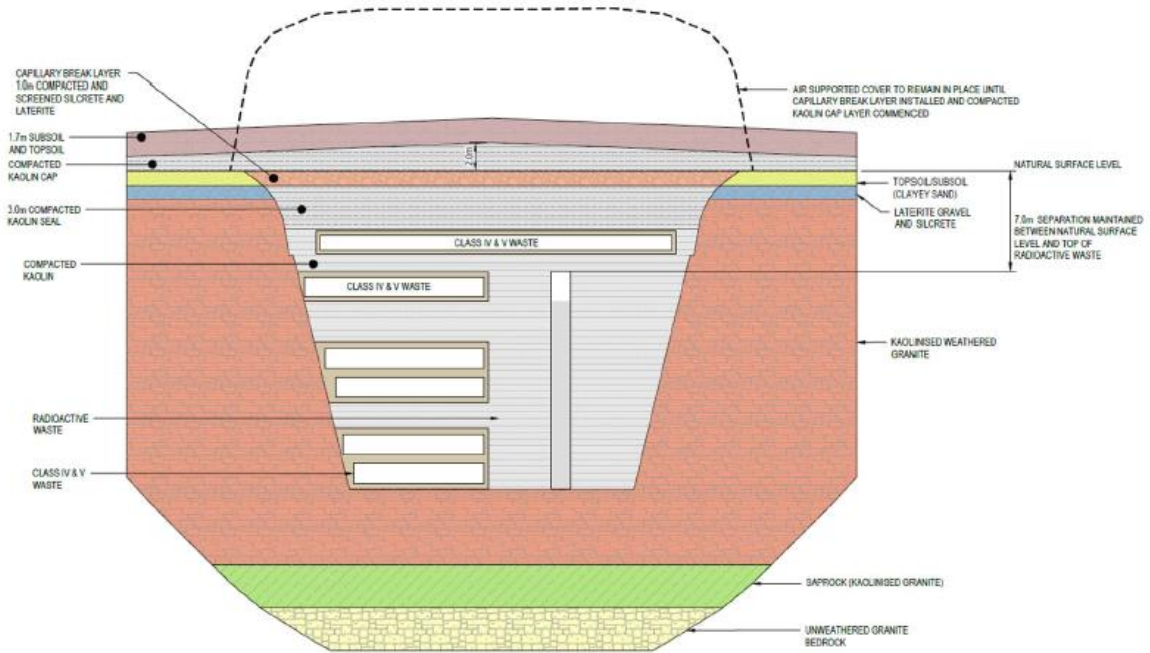
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**Prof. Matthew Tonts**  
**Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority**  
CHAIR

22 August 2022

Attachment 1: Figure of amended waste cell design

# Attachment 1 – Figure of amended waste cell design



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

**Proposal title:** Sandy Ridge Facility – Alignment of Gate Waste Acceptance Tonnage

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

**Date request to amend referred proposal under s. 43A:** 27 June 2022

**Proponent:** Tellus Holdings Ltd

**Proposal referral date:** 9 July 2021

**Level of assessment:** Public Environmental Review

**Existing referred proposal:**

Tellus is proposing to align the approved tonnage of waste received at the gate of its existing Sandy Ridge Facility (currently up to 100,000 tonnes per annum ((tpa) with the approved tonnage of waste (including treated waste) permitted to be disposed of into the facility's waste disposal cells (up to 280,000 tpa).

The proposal does not require any significant change to existing infrastructure at the facility, however the potential increase in material received at the gate would result in additional waste delivery vehicles accessing the facility and additional personnel to manage the operation of the facility.

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

The proposed amendment includes a change in the waste cell cap design, specifically a reduction in the thickness of the capillary break layer from 4 metres (m) to 1 m (a reduction of 3 m). The reduction in thickness of the capillary break layer would also result in an increase in capacity for the storage of wastes in each cell. This change in waste cell design results in Class IV and V wastes being placed over radioactive waste shafts. A depth of 7 m will remain between low level radioactive wastes and the natural surface. The change will also result in the storage of waste closer to the surface than originally proposed.

Tellus advises that the reduction in thickness of the capillary break layer would improve the design and overall cap performance for waste cells. The change is expected to increase the water storage capacity of the upper soil revegetation layers, which increases the volume of water available for release by evapotranspiration and hence less water percolating through the sealing layer into the cells.

There is no change to the content of the Proposal Content Document.

**Decision**

Amendment(s) to proposal is approved.

### Environmental factors relevant to amendment(s)

- Terrestrial Environmental Quality
- Inland Waters

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

Amendment sought	Changes to environmental impacts
Change of waste cell design <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduction in depth of the capillary break layer from 4 m to 1 m (reduction by 3 m)</li><li>- Increased capacity for the storage of Class IV and V wastes in cells</li></ul>	<p>The proposed changes do not alter the key environmental factors likely to be impacted by the proposal including Terrestrial Environmental Quality and Inland Waters.</p> <p>Preliminary information provided by the proponent indicates that the change in design will improve the cell cap performance, however the proponent is expected to provide further information during the assessment process to demonstrate the integrity of the cell design and that the EPA's objectives could be met.</p> <p>EPA Services is currently considering the draft ESD prepared by the proponent. Additional work items will be incorporated in the draft ESD regarding the waste cell design.</p> <p>The change is unlikely to significantly change the environmental outcomes or the proposal's consistency with EPA objectives.</p>

### Summary of consultation

The proponent has consulted with the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and the Radiation Health Unit (RHU, Department of Health) regarding the proposed changes. EPA Services has also consulted internally with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. The consultation is considered adequate, and the approved amendment will be incorporated in the ERD, which will be subject to a 6 week public review period.

### 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; and
- holistic impacts.

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 has considered whether the amended proposal will still be substantially the same character as the existing referred proposal.

***Approval – may be a significant amendment but can proceed with current assessment approach***

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, but that the EPA has enough information to reasonably proceed with assessment of the amended proposal without performing any additional functions at this stage.

**Attachments**

- Figure 1: showing original waste cell design
- Figure 2: showing amended waste cell design

**Appeals:** Decision not appealable.

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**Prof. Matthew Tonts**

CHAIR

Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority

**Date:** 22 August 2022

## Attachments

Figure 1 showing original waste cell design

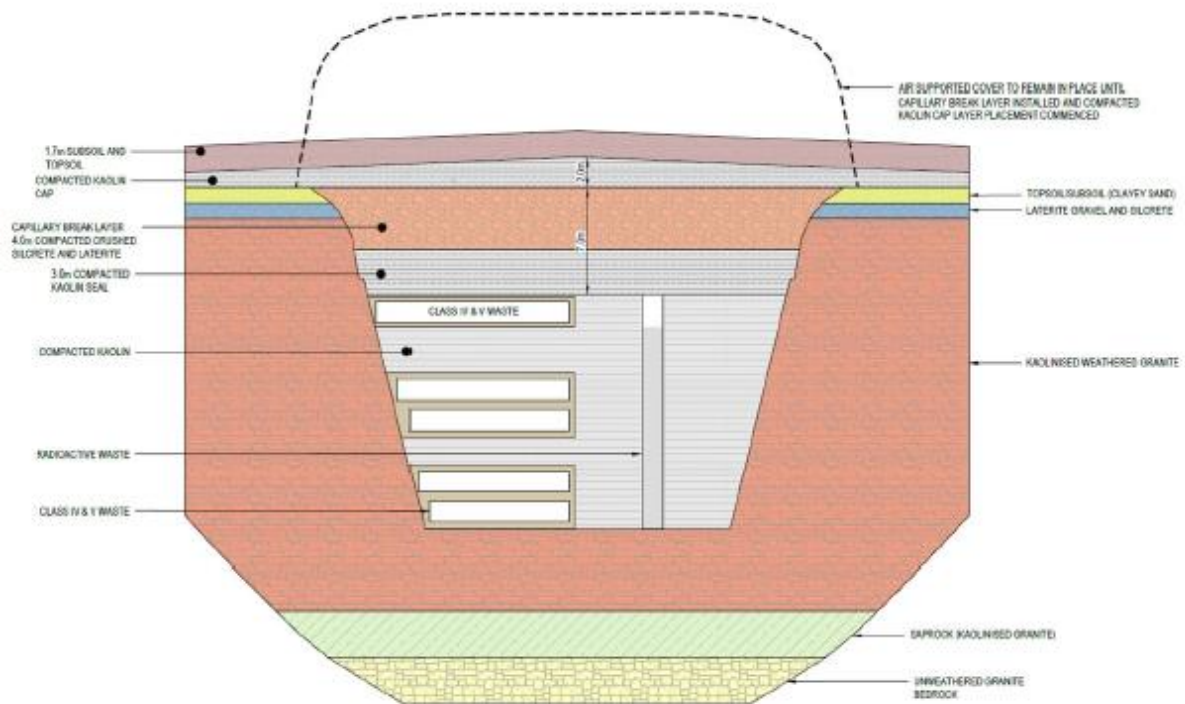


Figure 2 showing amended waste cell design

