

EPA Board Communiqué

September 2020

Regular Meeting 141, Tuesday 1 September



Review of Variable Fee Remissions

Annual permit fees comprise a fixed portion and a variable portion. The Board is able to waive all or part of the variable portion. The intent of the system was that the variable portion could be waived if and when operators do more than the minimum required by the Act or permit conditions, and that the fee waiver provides some recognition and reward for this. Several reviews of the system have found that it is not working as intended and the Board has been charged with reviewing the criteria used to provide remissions of the variable fee.

A paper presented to this meeting concluded that there are no viable alternatives to the criteria currently used by the Board and that the variable fee remissions scheme should be scrapped. The Board agreed with the conclusions of the paper and discussed whether it was possible or appropriate for the Board to simply stop awarding variable fee remissions or whether the Regulations need to be changed to reflect a revised approach to annual fees. The Board requested that EPA Tasmania seeks legal advice on this question.

Savage River Rehabilitation Program – Budget reconciliation and budget for 20-21

The Board received a briefing on the activities undertaken and progress made by the SRRP in the past year. The Board noted that the budget for 2019-20 had been underspent due to equipment purchases and consultancies not being completed in the timeframes originally envisaged. Grange Resources continued to support the program through monitoring and agreed remediation activities. The Board noted that:

- a study of the feasibility of recovering cobalt from old tailings will commence in 20-21
- the next bioassessment of the Savage River will take place in 20-21
- a draft strategic plan for the period 2020 – 23 has been prepared and will be presented to the Board
- a bund to collect seeps from the old tailings dam has been built and a pipeline constructed to take the seeps to the South Deposit Tailings Storage Facility.

The Board reviewed and approved the budget for 20-21 noting that the equipment purchases and consultancies deferred from 19-20 would take place in this year. The Board also noted that there would be a substantial drawdown of the Purchase Price owed by Grange due to the construction of the bund and pipeline to collect OTD seeps.

Register of Instruments

The Board carried out its annual review of the Registers of instruments that it is required to maintain in accordance with the Act. The Board had previously determined that these registers should be made available on the EPA website. It was noted that all current Environment Protection Notices and Part 5A Notices are available via The List (ListMap). The Board agreed that it was only necessary to publish other instruments that have been issued in the past three years, while older documents would be made available on request.

Special Fee Remissions

The Board considered two applications for special fee remissions. One (Jenkins Hire Pty Ltd) was deferred pending definitive advice on when the permit was issued following an appeal, while the other (Creeko Pty Ltd) was denied as the application did not meet the Board's criteria.

Assessment: Ten Mile Enterprises Pty Ltd – Pig Abattoir – Scottsdale

This application is for a greenfield abattoir to process pigs at Springfield, several kilometres south of Scottsdale. The abattoir will process pigs from the proponent's piggery and, potentially, pigs from other growers. There were 22 representations made in relation to the permit application, with the major issues raised being concerns about noise, odour, impacts on water quality and animal rights. About half of the

representors live in proximity to the site of the proposed abattoir and many had experienced odours from the piggery, about 2 km away.

The Board undertook an inspection of the site before the September meeting. It became evident during the site inspection that, in contrast to the information provided in the Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan, the proponents wished to keep pigs on the site overnight before slaughter.

The Board considered the documentation supporting the proposal, the representations and comments by the proponent on draft permit conditions. The key issues discussed were those raised in representations, namely the potential for noise and odour to cause nuisance to nearby residents and the potential for water pollution as a result of irrigating treated effluent. The Board concluded that provided there is strict compliance with conditions and good management, the abattoir could be operated in an environmentally acceptable way. However, the proponent's documentation had not assessed the increased potential for noise, odour and waste that would result from keeping pigs overnight and the Board included a condition in the permit prohibiting this practice unless and until further evidence is provided to show that this can be undertaken without causing environmental problems.

The Board completed its assessment and forwarded its advice and required conditions to the Dorset Council.
