

28 June 2023

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Ms Kylie Fitzpatrick  
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File reference  
36:DITT2022/00015

Via email: [eia.ntepa@nt.gov.au](mailto:eia.ntepa@nt.gov.au)

Dear Ms Fitzpatrick

**Re: Invite to comment on GEMCO's EIS for the Southern Lease Mining Project**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proponent initiated EIS for the Southern Lease Mining Project submitted by the Groote Eylandt Mining Company Ltd (GEMCO).

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade has reviewed the referral documents and comments are provided at Attachment A.

If you require any further information please contact Mairi Walsh, Manager Resource Regulatory Reform at [StrategyPolicyCoordination.DITT@nt.gov.au](mailto:StrategyPolicyCoordination.DITT@nt.gov.au) or on 8999 7020.

Yours sincerely



BRETT EASTON  
Director, Resource Policy and Reform

## Submission on proponent initiated EIS referral information and draft terms of reference

### GEMCO - Southern Lease Mining Project

This submission is made under regulation 53 of the Environment Protection Regulations 2020

NT EPA reference number: EP2023/024

**Government authority:** Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade – Mines Branch

**Summary:** The Mining Operation Division has reviewed the GEMCO EIS referral for the Southern Lease Mining Project (the Project) and considers that the proposal may have significant impacts on the physical environment, namely land clearing and hydrology. The proponent has identified the relevant environmental factors to be addressed in the EIS; however, in order to understand the significance of the impacts, more information is required with respect to exact pit locations and their proposed depths, site specific water balance and the proposed strategy to address potential soil shortages in rehabilitation and closure.

Section of referral or terms of reference	Theme / issue	Comment
TOR – Section 2.2.6 Construction and Operations – Operations	Waste Management	The referral details processing of mined ore at the existing GEMCO Mine. The proponent should demonstrate that this will not have a significant negative impact on the environmental performance of the existing mine.
TOR – Section 2.2.6 Construction and Operations – Water Requirements And Referral Supporting Information	Water Management	The supporting information indicates that the EIS proposal will include a water balance model for the Project which will operate as a “...‘nil discharge’ system...” and that “Any surplus will be pumped to the Western Leases for use as water supply in the concentrator”.  Where the water balance for the project is to be maintained by the existing mine, the proponent should provide summary information indicating that this would not negatively impact the water balance of the mine. In the event that this information is uncertain, the proponent should undertake further studies and develop appropriate contingencies (if and where required).
TOR Section 3.1. Terrestrial environmental quality	Soil availability for rehabilitation	Soil deficiency for closure works is an identified risk at the existing mine. The proponent should clarify whether the topsoil reserve will remain onsite within the Southern Lease for rehabilitation or be transferred to the existing mine. The proponent should demonstrate how the potential soil deficit will be managed to ensure appropriate closure outcomes.
TOR – Section 3.3 Hydrological process	Groundwater management	The proponent has identified potential impacts to groundwater but has not specified the mine pit depths and pit locations to enable determination of the significance of the impact.