



# Report and recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority



## Carina Iron Ore Mine – s46 request for amendments to Ministerial Statement 852

Polaris Metals Pty Ltd

Report 1494

November 2013

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY  
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTER FOR  
ENVIRONMENT

**CARINA IRON ORE MINE, 60 KM NORTH-EAST OF KOOLYANOBBIONG,  
SHIRE OF YILGARN – INQUIRY UNDER SECTION 46 OF THE  
*ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1986* – CHANGE TO CONDITION 5-2  
OF MINISTERIAL STATEMENT 852 (ASSESSMENT NO. 1985)**

The Minister for Environment has requested (22 October 2013) that the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) inquire into and report on the matter of amending Condition 5-2 of Ministerial Statement 852 to remove the clearing requirement for the S2 and W22 vegetation communities.

The following is the EPA's Report and Recommendations (**No. 1494**) to the Minister pursuant to section 46(6) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Polaris Metals Pty Ltd (Polaris), obtained approval for the Carina Iron Ore Mine under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) in January 2011 following assessment of the Carina Iron Ore Public Environmental Review (PER) document. The approval conditions are specified in Ministerial Statement No. 852.

In assessing the Carina Iron Ore Project, the EPA considered the following environmental issues as relevant to the proposal and requiring detailed evaluation in its Report and Recommendations (Report 1368):

- Flora and vegetation; and
- Mine closure and rehabilitation.

The EPA concluded that it is unlikely that the EPA's objectives would be compromised, provided there is satisfactory implementation by the proponent of the recommended conditions.

The Minister for Environment approved the proposal for implementation, subject to the conditions of Ministerial Statement 852. Ministerial Statement 852 was published on 28 January 2011.

## **PROPOSED CHANGE TO CONDITION 5-2 OF MINISTERIAL STATEMENT 852**

Condition 5-2 of Ministerial Statement 852 defines the extent of clearing of the S2 and W22 vegetation communities, as follows:

*5-2 The proponent shall ensure that the implementation of the proposal does not result in (through either direct or indirect impacts) a loss of more than 8.6 ha of the S2 vegetation community and 66 ha of the W22 vegetation community.*

In July 2013 Polaris submitted a section 45C application to the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (OEPA) for the Carina Extended Project, which involves the following changes to the existing Carina Iron Ore Mine proposal:

- the establishment of a new open pit and waste dump along with associated haul and access roads and supporting infrastructure, requiring an additional 180.8 ha of clearing.

The new open pit, waste dump and haul road infrastructure are being separately assessed under section 45C of the EP Act.

The Carina Extended proposal will result in an additional 23.5 hectares clearing of the W22 vegetation community. The S2 community will not be affected.

This section 46 amendment is required to remove condition 5-2 from Ministerial Statement 852 as the impacts to the S2 and W22 vegetation communities were based on initial estimates of the extent of these communities.

### **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGE**

The proposal has the potential to impact on the W22 vegetation community (a Priority 1 community) by direct loss or disturbance of habitat, and vehicle impacts.

#### Impacts on Priority Vegetation Communities

From recent survey data (February 2013 and October 2013) the regional distribution of W22 now totals approximately 954 ha, thus clearing of an additional 23.5 ha represents a total 9.5% reduction in regional extent. This is a reduction in the previously approved 12% clearing as recommended in EPA Report 1368, as the distribution of this community is more widespread from what was previously known. It is likely that this distribution will increase further as more surveying is conducted within the region.

## **CONSULTATION**

The OEPA has consulted with the Department of Parks and Wildlife in relation to proposed changes to the project and its conditions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The OEPA considers that the environmental factors of the proposal have not changed significantly from those presented in the PER and as assessed by the EPA in Report 1368, and no new significant environmental factors have arisen since the EPA's assessment of the proposal. In fact additional vegetation survey information provided by the proponent indicates that the risk posed by the project to the W22 Priority 1 community is likely to be less than that originally assessed, as new surveys indicate that this species is now more widespread.

The EPA concludes that its objectives would not be compromised through removal of condition 5-2; however, the EPA is concerned that current or future development impacts should not unduly impact on the S2 and W22 Priority 1 communities.

To provide for protection of the W22 and S2 communities, and provide additional flexibility in implementing the proposal, the EPA considers that the extent of clearing of these communities should be incorporated within the Key Characteristics Table for the proposal, to be effected through a s45C change to proposal. This would allow for a more adaptable approach whereby new information on the extent and protection of these communities can be addressed in any potential future changes to the proposal.

## **EPA RECOMMENDATION**

The EPA recommends that Condition 5-2 be deleted.

## RECOMMENDED ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

**STATEMENT TO AMEND CONDITIONS APPLYING TO A PROPOSAL  
(PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 46 OF THE  
*ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1986*)**

CARINA IRON ORE MINE, APPROXIMATELY 60 KILOMETRES NORTHEAST  
OF KOOLYANOBING, SHIRE OF YILGARN

**Proposal:** The proposal is to construct and operate an iron ore mine in the Goldfields region of Western Australia. The proposal involves mining of hematite direct shipping ore (DSO) from two open pits on the Yendilberin Hills, which form part of the Finnerty Range.

The proposal is further documented in Schedule 1 of Ministerial Statement 852

**Proponent:** Polaris Metals Pty Ltd (ACN: 085 223 570)

**Proponent Address:** 1 Sleat Road, Applecross WA 6153

**Assessment Number:** 1985

**Previous Assessment Number:** 1756

**Report of the Environmental Protection Authority:** Report 1494

**Previous Report of the Environmental Protection Authority:** Report 1368

**Previous Statement Number:** Ministerial Statement 852

The implementation of the proposal to which the above report of the Environmental Protection Authority relates is subject to the conditions and procedures contained in Ministerial Statement No. 852, as amended by the following:

Condition 5-2 is deleted.

[Signed date]

**HON ALBERT JACOB MLA  
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT; HERITAGE**