

Our ref: 33-D25-5043

Mr Steve Hedges
Vice President Operations
Groote Eylandt Mining Company Pty Ltd
Rowell Highway
ALYANGULA NT 0885

Dear Mr Hedges

RE: Groote Eylandt Mining Company Pty Ltd – Excess Water Disposal Project

I refer to the Groote Eylandt Mining Company Pty Ltd (GEMCO) Excess Water Disposal Project referral received by the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) on 14 March 2025.

Staff of the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment have conducted a review of the referral on behalf of the NT EPA and consider that additional information is required, pursuant to regulation 40 of the Environment Protection Regulations 2020,

The NT EPA concurs and therefore GEMCO is directed to provide additional information in response to Attachment A. Provision of the additional information is required to inform the NT EPA's decision-making. The timeframe for submission of the additional information is within three months from the date of this letter.

In accordance with regulation 40(4) of the Environment Protection Regulations 2020, the required period for the NT EPA to make a decision on the referral ceases to run until this information is provided.

The timeframe for the NT EPA to decide whether to accept or refuse the referral will recommence after receipt of the additional information. If accepted, the referral document will be made available for public consultation for 20 business days. Within 30 business days after public consultation closes, the NT EPA will determine whether an environmental impact assessment is required and, if so, the method of assessment.

Further information and a flow chart illustrating the environmental impact assessment process is available at: <https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/your-business/environment-impact-assessment>.

Any queries in relation to this matter should be directed to Holly Durrant, A/Manager Environmental Assessment on telephone (08) 8924 4159 or email: eia.ntepa@nt.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Vogel', with a horizontal line drawn underneath.

DR PAUL VOGEL AM
Chairperson

28 March 2025

FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED (EP Regulation 40):

GROOTE EYLANDT MINING COMPANY PTY LTD – EXCESS WATER DISPOSAL PROJECT

Topic	Comment	Further Information Required
Proposal		
Scope of the proposal	The referral proposes the water disposal project to account for increases in excess water volumes and salinity resulting from the increasing depth of quarries and proximity of proposed quarries to the coast. The excess water disposal project, therefore, results directly from the larger action of mining those quarries. The scope of the referral identifies a discharge capacity of up to 80 gegalitres per year, with operation requirements expected to be no more than 60 GL/annum. A water balance and operational details have not been provided. The 60 – 80 GL/a from dewatering activities proposed for disposal is a significant volume, and there is potential for the extraction of that volume from the groundwater / surface water environment to cause significant impacts on hydrology, groundwater dependent ecosystems, and cultural and heritage values.	1. Provide an overview of the current and proposed mining operation relevant to the proposed action including pit location, footprint and depth. 2. Provide the current and predicted site water balance including the existing and increased dewatering volumes. 3. Provide further information on the onsite water management system upstream of the proposed pump and pipeline infrastructure, including, but not limited to; a. description of the pit dewatering methodology b. identifying where pits are used as staged water storage prior to discharge (where relevant). c. excess water management measures and whether these are meeting relevant environmental criteria, e.g. discharge of excess water to native vegetation 4. Provide further information on the extent of current and predicted groundwater drawdown and the environmental values potentially at risk within the extent of current and predicted drawdown over the life of the proposed action. 5. Describe the potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, including to hydrology, groundwater dependent ecosystems and cultural heritage, of the proposal taking into consideration:

Topic	Comment	Further Information Required
		a. existing and increased dewatering volumes b. existing and increased discharges to the marine environment.
Supporting documents	The proponent must ensure that documents used in the development of the referral, that are not publicly available, are provided to ensure that the information referenced can be verified.	6. Provide supporting documents that are not publicly available, including: a. IPE (2023). Development of Water Quality Trigger Values for Discharge to Marine Environment. Prepared by Indo-Pacific Environmental for GEMCO, DRAFT revision B, July 2023. b. Red Earth Engineering (2024). GEMCO Excess Water Disposal Project Hydrology and Hydraulic Modelling Report. Prepared for South 32 – Groote Eylandt Mining Company (GEMCO). Dated 20 September 2024