



Mr Sean Gregory
General Manager – Exploration & Development
Polaris Metals Pty Ltd
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APPLECROSS WA 6153

Our Ref: OEPA2011/807
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Dear Mr Gregory

PUBLIC ADVICE UNDER SECTION 39A(7)
Environmental Protection Act 1986

PROPOSAL: Jackson 4 (J4) Drilling Programme on M77/1242 and E77/1097
LOCATION: Approximately 105 km north of Southern Cross
LOCALITY: Shire of Yilgarn
PROPONENT: Polaris Metals Pty Ltd
DECISION: Not Assessed – Public Advice Given

Further to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) letter of 12 March 2012 with regard to the above proposal, the Office of the EPA (OEPA) advises that the Minister for Environment recently dismissed all appeals against the EPA's determination that your proposal should be treated as *Not Assessed-Public Advice Given*.

Accordingly, the OEPA provides the following advice:

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Environmental Issues

- a. Clearing of native vegetation
- b. Rehabilitation

2. Advice and Recommendations regarding Environmental Issues

The proposal is located on the western extremity of the Helena-Aurora Range. The Helena-Aurora Range is known to contain a number of high environmental values including rare species, restricted vegetation communities, fauna, habitat, landscape values etc.

In accordance with EPA Report No. 1256: *Advice on areas of the highest conservation value in the proposed extensions to Mount Manning Nature Reserve* (May, 2007), the Helena-Aurora Range is considered to be the highest value of the banded ironstone formation (BIF) ranges.

Having regard to the values of the proposal area and surrounds, and the nature of the proposed exploration activities, the program needs to be carefully managed to ensure impacts are minimised as much as possible, and residual impacts are limited. The OEPA had previously discussed potential conditions that could be applied to the exploration program under the *Mining Act 1978*. Previous advice from Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) confirmed it was able to apply conditions of the kind identified by the OEPA, and that compliance inspections can also be undertaken by DMP Environmental Inspectors.

a. Clearing of native vegetation

The EPA notes that the proposal involves the clearing of native vegetation.

The EPA expects that the DMP will manage the program so as to minimise direct and residual impacts associated with exploration and related activities. Flora and vegetation management should include, but not be limited to:

- minimum impact area for drill pads and associated working areas;
- minimum size (i.e. width and length) and number of access roads, with a review of all new proposed access roads to prevent unnecessary clearing;
- reporting of non-conformance with impact predictions; and
- contingency measures in the event impact predictions are being exceeded.

In addition to the above management measures, monitoring in the form of fixed point photograph locations are recommended to demonstrate consistency with impact predictions during operation, and as a measure for rehabilitation success at the completion of the exploration program. Fixed point photograph locations are to have regard to ensuring an even spread across the entire proposal area to capture all ground disturbance. Photographs should be taken at monthly intervals during operations and at the completion of rehabilitation works. Photographs are also to be provided to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).

In the event photographs or other compliance inspections indicate that impact predictions have been exceeded, and notwithstanding any compliance action undertaken by the DMP, it is expected that the DEC will be consulted with respect to any proposed mitigation measures.

b. Rehabilitation

The OEPA notes that the native vegetation in the proposal area is of high environmental value, therefore rehabilitation on the site needs to be undertaken progressively and be consistent with site specific rehabilitation criteria. It is understood the proponent will rehabilitate the area consistent with the requirements of the DMP and as set out in EPA Guidance Statement No. 6: *Rehabilitation of Terrestrial Ecosystems*. It is also expected that the DEC will be consulted in relation to proposed rehabilitation of areas disturbed by exploration activities.

The EPA expects the DMP to consider and implement this advice through the approvals process. If you have any enquiries, please contact the person cited above.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Sutton
Director
Assessment and Compliance Division

27 November 2012