

NOTICE OF DECISION AND STATEMENT OF REASONS

Section 56 of the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act)

Regulations 174 and 175 of the *Environment Protection Regulations 2020* (EP Regulations) for a decision on a significant variation

Name of proposed action	Rover 1 Project
Proponent	Castile Resources Pty Ltd
NT EPA reference	EP2023/030
Description of proposed action	Development and operation of an underground iron oxide copper gold mine to produce copper, gold, cobalt and magnetite, approximately 70 km southwest of Tennant Creek in the Barkly local government area. The proposed action is located on NT Portion 3556 and the land tenure is Aboriginal freehold. The estimated operational life of the mine is approximately 10 years, followed by 5 years of rehabilitation.
Nature of the significant variation	Key changes to the proposed action include: • removal of the onsite downstream processing of: ○ bulk sulfide concentrate to produce gold, copper and cobalt and ○ high grade magnetite product • removal of the 40 km long gas pipeline connecting the site to the Amadeus gas pipeline • relocation of proposal infrastructure components at the Rover 1 site through a redesign.
Decisions on significant variation	The assessment can continue with the existing environmental impact statement process to assess the proposed action and the significant variation within the existing terms of reference, in accordance with EP Regulation 173(1)(c)(i).
Person authorised to make decision	Dr Paul Vogel AM – Chairperson, as delegate of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)
Signature	
Date of decision	4 February 2026
Matters considered	EP Regulation 172 and 173(6): • the accepted notice of significant variation • submissions (received under EP Regulation 170 and 171) in relation to the significant variation consultation period from 12 December 2025 to 14 January 2026 ○ government authority submissions received: 5

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- public submissions received: Nil
 - whether a different or new method of environmental impact assessment is required for the significant variation considering the following:
 - whether the potential for a significant impact on the environment of the significant variation differs in a material way from the impacts already identified in the assessment process for the proposed action
 - whether, and the extent to which, the significant variation would change the potential for significant environmental impacts already identified for the proposal
 - whether the objects of the EP Act and the purpose of the environmental impact assessment process (in section 42 of the EP Act) would be undermined if the matters raised in the significant variation were not assessed
 - EP Regulation 59 – the method of environmental impact assessment.
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Consultation

Submissions from government authorities have identified:

- significant hazardous chemicals will be used on site including cyanide for gold processing which requires a Major Hazard Facility Licence
- requirement for a Traffic Impact Assessment in accordance with the Austroads Guide to Traffic Management Part 12: Integrated Transport Assessments for Developments
- that works should not commence until an Authority Certificate¹ is obtained as changes to the groundwater regime are expected due to plans for dewatering the underground mine and pumping from a borefield, which may have an effect on Aboriginal sacred sites if present
- it will be necessary for the proponent to clearly quantify the water balance in terms of sources and supply rates/schedules, consumption rates/schedules and water supply storage/disposal details for the amended project
- that the proposed variations are unlikely to affect any additional biodiversity values beyond those originally identified, and that the existing terms of reference for an EIS are adequate to address biodiversity values that may be impacted by the proposal.

All submissions received are available on the NT EPA website.

¹ An [Authority Certificate](https://www.aapant.org.au/services/authority-certificates) is a legal document issued by the [Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority](https://www.aapant.org.au) that protects sacred sites from damage by setting out the conditions for carrying out specific works on an area of land and/or sea (AAPA website <https://www.aapant.org.au/services/authority-certificates>).

Statement of Reasons

Overview

The significant variation:

- removes the onsite downstream processing of bulk sulfide concentrate to produce gold, copper cobalt, and also high-grade magnetite product
- removes the 40 km long gas pipeline connecting the site to the Amadeus gas pipeline, and
- relocates proposal infrastructure components at the Rover 1 site through a redesign.

The relocation of infrastructure and removal of these elements from the proposed action does not reduce the potential significant impacts already identified in the assessment process. The varied proposed action still includes underground mining, facilities and infrastructure, groundwater extraction, sewage irrigation to land, a gas fired power station and some onsite primary processing of ore e.g. crushing, grinding and separation through a magnetic separator (iron ore), gravity (gold) and bulk sulfide float (bulk sulfide concentrate).

The NT EPA considers that the varied proposed action has the potential to significantly impact environmental values associated with the eight environmental factors² previously identified in the NT EPA's [Notice of Decision and Statement of Reasons](#) of 9 January 2024; and the method of standard assessment by environmental impact statement is required for the same reasons in relation to regulation 59 identified in the NT EPA's [Notice of Decision and Statement of Reasons](#) of 9 January 2024.

Justification

The assessment can continue with the existing assessment method (environmental impact statement) within the existing terms of reference (NT EPA terms of reference for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Rover 1 Project, 2 February 2024) because:

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| Regulation 172(2)(a) | The potential for a significant impact on the environment remains and does not differ in a material way from that already identified in the assessment process for the proposed action. |
| Regulation 172(2)(b) | The significant variation does not materially change the extent, type or amount of the potential significant impacts from those already identified in the assessment process. |
| Regulation 172(2)(c) | The matters raised in the significant variation do not remove the potential for significant environmental impact. A decision to continue with the existing assessment method is consistent with the objects of the EP Act and purpose set out in section 42 of the EP Act. |

Conclusion

The NT EPA considers that the significant variation does not remove the potential for the proposed action to have a significant impact on environmental values associated with eight environmental factors due to the location, magnitude and geographic extent of the proposed action.

There is still a potential for significant impact on the environment from the varied proposed action and standard assessment by environmental impact statement is required in accordance with the existing terms of reference.

² [NT EPA Environmental factors and objectives](#)
