

PART A – Introduction and Description

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSED DARWIN CITY WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT AT THE DARWIN WHARF

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1 INTRODUCTION

These Guidelines have been developed to assist URS Australia Pty Ltd on behalf of the Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment in preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Darwin City Waterfront Redevelopment in accordance with Clause 8 of the Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act (1982)* of the Northern Territory.

These Guidelines consist of two sections:

- Part A (this section) is the introduction and description of the project and the EIS process; and
- Part B (attached) details the type and extent of information to be included in the Draft EIS.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by URS Australia Pty Ltd outlines a proposed redevelopment of the area known as the Darwin Wharf Precinct. The project, henceforth termed the Darwin City Waterfront Redevelopment, proposes to revitalise/redevelop an area of approximately 27.2 hectares of land zoned CBD, south of the existing Darwin CBD. The specific nature of the project has not been finalised though a conceptual plan has been created to provide a template to help facilitate a final design for the site by a successful tenderer. Within the concept plan the following components have been included as likely/preferred land use considerations for the waterfront site:

- passive and active areas of open space incorporating community and recreation-oriented facilities;
- significant family-oriented swimming feature;
- continuous waterfront promenade;
- extension of the Smith Street axis to the waterfront to provide ready access to the civic and retail areas of the Darwin CBD;
- generous car parking;
- community buildings and facilities that reflect the historical and cultural values of the site;
- provision of public art;
- construction of a internationally-renowned/regarded Convention and Exhibition Centre (CEC);
- possible marina-oriented development;
- focal “landmark” feature;
- residential development in keeping with the site master plan;
- serviced apartments and possibly a hotel to complement the CEC; and
- complementary retail, commercial and hospitality developments such as restaurants and cafes.

Aside from the Convention and Exhibition Centre, which is expected to provide a catalyst for the entire redevelopment, construction of residential, commercial and hospitality facilities will be reliant on market forces such as demand.

As redevelopment progresses in the future, it is probable that environmental management issues will have to be considered case-by-case for individual developments to ensure appropriate practices/standards and quality assurance procedures are followed for the life of the project.

If at some future stage the proponent desires to significantly alter the design of the project, then a new Notice of Intent will have to be submitted to the Office of Environment and Heritage to determine if formal assessment (at the Public Environmental Report [PER] or EIS level) will be required.

3 PURPOSE OF THE EIS

The draft EIS aims to provide:

- a source of information from which individuals and groups may gain an understanding of the proposal, the need for the proposal, the economic and other benefits that might arise from the project, the alternatives, the environment that it would affect, the impacts that may occur and the measures taken to minimise those impacts;
- a basis for public consultation and informed comment on the proposal; and
- a framework against which decision-makers can consider the environmental aspects of the proposal, set conditions for approval to ensure environmentally sound development and recommend an environmental management and monitoring program.

The object of these Guidelines is to identify those matters that should be addressed in the draft EIS. The Guidelines are based on the initial outline of the proposal in the NOI. Not all matters indicated in the Guidelines may be relevant to all aspects of the proposal. Only those matters that are relevant to the proposal should be addressed. The Guidelines, however, are not necessarily exhaustive. They should not be interpreted as excluding from consideration any matters which are currently unforeseen that emerge as important or significant from scientific studies or otherwise during the preparation of the draft EIS, the public consultation process and the preparation of the Supplement to the draft EIS (response to submissions).

The draft EIS should be a self-contained and comprehensive document written in a clear, concise style that is easily understood by the general reader. Cross-referencing should be used to avoid unnecessary duplication of text. Text should be supported where appropriate by maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive material. Detailed technical information and baseline surveys should be included as appendices.

Content in the draft EIS should include both quantitative and qualitative analysis as appropriate. Impacts should not just be treated as adverse: beneficial effects should also be identified.

The justification of the project in the manner proposed should be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives should be comprehensive. For the purpose of these Guidelines, the “principles of ecologically sustainable development” are as follows:

- the precautionary principle - namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- inter- and intra-generational equity - namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and
- improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources.

4 EIS PROCESS

The EIS process, as described by the Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act 1982* of the Northern Territory, is displayed in Figure 1.

Overview of the Process

Once the Minister has determined that an EIS is required, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) prepares Draft Guidelines for Preparation of an EIS, after consulting with relevant advisory bodies.

These Draft Guidelines are then subject to public review for a 14-day period. At the end of this period, OEH has 14 days to finalise the Draft Guidelines for Ministerial approval. If approved, final Guidelines are forwarded to the proponent.

When the proponent has prepared a Draft EIS, this document is exhibited for public review and comment for a minimum of 28 days, during which time advisory bodies also comment on the document.

Comments are forwarded to the proponent, who addresses issues in a Supplement to the Draft EIS. The Supplement is then reviewed by advisory bodies.

OEH then has 35 days to prepare an Environmental Assessment Report and Recommendations based on the Draft EIS and Supplement. If the Minister approves the Report and Recommendations, these are forwarded to the responsible (consent) Minister(s) for inclusion in permit, lease or license conditions and in relevant management procedures (e.g. Environmental Management Plans).

The Assessment Report and Recommendations are included on the OEH website and hard copies are provided to respondents and selected public libraries and viewing sites.

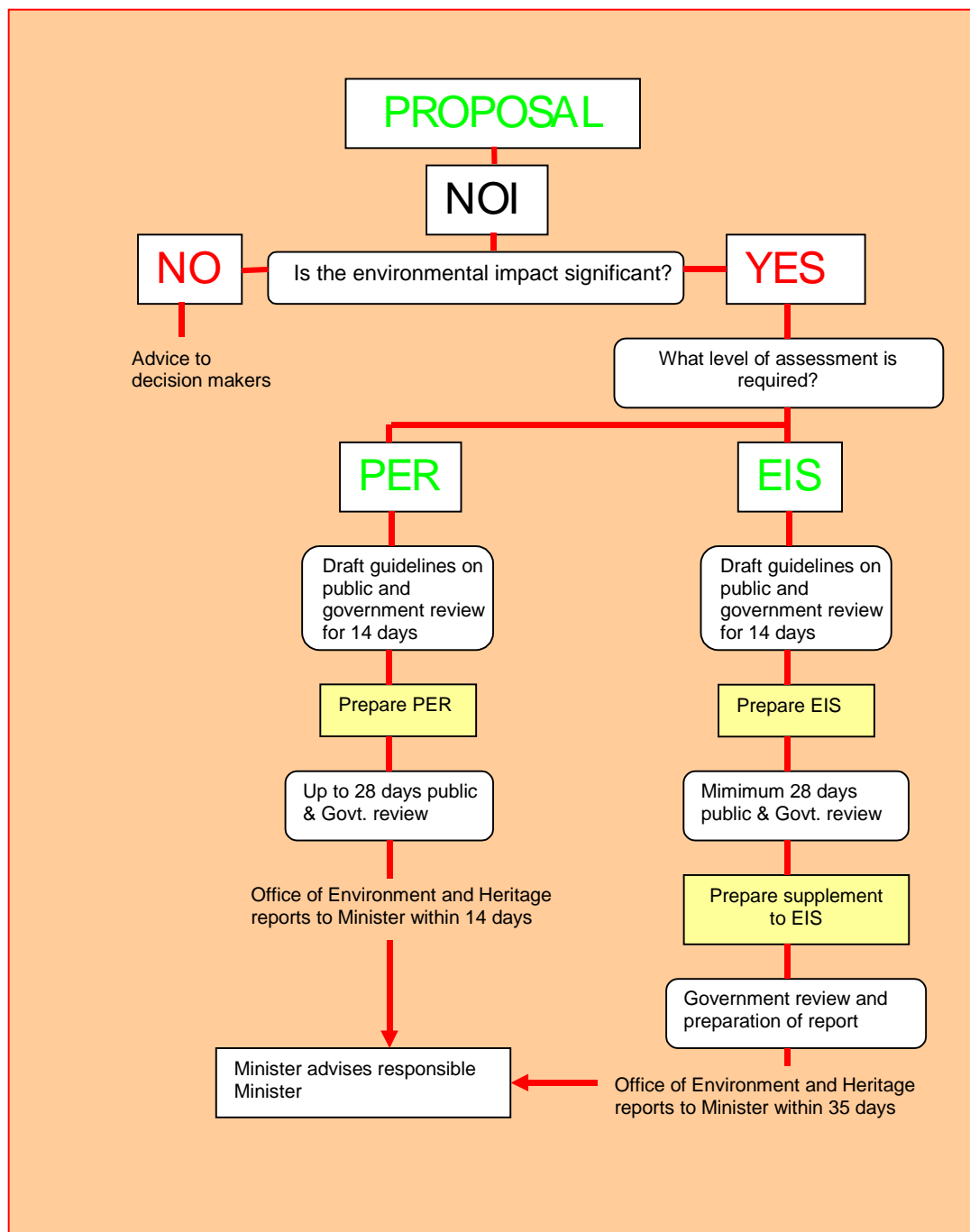
5 ADMINISTRATION

The Project Officer is Rod Johnson, Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment. The contact number is (08) 8924 4002 and facsimile (08) 8924 4053, e-mail: roderick.johnson@nt.gov.au.

Three “Preliminary” copies of the Draft EIS should be lodged with the Office of Environment and Heritage for internal review prior to release for public and advisory body comment.

Once this internal review is complete and any necessary changes implemented by the proponent, approximately 25 bound copies of the Draft EIS will be required for distribution to NT advisory bodies and public viewing locations (e.g. libraries, council offices, etc.). In addition, 8 CD-ROM copies (in ADOBE*.pdf format) plus two unsecured Microsoft Word copies should be submitted (to allow placement on the Office’s Internet site and to facilitate production of the Assessment Report and Recommendations).

The proponent should also consider producing at least several copies for direct sale to the public, on request.



6 **FIGURE 1**
The Northern Territory Environmental Assessment Process.