



Department of Mines,
Petroleum and Exploration

Procedure

Mining Development and Closure Proposal and Approvals Statement Framework

Version 3.0
September 2026

Document hierarchy

Legislation	Mining Act 1978 Mining Regulations 1981
Policy	Environmental Regulatory Strategy Environmental Objectives Policy for Mining Small Mining Operations Policy
Guidelines	Guideline for preparing Mining Development and Closure Proposals
Procedures	Environmental Application Administrative Procedures This document

Version history

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	2024	Initial publication of the Mining Development and Closure Proposal and Approvals Statement Framework.
2.0	August 2025	Updated to include details of the department's transition strategy for existing operations, updated to reflect change in department name and updated to include details on Mining Environmental Groups.
3.0	September 2026	Additional information included on the relation between projects and MEGs and how to modify tenement associated with a MEG. Updated Appendix 1: MCP Scoping Document Template.



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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure for:

- submission of Mining Development and Closure Proposals (MDCP);
- submission of Mine Closure Plans (MCP);
- generating and issuing Approvals Statements; and
- transition of existing operations to an Approvals Statement.

Objective

The objective of the document is to detail the procedural elements associated with the submission of MDCPs and MCPs, alterations to Approvals Statements and the transition to the MDCP and Approvals Statement Framework.

Scope

The document applies to all MDCPs and MCPs submitted to the Department of Mines, Petroleum and Exploration (DMPE) following amendments introduced by the *Mining Amendment Act 2022* (Amendment Act).

1. Regulatory context

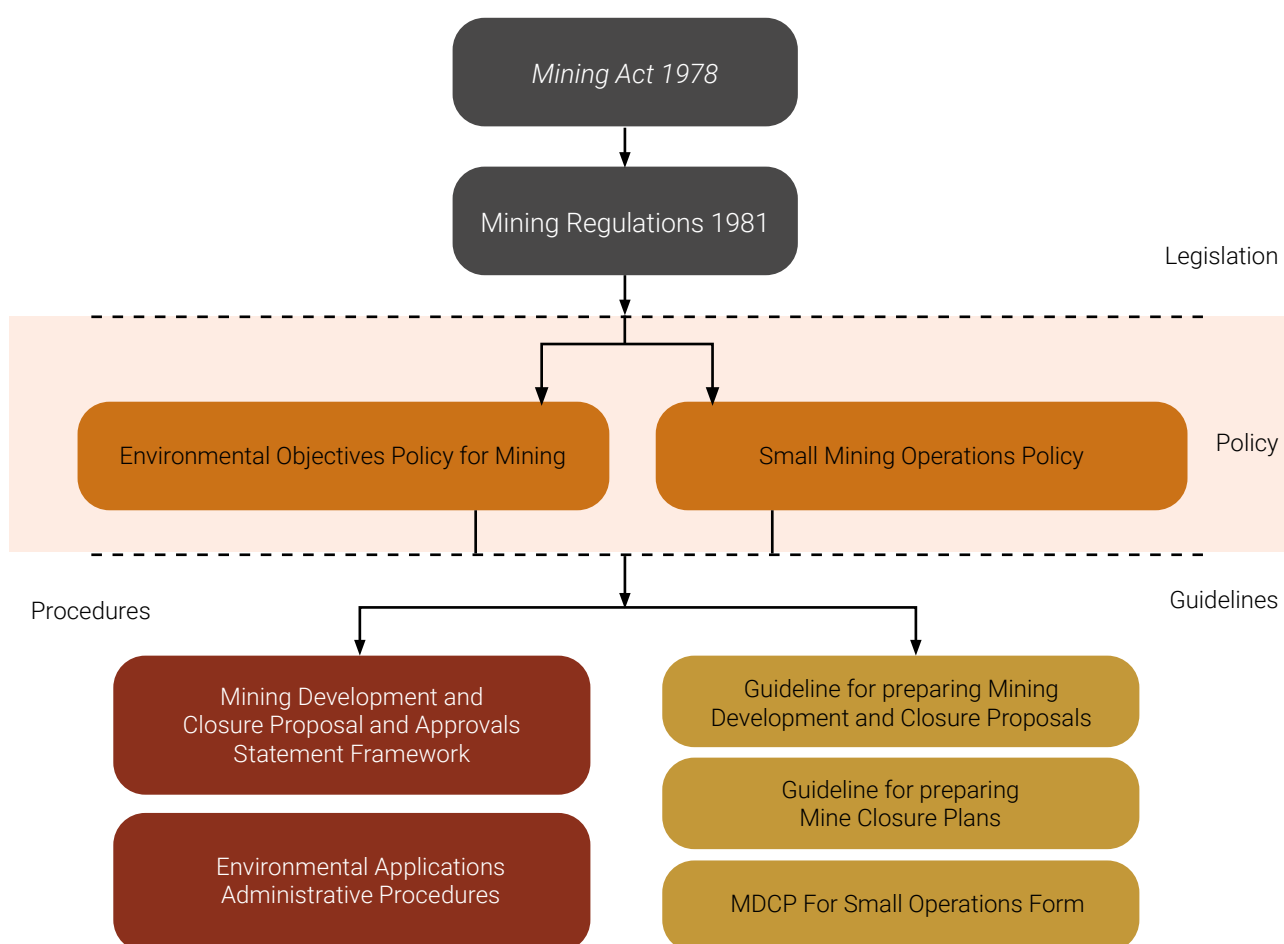
The amended *Mining Act 1978* (Mining Act) states that prior to undertaking any activity for the purpose of, or in preparation for, mining operations or carrying out mining operations on a tenement granted under the Mining Act, the activities must be included in a MDCP, approved under section 103O(1) of the Mining Act and recorded on an Approvals Statement. Activities must be undertaken in accordance with the Approvals Statement or prior approvals documentation.

Approvals issued under the Mining Act prior to commencement of the *Mining Amendment Act 2022* remain in force.

A MCP document that reports on planning and progress towards successful mine closure must be submitted to DMPE. Under section 103AT of the Mining Act, a MCP for the relevant tenements must be lodged on or before the lodgement date recorded on the Approvals Statement.

The detailed content requirements for both MDCPs and MCPs are prescribed in the Mining Regulations 1981 (the Regulations). To support applicants in meeting their legislative requirements under the Mining Act (and Regulations) and demonstrate that their activities can meet the [DMPE Environmental Objectives](#), DMPE has prepared detailed guidance on how to prepare MDCP and MCP applications, as well as procedural documents to assist with submission of these applications as outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Document hierarchy under the *Mining Act 1978*



2. Interaction between MDCPs, MCPs and Approvals Statements

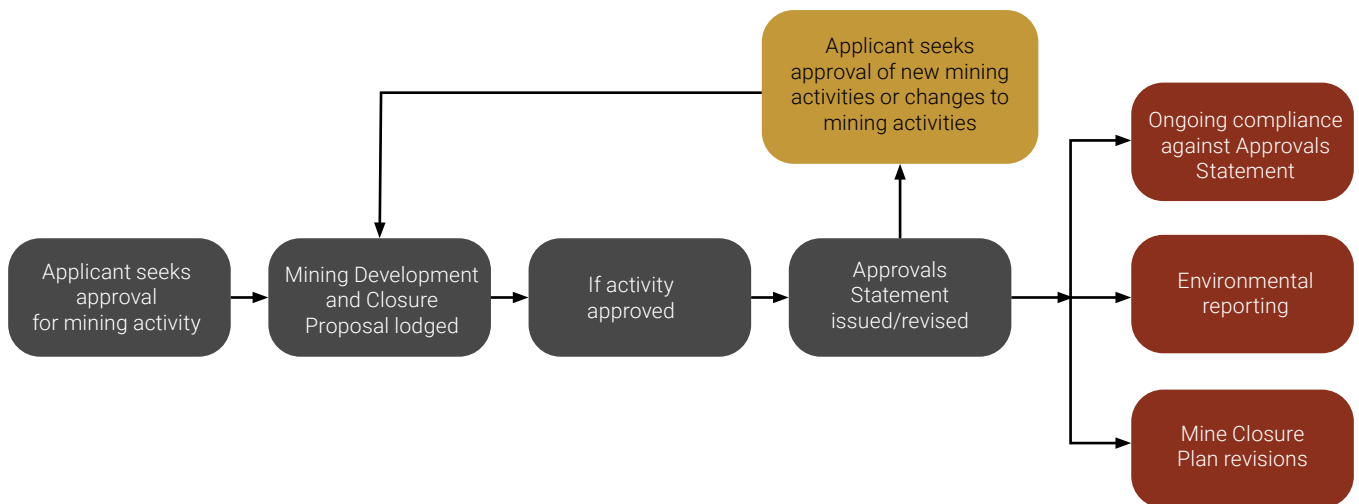
A **MDCP** functions as the targeted application that is required to seek approval for mining activities under the Mining Act. A MDCP's primary purpose is to demonstrate to DMPE that proposed mining activities can be conducted in accordance with the department's [Environmental Objectives Policy for Mining](#). As DMPE is the lead regulator of rehabilitation and mine closure in Western Australia, a MDCP includes details on mine closure in order to ensure closure has been appropriately considered at the mining approval stage, meaning a submission of a standalone MCP is no longer required at this stage.

Following assessment of a MDCP, should the proposed activities be approved, an **Approvals Statement** will be issued to the tenement holder. The Approvals Statement defines the scope and limits of the mining activities approved, any relevant conditions (environmental outcomes), closure outcomes and date for submission of the **MCP**.

It is a requirement of the Mining Act that standalone MCPs are submitted to DMPE to demonstrate planning and progress of the mining operation towards successful closure and achievement of the closure outcomes recorded on the Approvals Statement.

The interaction between MDCPs, Approvals Statement and MCPs is also represented visually in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Conceptual representation of the Mining Development and Closure Proposal, and Approvals Statement Framework and interaction with Mine Closure Plan submissions and reporting requirements.





3. Mining Development and Closure Plans

3.1 Pre-submission engagement

To facilitate an efficient assessment process, applicants are encouraged to engage with DMPE prior to submission of a MDCP on key aspects of the proposal.

A scoping document template has been provided as Appendix 1 and is also available on the [DMPE website](#) for applicants to complete prior to the scoping meeting. This template will assist in setting out the scope and key aspects of the mining activities, delineate regulatory agency responsibilities and identify any information gaps. The scoping document template is intended to guide applicants for scoping meeting discussions with DMPE and is not a mandatory document for approval.

The procedures for screening and assessing environmental applications and making decisions is set out in the department's [Environmental Application Administrative Procedures](#). This includes details on statutory and agreed administrative requirements for interaction of an assessment with those required under other legislation and target timeframes for completing environmental assessment.

3.2 Interaction with other regulatory frameworks

DMPE acknowledges the importance of reducing duplication with other regulatory frameworks and is committed to continual improvement as a regulator. Wherever practicable, if impacts to [DMPE environmental factors](#) are assessed and regulated under other regulatory frameworks, DMPE will not duplicate this assessment through the MDCP process. It is noted however that some environmental approvals only apply during specific activities or phases of mining (e.g. while a site is operating) and may not be applicable during other phases such as mine closure or care and maintenance. In these instances, the MDCP would need to capture these phases not regulated under other frameworks.

Where an applicant can demonstrate in the 'Legislative Framework' section of an MDCP that impacts to a DMPE environmental factor has been assessed and regulated under another regulatory framework, assessment of this impact will not be duplicated via the MDCP process.

The Guideline for Preparing Mining Development and Closure Proposals provides specific guidance for activities assessed under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and those that require a Native Vegetation Clearing Permit under Part V of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.



4. Approvals Statement

4.1 Information recorded on an Approvals Statement

In accordance with section 103AP of the (amended) Mining Act, the following information will be recorded on an Approvals Statement:

- approval given to an activity proposed in a mining development and closure proposal;
- any conditions attached to the approval (see section 5.2 on page 10);
- any relevant information (note: the Mining Act defines any relevant information as information “relevant to the nature and extent of the activity”);
- the closure outcomes; and
- the date by which a mine closure plan must be lodged.

4.2 Conditions recorded on an Approvals Statement

The Regulations establish that a MDCP must include environmental outcomes that will be met during the life of the project.

Environmental outcomes are used to establish the acceptable level of impact that must not be exceeded, or the level of protection/performance that must be achieved for the site to be compliant throughout the mine life.

Should activities proposed within a MDCP be approved, the environmental outcomes will be recorded on the Approvals Statement as a ‘Condition of Approval’.

To promote consistency and efficiency in document preparation and assessment, DMPE has developed a list of standard environmental and closure outcomes which can broadly be applied to many mining operations (Appendix 5 of the Guideline for Preparing Mining Development and Closure Proposal). Applicants will also have the opportunity to develop site-specific environmental or closure outcomes where the standard outcomes are not appropriate for their operation. Site-specific outcomes will also be recorded on the Approvals Statement as a condition.

In addition, the Approvals Statement will record standard conditions relating to environmental monitoring and reporting. This includes, but is not limited to, conditions requiring submission of an environmental report to demonstrate that environmental outcomes are being met and progress is being made towards meeting closure outcomes.

Conditions recorded on an Approvals Statement have the same legal standing as a tenement condition.

4.3 Procedural fairness when issuing an Approvals Statement

To afford procedural fairness, tenement holders will be provided with an opportunity to review their Approvals Statement prior to it being formally issued.

4.4 Public availability of Approvals Statements

Once formally issued, an Approvals Statement will be made publicly available in accordance with section 103AP(3) of the Mining Act. In addition, MCPs will continue to be made publicly available.



4.5 Amendments to Approvals Statements

For operations with an existing Approvals Statement, a MDCP will need to be submitted to DMPE for assessment in the following circumstances:

- When new mining activities (for the purposes of, or in preparation for, mining operations) are proposed or when changes, expansions or alterations are proposed to mining activities beyond what is recorded on the Approvals Statement.
- When any mining activities are proposed outside of the activity envelope recorded on the Approvals Statement.
- To amend a closure outcome. Note: Section 103AP of the Mining Act requires the Approvals Statement to record the closure outcomes as presented in the MDCP thus any changes to closure outcomes as recorded on the Approvals Statement need to be reflect in a MDCP.

Where a mining operation has an existing Approvals Statement, the MDCP submitted only needs to provide details on the aspects for which approval is being sought (i.e. the expansion or additions to the mining operation).

The Guideline for Preparing Mining Development and Closure Proposals has been designed to provide guidance on the information required within a MDCP when seeking approval for amendments to a mining operation with an existing Approvals Statement.

Within each section of the guideline, subheadings titled “Amendments to an Approvals Statement” have been included, (also consolidated in Appendix 2 of the guideline) to provide specific guidance on the level of detail to be presented in the MDCP when seeking an amendment. This is intended to ensure all the relevant information is provided, to improve efficiency of assessment and simplify the process for amendments to existing operations.

Following assessment of the MDCP, the Approvals Statement will be updated to reflect the changes and the amended statement provided to the tenement holder/s. Only one Approvals Statement will be issued for a mine covering all tenements, however the Approvals Statement will be updated over the life of mine to reflect the approved amendments/updates to the mining operation as reflected in the conceptual diagram presented in Figure 2.

5. Mine Closure Plans

5.1 Requirement to submit MCPs

It is a requirement of the Mining Act that standalone MCPs are submitted to DMPE in order to demonstrate that the mining operation is planning and progressing towards successful closure and achievement of the closure outcomes for the operation.

The due date for submission of a MCP will be specified on the Approvals Statement issued following assessment of the MDCP. In circumstances where an Approvals Statement has not been issued for a project (i.e. operating under existing approvals) the due date for submission of a MCP will continue to be specified via tenement conditions. The review date for a MCP will be based on factors such as expected life of mine, the quality of the MCP content and number of knowledge gaps remaining. The level of information required in a MCP will be reflective of the stage of mine development with an increasing level of detail required as the mine moves towards closure.



5.2 Closure information in MCP compared to MDCP

The closure information submitted in the MDCP needs to provide sufficient detail to demonstrate that DMPE objectives for rehabilitation and mine closure can be met. This includes closure designs for key landforms, identification of closure knowledge gaps and opportunities for progressive rehabilitation. A guide to the level of detail required in a MDCP compared to a MCP is provided in Appendix 2.

6. Reporting and compliance

As a condition of approval, tenement holders will need to provide an environmental report to DMPE demonstrating compliance with environmental and closure outcomes/conditions recorded on the relevant Approvals Statement/s or prior approval documents.

All Approvals Statements will contain a standard condition requiring tenement holders to notify DMPE of any reportable environmental incidents within 24 hours of detection. A reportable environmental incident is defined as:

- An incident that breaches any environmental outcome/condition recorded on the relevant Approvals Statement or has the potential to cause such a breach.

Failure to notify DMPE of a reportable incident constitutes a breach of conditions and renders the tenement/s liable for forfeiture under the Mining Act.

For further guidance on compliance reporting, please see the DMPE [Guidance Note on Environmental Non-compliance and Incident Reporting](#). This document will be updated to incorporate the MDCP framework.

7. Transition

7.1 Existing, undetermined mining proposals

Any applications that are lodged prior to the commencement of the MDCP framework but are still under assessment and awaiting a decision by DMPE at the time of commencement, will be taken to be a MDCP. An Approvals Statement will be issued following assessment and approval of the activities.

The MCP in the application will be taken to be the closure information required to be included in a MDCP under the Mining Act requirements.

7.2 Existing, approved activities

Tenement holders do not need to submit a MDCP to seek approval for existing activities. From the date of commencement all previously approved mining proposals (including Notices of Intent) are taken to be a MDCP.



7.3 Transition of existing, approved operation onto an Approvals Statement

Under the Mining Act (Schedule 2, Division 3), the Minister can issue an Approvals Statement for a previously approved mining operation based on previous approvals documentation during a period of transition (10 years from commencement date with possibility for extension). The simplicity of administering one framework is beneficial for government, industry and the community. It is a priority for DMPE to ensure existing mining operations can be transitioned in a timely manner.

During the transition period DMPE will run a program for transition of existing mining operations to an Approvals Statement (transition program). The aim will be to have the majority of existing operating sites transitioned within a two to three year period to ensure efficiency and consistency benefits of the new framework are realised.

The transition program will be department led; all existing Environmental Group Sites (to be transitioned to Mining Environmental Group (MEG) under the new framework) have been prioritised based on a number of factors including scale and complexity of operations, life of mine and type and status of approvals.

DMPE acknowledges the effort, time and process many tenement holders have been through to transition their mining operations to a single mining proposal under the risk and outcomes-based framework of the 2016 and 2020 Mining Proposal Guidelines. Given these projects are already operating under a risk/outcome-based framework, DMPE will prioritise these mining operations for transition first.

Tenement holders do not need to contact DMPE to request transition, DMPE will contact tenement holders to commence the transition process. DMPE will be taking a systematic approach based on the prioritisation schedule, however the process will also be dynamic and respond to changes in circumstances for mining operations.

DMPE has worked with industry representatives to ensure the transition process does not create undue work for mining operations. Tenement holder/s will be requested to review and complete a template to ensure the information required to be recorded on the Approvals Statement is captured in the appropriate format. Parts of the template will be prefilled information from DMPE records. Following receipt of the completed template and information requested, DMPE will provide a draft Approvals Statement to review prior to being formally issued.

The transition program does not involve a new environmental assessment, it is a transition of previously approved activities and associated outcomes and conditions to an Approvals Statement. It is acknowledged environmental management practices have evolved over time and details required in approval documentation has also changed overtime. Where appropriate the transition program may provide an opportunity for mining operations to consolidate mining activities and modernise to an outcomes-based regulatory framework. In most circumstances DMPE will look to transition existing mining operations to the standard environmental and closure outcomes as presented in Appendix 5 of the Guideline for Preparing Mining Development and Closure Proposals.

Failure to provide information to DMPE during the transition process will result in Approvals Statement being drafted using information available in DMPE records.



7.4 MDCP submitted to support mining lease application

Currently DMPE undertake parallel assessment of a mining proposal that is lodged to support a mining lease application. From 9 September 2025, a MDCP submitted to a support mining lease application will not be parallel assessed with the mining lease application. Verification that the MDCP meets the required form and content as specified in the Mining Act and Regulations will be undertaken. For valid submissions the applicant will then be requested to lodge the MDCP through Resources Online for environmental assessment following grant of tenure.

This change in process will be introduced on a trial basis to be reviewed 12 months from the commencement date to determine further efficiencies.

8. Small operations

In order to meet the requirements of the Mining Act, a MDCP is required for all mining operations. DMPE has developed a dedicated pro forma document to support applicants in lodging MDCPs for small mining operations that meets all of the requirements of the Mining Act and Regulations.

The department's Small Mining Operations Policy provides further guidance on the key elements of the environmental regulatory framework under the Mining Act relevant to small mining operators.

9. Mining Environmental Groups and Projects

9.1 Projects

A Project is a common term used to describe a mineral deposit identified in Western Australia. Often these deposits are linked to tenements granted under the Mining Act in order to further define their spatial extent. Projects created by the Department, are assigned a unique identifier known as a J-code.

The Geological Survey of Western Australia (GSWA) maintains a comprehensive database of mines, mineral deposits and prospects in the Mines and Mineral Deposits (MINEDEX) System.

9.2 Environmental Group Sites

An Environmental Group Site (EGS) was terminology introduced when the EARS2 system for compliance reporting was developed. An EGS referred to a grouping of individual tenements for the purposes of further distinguishing the operations which make up a particular Project. This will be replaced with Mining Environmental Group (MEG) (see section 9.3 on the next page).

9.3 Mining Environmental Group

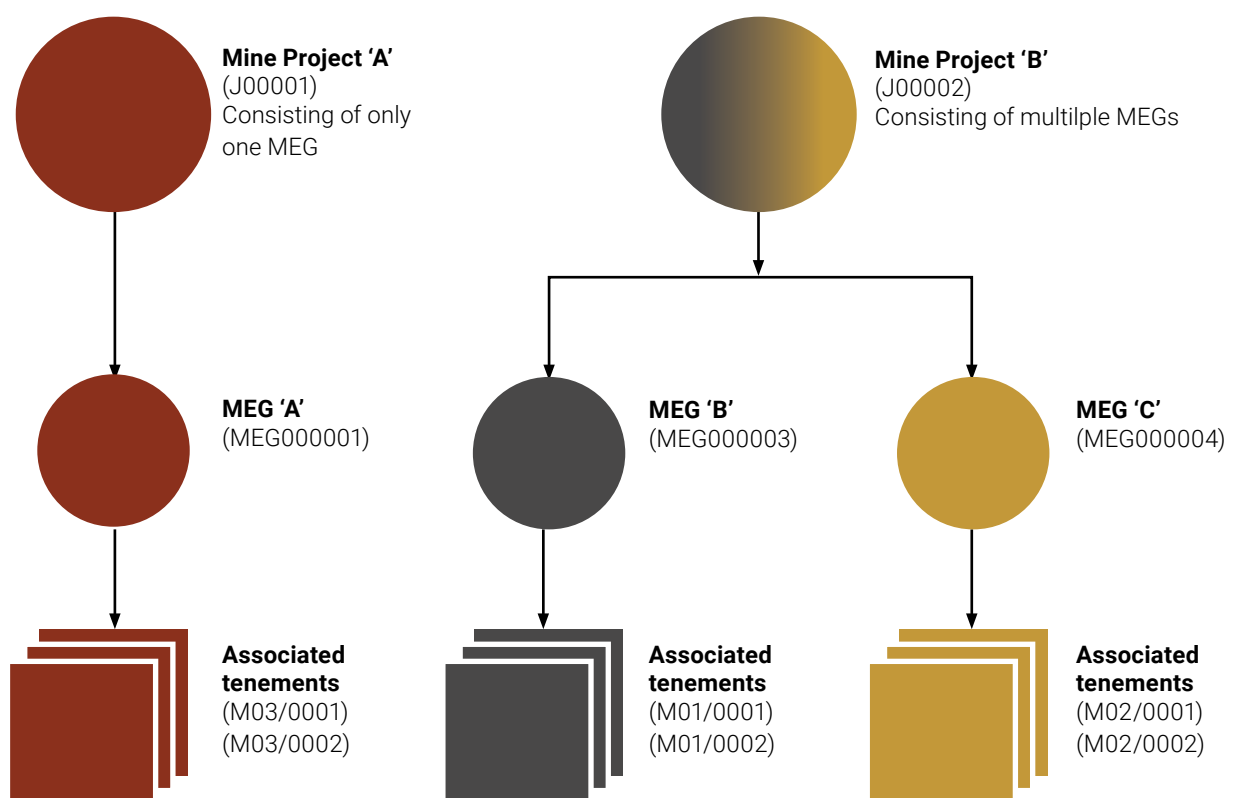
With the development of the **Resource Online (RO)** system to support the submission of **MDCPs** and the issuing of **Approvals Statements**, the nomenclature for a grouping of tenements together within a Project will change from an EGS to a **MEG**.

All existing mining operations have had their existing EGS number changed to become a MEG. The number has stayed the same, but the prefix 'S' has changed to the prefix 'MEG'. All new greenfield mines will be issued with a unique MEG number (rather than an EGS number) as part of the issuing of their initial Approvals Statement.

In the first phase of the RO roll out, the submission of an Annual Environmental Report per EGS/MEG through the EARS2 system will continue.

The intent of a MEG is for all the activities and tenements of a mine site to be grouped together for the purpose of combined reporting and closure planning. The grouping should fit together all the components of a mine site that logically fit together as a stand-alone operation and make practical sense to be included in one Approvals Statement, MCP and Environmental Report (ER).

Figure 3. Tenement grouping relationship (Projects, MEG, associated tenements)





9.4 Creating and modifying a MEG

The creation of a new MEG will happen through the process of submitting the first MDCP for a mine.

Additional tenements can be added to a MEG via lodgment of subsequent MDCPs for the MEG through Resources Online.

Where mining activities on a tenement are recorded on an Approvals Statement for a particular MEG, the tenement and associated mining activities can be transferred to a new or existing MEG through MDCP lodgment process.

For tenements (MEG) that have not had approved activities listed on an Approvals Statement, the mine operator can modify the existing MEG tenements with consent of the relevant tenement holders through the MEG tenement management function in Resources Online.

Operators should consider the following guidance when determining what tenements should be included in a MEG:

1. Each MEG will likely have an obligation to submit one ER and have one MCP.
2. Tenements in a MEG should not be separated by expansive distances unless it can be justified that the closure requirements are linked and make practical sense to be reported in one MCP.
3. If there is more than one tenement holder for the tenements in the MEG, the tenement holders must agree to the grouping (because it relates to ongoing obligations/reporting on their tenements).
4. Where the mine consists of a significant number of tenements and/or distinct operational areas it may be appropriate to separate the mine into separate MEG. The Department does not support multiple MEGs from the same operator, for the same commodity, within close proximity to one another without appropriate justification.

Appendix 1: MDCP Scoping Document template

The purpose of a Mining Development and Closure Proposal Scoping Document is to:

- provide a framework for pre-consultation with DMPE to discuss the key aspects of the Mining Development and Closure Proposal;
- delineate regulatory agency responsibilities; and
- identify issues that are to be addressed prior to submission of the mining proposal and/or required studies/work that need to be carried out.

A blank template is available on the DMPE website for potential applicants to complete to ensure necessary information is available or information gaps identified prior to meeting with DMPE. This document is provided for further guidance to applicants intending to submit Mining Development and Closure Proposal and is not a document for approval.

1. Key proposal activities

The purpose of this section is to discuss how the activities will be presented in the MDCP and where they are proposed.

Summary of proposal

Mining Environmental Group	
Operator/Applicant name	
Short description	

Proposed Activity Details

Attachments

Attachment 1: Proposed activity envelope

Attachment 2: Proposed site plan

Total mining activity area table (disturbance and activity types)

Tenement	Total activity area (ha)	Total area of native vegetation to be cleared (ha)	Key Mining Activities	Supporting mining activities

Key mining activity details table (additional detail for more complex activities)

Key Mining Activity	Reference	Nature and extent	Tenement	Activity Area (ha)

Operational elements¹

Activity type/element	Location	Proposed detail

2. Consideration of environmental factors and scope of work

The purpose of this section is to discuss what further work has been undertaken to understand how the proposed activities will impact on the department's environmental factors.

Environmental factors	Studies under-taken/ proposed	Comments
Terrestrial environmental quality		
Flora, vegetation and fauna		
Inland waters		
Rehabilitation and mine closure		

¹ Include any operational elements that are not clearly explained by the activity details tables.

3. Stakeholder engagement

The purpose of this section is to outline what targeted stakeholder engagement has been undertaken, what further engagement is proposed, and how this has affected the proposal.

Stakeholder engagement to date indicates the post-mining land use will be:

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Stakeholders	Description of engagement	Stakeholder comments/issue	Proposed response and/or resolution

4. Other relevant approvals

The purpose of this section is to outline what other environmental approvals (or other relevant approvals) have been granted or will be applicable and what aspects of the proposal they will regulate.

Relevant Approval	Regulated activities	Phase of mine life

Appendix 2: Content requirements for MDCPs compared to MCPs

Aspect/content	MDCP	MCP	MDCP for amendment to Approvals Statement	MCP revision
Proposal description	Description of the proposed operation including activity envelope within which all activities will occur, maximum activity areas and characteristics and design of key mine activities	Description of the operations to provide context to the document. This will include historical operations and maps as appropriate.	Description of the additional activities/ changes to operations. Where appropriate updated activity envelope and activity details provided.	Updated to detail current status of the site.
Legislative framework/ identification of closure obligations and commitments	Details of environmental approvals relevant to the operations.	List of environmental approvals relevant to closure of operations.	List of environmental approvals relevant to additional activities/changes to operation.	Updated with additional closure obligations and commitments over life of mine, progress towards attainment of the obligations.
Environmental data and analysis	Description of environmental information and baseline data for the project and implications for environmental risk assessment.	Summary of environmental data (ongoing monitoring and baseline) available for the site and implications for closure.	Description of environmental data to support additional activities/changes to operation.	Continuously update to reflect information gathered for the site through routine monitoring.
Land use and stakeholder engagement	Details pre mining land use/s, proposed post mining land use and stakeholder engagement undertaken prior to commencement of operations.	Details on post mining land use/s. Register of stakeholder engagement undertaken in relation to mine closure.	Details additional stakeholder engagement undertaken in relation to the additional activities/changes to operation and where relevant changes to post mining land use/s.	Details post mining land use and stakeholder engagement progress. Continuously updated to reflect ongoing stakeholder engagement undertaken in relation to mine closure.
Risk assessment and management	Standardised environmental risk assessment for all phases of mine life (operations and closure).	Closure focused risk assessment using standardised framework.	Standardised environmental risk assessment for additional activities/ changes to operation.	Continuously reviewed over the life of mine.
Environmental and closure outcomes, criteria and monitoring	Environmental outcomes presented with monitoring framework. Closure outcomes presented with site specific completion criteria.	Closure outcomes presented with site specific completion criteria. Monitoring details with links to risk, outcomes and criteria.	Details on environmental and closure outcomes in relation to the additional activities/changes to the operation. Changes to monitoring as a result of additional activities/changes.	Completion criteria further refined. Monitoring results provide information to refine criteria and achievement of closure at the operation.
Closure implementation	Includes: - closure designs for key mining activities; - identified knowledge gaps and schedule for addressing them; and - identified opportunities for progressive rehabilitation.	Includes information on: - closure work schedule for achieving closure outcomes; - research and trials planned; - progressive Rehabilitation Plans; - early closure or suspension of operations to care and maintenance; - decommissioning schedule; and - monitoring and maintenance closure costs.	Details on closure implementation in relation to the additional activities/ changes to the operation	Further refined closure tasks and rehabilitation and decommissioning schedule. Updated closure costs. Implementation detail increases as operation nears closure.

Government of Western Australia
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8.30am – 4.30pm

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