

EPA Board Communiqué

November 2017

The Board held its Meeting numbers 109 and 110 in Hobart on Tuesday 7 and 14 November 2017, respectively.

The two meetings were held in one month to allow the Board to complete the assessment of several Level 2 activities within the statutory timeframes.

Meeting 109

Strategic Issues Workshop

The Board has agreed to hold a workshop at least once a year to consider specific strategic issues which might require more time and focus than would be possible at normal general meetings. The Board agreed that a workshop should be held in early 2018 to consider the Board's response to the review of the assessment process.

Assessment of proposal by Forward Mining for Magnetite Mine, Rogetta Project, Hampshire

The Board completed the assessment of an application by Forward Mining to develop an open cut magnetite mine at Rogetta Rd, Hampshire. The major issues identified in the Environmental Assessment Report were wastewater emissions, including the potential for acid drainage to develop, and natural values.

The Board concluded that there was a relatively low potential for acid drainage to develop and that the proposed management measures, reinforced by permit conditions, would be adequate to manage the risks. The Board also considered the potential for the mine to create legacy issues as a result of seepage from the tailings dam and waste rock dumps and, again, concluded that these issues could be adequately managed. The Board considered natural values both from the perspective of State and Commonwealth listed species as the assessment was undertaken in accordance with a bi-lateral agreement with the Commonwealth. Overall, the Board considered that the risks to threatened species were low.

There was one representation made in response to the application, which largely concerned matters outside the Board's jurisdiction. The Board also considered a number of comments made by the proponent on draft permit conditions.

The Board requested several amendments to the Assessment Report and permit conditions arising from its discussions and resolved to advise the Burnie City Council that a permit could be issued.

Bell Bay Pulp Mill application for partial exemption for permit fees

The Board granted the receivers for the Gunns Bell Bay Pulp Mill a partial exemption for annual permit fees given that the development has not proceeded.

Community Awards

The Chair provided members with an overview of the judging process for the Board's Sustainability Award as part of the Tasmanian Community Awards and outlined the finalists.

Director's Briefing

The Director advised that

- the legislation to transfer the regulation of salmon to the EPA would come into force on 4 December (the referral of decisions on salmon farming to the Board will be codified by Regulations which are not likely to come into force until early 2018)
- tyre stockpiles are now Level 2 activities and will be regulated by the EPA
- several other Regulations have been or are being re-made
- the waste traps Tassal is using in Macquarie Harbour are working well. Waste will be discharged via the Pardoe WWTP pipeline.

Meeting 110

Assessment of proposal by Huon Aquaculture for Whale Point Salmon Nursery, Port Huon

Huon Aquaculture's proposal is to build a recirculating aquaculture system at Whale Point to produce up to 800 tonnes per year of smolt for growing out on marine leases. The proposal includes a wastewater treatment plant to enable wastewater to be recirculated, minimising discharges and the extraction of freshwater. Construction of the facility is already underway.

There were a number of representations made in relation to the application.

The issues discussed by the Board included:

- biosecurity at the hatchery
- wastewater disposal and the need for contingency planning (the wastewater treatment system was considered best practice)
- noise, and in particular whether the problems experienced at another facility were likely to occur here
- the management of soil contaminated by previous activities on the site, and
- the impact that large ships coming into Port Huon may have through disturbing bottom sediments.

The Board requested several amendments to the Assessment Report and permit conditions arising from its discussions and resolved to advise the Huon Valley Council that a permit can be issued.

Assessment of proposal by Mt Oriel Breadalbane Pty Ltd for Cocked Hat Hill Quarry, Breadalbane

This proposal is for a new hard rock quarry near several other similar quarries at Breadalbane. There are a number of residences and a proposed new cattery in relatively close proximity to the quarry especially as it will require blasting and crushing. However the provisions of the planning scheme provide some protection for quarrying as the resource at Breadalbane is considered a strategic one.

There was only one representation concerning the application. The main issues considered by the Board were noise emissions, vibration from blasting and dust. The DPEMP was supported by noise modelling and a draft Blast Management Plan.

The Board concluded that the proposal could be satisfactorily managed and resolved to advise the Northern Midlands Council that a permit could be issued for the development, subject to conditions.

Review of the Assessment Process

The final report from Ian Abernethy has been received and will be circulated to Board members. The Board agreed that it would be appropriate, in the first instance, for EPA Tasmania to formulate a response to the recommendations in the report. The Board will then discuss these prior to its draft response to the report being released for comment.