



ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT PUBLIC COMMENT INVITED

OVERVIEW

VHM Limited (the Proponent) has prepared an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project (the Project).

The EES, the draft Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA), and the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) Development Licence application are now available for public comment for a period of 40 business days.

This notice is provided pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) (EE Act), the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act), *Environment Protection Act 2017*, and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) (PE Act).

Written submissions can be made between **20 November 2023 and 11.59 pm on 17 January 2024**.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project is located in the Loddon Mallee region of Victoria and will involve mining and processing heavy mineral sands and rare earths into mixed heavy mineral concentrate (HMC), zircon concentrate, rutile product, leucoxene products, ilmenite product and rare earth mineral products.

The products generated from processing the ore will be transported in sealed sea containers via road to the Ultima intermodal terminal and railed to the Port of Melbourne for overseas export, supporting the increasing global demand for critical minerals. The Project aims to create and sustain significant long-term employment and economic activity in Victoria and the Loddon Mallee region.

The key components of the Project include the following:

- Mining and processing of 5 million tonnes per annum of heavy mineral sands within two mining areas to produce a variety of critical mineral concentrates.
- Transport of product using sealed sea containers via road to Ultima and then rail to Port of Melbourne.
- Establishing a 38 kilometre water supply pipeline capable of supplying up to 4.5 GL/per annum from Kangaroo Lake to the mine.
- Electrical power needed for mining and processing during operation, requiring a maximum 5 megawatts of power consumption.
- Upgrading various local roads to support the project and transport of product to Ultima.
- Progressive rehabilitation of mined areas and return land to agricultural land uses within three to five years.

EES PROCESS

In September 2018 the former Victorian Minister for Planning determined that an EES would be required for the Project under the EE Act. In October 2019 the Commonwealth Government determined that approval would also be required under the EPBC Act. An assessment of impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) will occur via the EES process, which is accredited under the EPBC Act through a Bilateral Agreement with the Commonwealth.

In May 2019 the former Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) issued the final Scoping Requirements which identified the matters to be investigated and documented in the EES.

The Victorian Minister for Planning will provide a final assessment of the effects of the Project following public exhibition of the EES and a subsequent Inquiry. This EES has considered MNES for making a determination under the EPBC Act.

After considering the Victorian Minister for Planning's assessment under the EE Act, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water will decide whether the Project is approved, approved with conditions, or refused under the EPBC Act.

You can make a submission on the matters assessed for the purposes of the relevant provisions under the EPBC Act by making a submission on the EES.

Procedures for the EES are available on the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning website at: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environmental-assessments/browse-projects/goschen-mineral-sands-and-rare-earths-project>.

HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

Anyone can make a submission on the EES, the draft PSA, and the EPA Development Licence application. Submissions must be made in writing and be received by **11.59 pm on Wednesday 17 January 2024**. Each submission will be treated as a submission on the EES, the draft PSA and EPA Development Licence. Only one submission is needed to address all of your views about the Project, its effects, and the relevant documents.

Online submissions are preferred and can be lodged via the Victorian Government's Engage Victoria website at: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/Goschen-IAC>.

Where a submitter is unable to lodge a submission online, they can contact Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) through the Customer Call Centre on 136 186 (select Option 6) and request a hard copy submission coversheet. Each hard copy submission must be accompanied by a coversheet issued by PPV for privacy reasons.

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission.

Petitions will be treated as a single submission and only the first name from a petition will be registered and contacted. Pro-forma submitters will be registered and contacted individually if they provide their contact details. However pro-forma submitters who want to be heard at the hearing may be encouraged to present as a group, given their submissions raise the same issues.

Submissions will be treated as public documents and will be published on the Engage Victoria website.

Do not include personal information in the body of submissions (such as your email address or phone number) or photographs of people, particularly children. Your submission and your name will be made public.

The submission process is independently managed by PPV and any enquiries regarding the submissions and the Inquiry and Hearing process should be directed to PPV.

HOW TO ACCESS THE EES AND EXHIBITED DOCUMENTS

The EES, draft PSA and EPA Development Licence application are now available to read and download at <http://www.vhmltd.com.au/ees/>. Hard copies of the EES, draft PSA, and EPA Development Licence application will be made available at the following locations during the exhibition period:

Swan Hill Rural City Council offices - 45 Splatt Street, Swan Hill Vic 3585

Gannawarra Shire Council offices - Patchell Plaza, 47 Victoria Street, Kerang Vic 3579

Sir John Gorton Library Kerang - 2 Shadforth Street, Kerang Vic 3579

Swan Hill Regional Library - 53/67 Campbell Street, Swan Hill Vic 3585

State Library of Victoria - 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne Vic 3000

Individuals can request an EES information pack by contacting VHM Limited on the below details. Packs include:

- A downloadable electronic version of the EES, all supporting attachments (including the draft PSA and EPA Development Licence application) and Summary Brochure (via email); or
- Printed copy of the Summary Brochure and USB containing the EES and all supporting attachments (including the draft PSA and EPA Development Licence application).

For those who may have accessibility requirements, or where electronic options are impracticable, hard copies of some documents may be requested.

Email: community@vhmltd.com.au

Telephone: (03) 5450 8804

Please note, the EES is a large document, and we encourage the use of electronic versions. Printed copies can be arranged for an at cost fee.

INQUIRY AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROCESS

The Minister for Planning will appoint a joint Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) under the EE Act and the PE Act to hold an inquiry into the project and its environmental effects. The independent IAC will review the public submissions of the EES, the draft PSA and the EPA Development Licence application before providing advice to the Minister for Planning. It will consider the environmental effects of the Project in accordance with the Terms of Reference issued by the Minister for Planning.

After the exhibition period, the IAC will hold a **Directions Hearing by video conference on Tuesday 13 February 2024**, where the necessary arrangements and timetable for the public hearing will be established. Further information about the Directions Hearing arrangements will be published on <https://engage.vic.gov.au/Goschen-IAC> when determined.

The public hearing will commence in the week beginning Monday 25 March 2024 and run for one to three weeks (if required).

Members of the public and any other parties seeking to be heard at the public hearing are required to make a **written submission**, and indicate in the online submission form, or hard copy submission coversheet, that they would like to be heard at the hearing.

Information on the hearing process and timetable will be published as it becomes available at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/Goschen-IAC>.

QUESTIONS

Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project

VHM Limited
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Email: community@vhmltd.com.au
Website: www.vhmltd.com.au

In relation to making a submission or the Inquiry and Advisory Committee Process

Planning Panels Victoria
Telephone: 136 186 (select Option 6)
Email: planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au

In relation to the EES process

Impact Assessment Unit- Department of Transport and Planning
Email: environment.assessment@delwp.vic.gov.au
Telephone: (03) 8622 7633

In relation to the EPA Development Licence

Permissions- EPA Victoria
Email: permissions@epa.vic.gov.au
Telephone: 1300 372 842