

# **Decision Report**

## **Application for Works Approval**

#### Part V Division 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986

Works Approval Number W6604/2021/1

**Applicant** Robe River Mining Co. Pty. Ltd

**ACN** 008 694 246

File Number DER2021/000560

Premises Angelo River Exploration Mobile Camp

Exploration Licence E47/754

ANGELO RIVER

SHIRE OF EAST PILBARA

**Date of Report** 22/01/2022

**Decision** Works approval granted

Stephen Checker MANAGER, WASTE INDUSTRIES REGULATORY SERVICES

an officer delegated under section 20 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (WA)

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## 1. Decision summary

This Decision Report documents the assessment of potential risks to the environment and public health from emissions and discharges during the construction and operation of the Premises. As a result of this assessment, Works Approval W6604/2021/1 has been granted.

## 2. Scope of assessment

#### 2.1 Regulatory framework

In completing the assessment documented in this Decision Report, the department has considered and given due regard to its Regulatory Framework and relevant policy documents which are available at <a href="https://dwer.wa.gov.au/regulatory-documents">https://dwer.wa.gov.au/regulatory-documents</a>.

### 2.2 Application summary and overview of Premises

On 20 September 2021, the applicant submitted an application for a works approval to the department under section 54 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The application relates to construction and operation of a temporary Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).

Angelo River Exploration Mobile Camp (the site) is a Joint Venture holding of Robe River Iron Associates (Cape Lambert Iron Associates, Mitsui Iron Ore Development Pty Ltd, North Mining Limited, and Pannawonica Iron Associates). Robe River Mining Co Pty Ltd (the Applicant) is the manager company for the Rio Tinto Group.

The site is located at West Angelas approximately 98 km west of Newman and operates under Exploration Licence 47/754. The Premises relates to the Category 85 - a Sewage Facility, with a production capacity of 30 cubic metres under Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection Regulations* 1987 (EP Regulations) defined in Works Approval W6604.

The infrastructure and equipment relating to the premises and any associated activities, which the department has considered in line with *Guidance Statement: Risk Assessments* (DER 2017), are outlined in Works Approval W6604

Table 1: Classification of premises and assessed design capacity

Description	Category	Assessed production or design capacity or throughput
Category – 85 Sewage facility: premises - a) on which sewage is treated (excluding septic tanks); or b) from which treated sewage is discharged onto land or into waters.	More than 20 but less than 100 cubic metres per day	30 cubic metres per day

The Applicant proposes to replace the existing 40 person camp with a 120-person camp.

The site clearing will be undertaken under approval POW REG ID 96051 and 71524 from December 2021 to January 2022.

The Applicant wishes to undertake time limited operations from January 2022 onwards under this Works Approval. Table 2 lists the documents submitted during the assessment process.

Table 2: Documents and information submitted during the assessment process

Document/information description	Date received
Works Approval Application Form	20/09/2021
Supporting document (RTIO, 2021) Attachment 8A	20/09/2021

#### 2.3 Description of proposed activity

The Applicant is seeking to construct a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and spray-field to service up to 120 person per day. The existing sewerage treatment facility (40-person) will be decommissioned and a new Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC) WWTP and Spray-field will be installed at the site. The WWTP will include an anerobic chamber, clarification chamber and disinfection chamber where the residual water will be treated with chlorine prior to discharge.

All the plant components will be skid mounted, tanks units will be circa 300 mm above finished floor level (AFFL) and installed on a compacted earthen pad.

Groundwater is inferred to flow towards the southeast with minimal head gradient that occurs at approximately 37 metres below groundwater level (mbgl).

The WWTP will be located approximately 70 m from the nearest camp accommodation block. The spray field will be located approximately 100 m from the nearest accommodation block and approximately 820 m from the nearest non-perennial drainage line.

The WWTP is expected to produce treated effluent of the quality outlined in Table 3. The design effluent quality values of the WWTP will meet or exceed the standards outlined in the *Australian Guidelines for Sewage Systems – Effluent Management* (ANZECC, 1997).

Table 3: Expected Water Quality for the WWTP under standard testing conditions (table taken from Application supporting document).

Outputs	Target treated wastewater (effluent) quality	Discharge Criteria (Treatment C^)
Biological Oxygen Demand	<20 mg/L	20-30 mg/L
Total Suspended Solids	<30 mg/L	25-40 mg/L
Total Nitrogen	<40 mg/L	20 – 50 mg/L
Total Phosphorus	<8 mg/L	6 – 12 mg/L
pH	NR	NA
Residual free chlorine	NR	NA
Thermo-tolerant Faecal Coliforms	<10 cfu/100 mL	<10,000 cfu/100 mL

NR - Not reported

NA - Not applicable

The soil in the vicinity of Spray-field have been assessed by the Applicant as Category 'D' (i.e. fine grained soils with a low vulnerability to eutrophication of downstream surface waters) in accordance with *Water Quality Protection Note 22 - Irrigation with Nutrient-rich Wastewater (Department of Water, 2008)* (WQPN 22).

Total nutrient discharged per year based on maximum concentration criteria will equate to approximately 547 kilogram (kg) of nitrogen (N) and 87 kg of phosphorus (P). To comply with the nutrient application rates as outlined in *Water Quality Protection Note 22 – Irrigation with Nutrient-rich Wastewater (Department of Water, 2008)* for soil type D (i.e. 480 kg/hectare/year for N and 120 kg/hectare/year for P), the irrigation spray-field area of 13,600 m² is considered

appropriately sized, giving approximate maximum loading rates of 402 kg/hectare/year for N and 66 kg/hectare/year for P.

On construction a compliance report will be submitted to the DWER. The commissioning of the WWTP and a time limited operation of spray field will be undertaken over a six-month period to identify and resolve any design and construction issues.

During commissioning, the WWTP will undergo a period of stabilisation. Once commissioning is completed, monitoring of the effluent water quality will be undertaken quarterly.

A time limited operation will be undertaken under the Works Approval, to allow for the assessment and determination of a Licence application.

Conditions are included in the Works Approval to regulate the disposal of wastewater to the spray field during the time limited operational phase. The conditions of the Works Approval will be transferred into the Licence that will commence once a Licence is approved.

The infrastructure and equipment to be installed are outlined in Table 4 below and the site location and layout is shown in Figure 1.

Table 4: Infrastructure to be installed.

Ref	Infrastructure or Equipment	Site Layout Plan reference (Figure 1)
1	Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC) Process plant and associated tank	RBC Process plant
2	Spray-field, surrounded by a 10 cm earthen bund.	Spray-field

#### 3. Risk assessment

The department assesses the risks of emissions from prescribed premises and identifies the potential source, pathway and impact to receptors in accordance with the *Guidance Statement: Risk Assessments* (DER 2017).

To establish a Risk Event there must be an emission, a receptor which may be exposed to that emission through an identified actual or likely pathway, and a potential adverse effect to the receptor from exposure to that emission.

## 3.1 Source-pathways and receptors

#### 3.1.1 Emissions and controls

The key emissions and associated actual or likely pathway during premises construction and operation which have been considered in this Decision Report are detailed in Table below. Table also details the proposed control measures the applicant has proposed to assist in controlling these emissions, where necessary.

**Table 5: Proposed applicant controls** 

Source	Emission (as identified above)	Proposed controls			
Construction of infrastructure and installation of equipment.	Dust	<ul> <li>The premises is significant distance from receptors.</li> <li>The skid mounted WWTP will be transported as a unit, limiting the requirement for major earthworks.</li> <li>The camp area is already cleared of vegetation, and the surface made good. The spray field does not require clearing.</li> </ul>			

Source	Emission (as identified above)	Proposed controls
		<ul> <li>Any earthworks required will be restricted to construction activities.</li> <li>During construction dust suppression will be employed using water sprays, water trucks, control of vehicle movements, restricted speeds.</li> <li>If required rehabilitation of disturbed areas will be undertaken.</li> </ul>
	Noise	Location of premises is significant distance from receptors.
Commissioning of the WWTP	Discharge of partially treated wastewater to land	<ul> <li>Discharge of untreated water to the Spray-field is not expected during commissioning.</li> <li>Three monthly validation monitoring of effluent during the commissioning period.</li> <li>System will be tested for leaks by running raw water through the system.</li> </ul>
Operation of the WWTP	Odour	<ul> <li>WWTP tanks are enclosed.</li> <li>The premises is a significant distance from receptors.</li> <li>The WWTP will be appropriately designed and operated to mitigate the risk of odour emissions.</li> <li>Regular inspection and preventative maintenance will be undertaken.</li> <li>Standard maintenance procedures are expected to effectively mitigate the risk of odour emissions.</li> <li>Prevailing wind direction is from the east, therefore more likely to move odour away from the camp (Benchmark Monitoring, West Angelas weather station)</li> </ul>
	Spills/ unintended releases of untreated wastewater	<ul> <li>WWTP is designed with an earthen bund, to contain sewage in the event of a sewage spill.</li> <li>The system will be fitted with a visual alarm beacon with SMS alert system, should any faults occur such as pump failure, high tank levels, tank overflows etc.</li> <li>Spill response inspection and maintenance will be undertaken</li> </ul>
Operation of the irrigation Spray-field	Discharge of treated wastewater to land	<ul> <li>Spray drift from irrigation is accounted for with respects to the spray field design.</li> <li>The WWTP is designed to ensure that nutrient loads in treated effluent meet a Class B level of treatment and do not exceed targets specified in Australian Guidelines for Sewerage Systems</li> <li>Management procedures mitigate the risk of discharge with elevated nutrient levels in soil / seepage to groundwater or surface water.</li> <li>The spray field is fenced off from access to fauna.</li> <li>Irrigating over an area of sufficient size (as determined by Department's Water Quality Protection Note 22) to prevent excess nutrient loading.</li> <li>Flow meter installed at discharge pipe to ensure approved volume to irrigation field is not exceeded</li> <li>Spill response will be provided as monitoring, inspection and maintenance will be undertaken.</li> </ul>

#### 3.1.2 Receptors

In accordance with the *Guidance Statement: Risk Assessment* (DER 2017), the Delegated Officer has excluded employees, visitors and contractors of the applicant's from its assessment. Protection of these parties often involves different exposure risks and prevention strategies, and is provided for under other state legislation.

Table below provides a summary of potential human and environmental receptors that may be impacted as a result of activities upon or emission and discharges from the prescribed premises (*Guidance Statement: Environmental Siting* (DER 2016).

Table 6 Sensitive human and environmental receptors and distance from prescribed activity

Human receptors	Distance from activity or prescribed premises
Closest residential zoned premises: Newman	Approximately 98 km east.
Closest recreation zoned premises: Newman	Approximately 98 km east.
Turee Creek Station Lease N050676	Approximately 13 km southeast.
Environmental receptors	Distance from activity / prescribed premises
Reserves and National Parks	The Karijini National Park boundary is located approximately 27 km northwest of the site.
Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA)	None
RAMSAR Wetlands	None
Geomorphic Wetlands	None
West Angelas Cracking Clays (TEC and PEC area)	Located approximately 16 km north of the site.
Groundwater	Depth not known. Assumed to be at approximately 37 mbgl, a level similar to a well WB14ANR001 located approximately 4 km southwest.
Groundwater wells	Two water bores (ID 20066570 and 20066569) are located approximately 22 km southwest and 33 km northwest.  West Angelas Well field is located approximately 14k m north.
Surface water	Two minor non-perennial drainage lines are located near the site. One is located approximately 870 m to the west and 820 m southeast.  Both drain towards the south and west and into the Ashburton River system.  Three significant watercourses located within the wider catchment area include:  Angelo River - approximately 5.0 km southeast, Indabiddy Creek - approximately 4.0 km south and Spearhole Creek - approximately 8.5 km northeast.  None
Threatened flora	None
Threatened fauna	110110

RioTinto Existing Camp Layout and Proposed WWTP and Spray Field Location POW96051 Proj: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 50 Scale: 1:4,000 @ A4 gisteam@riotinto.com Angelo River Camp Location Proposed Sprayfield Location Existing Angelo River Exploration Mobile Camp Existing Camp and Building Infrastructure Existing Angelo River Exploration Mobile Camp POW71524 682.000 682,200 682,400 682,600

Figure 1: Location and layout of the Angelo River Exploration Mobile Camp

CTTI [22] POTABLE WATER WASTE WATER - DN50 - 80 PVC — DN50 (PRE INSTALLED) - 100 TW BUS DROP-OFF AVEA - DN110 (BORE) - 100 PVC - DN110 - 125 PVC LV CARPARK VALVE FIRE HOSE REEL DN50 PRESSURE DN110 PRESSURE - FHR REACH (Max. 36m) - DN160 PRESSURE PUMP STATION
DUAL TANK PUM SPRAY (4m) IN GROUND SERVICE DUAL TANK PUMP STATION KITCHEN PUMP STATION
GREASE TRAP ⊗ VALVE CAMP ENTRY: EXIT 00 8 8 **ATCO** HYDRAULIC SERVICES PLAN HYDRAULIC SERVICES

Figure 2: Design drawing of the Angelo River Exploration Mobile Camp containing Wastewater Treatment Plant and Spray-field.

### 3.2 Risk ratings

Risk ratings have been assessed in accordance with the *Guidance Statement: Risk Assessments* (DER 2017) for each identified emission source and takes into account potential source-pathway and receptor linkages as identified in Section 3.1. Where linkages are in-complete they have not been considered further in the risk assessment.

Where the applicant has proposed mitigation measures/controls (as detailed in Section 3.1), these have been considered when determining the final risk rating. Where the Delegated Officer considers the applicant's proposed controls to be critical to maintaining an acceptable level of risk, these will be incorporated into the works approval as regulatory controls.

Additional regulatory controls may be imposed where the applicant's controls are not deemed sufficient. Where this is the case the need for additional controls will be documented and justified in Table .

Works Approval W6604/2021/1 that accompanies this Decision Report authorises construction and time-limited operations. The conditions in the issued Works Approval, as outlined in Table have been determined in accordance with *Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions* (DER 2015).

A licence is required following the time-limited operational phase authorised under the works approval to authorise emissions associated with the ongoing operation of the Premises i.e. Sewage facility activities. A risk assessment for the operational phase has been included in this Decision Report, however licence conditions will not be finalised until the department assesses the licence application.

Table 7: Risk assessment of potential emissions and discharges from the Premises during construction, commissioning and operation

Risk Event					Risk rating <sup>1</sup>	Applicant	Conditions <sup>2</sup>	
Source/Acti vities	Potential emission	Potential pathways and impact	Receptors	Applicant controls	C = consequence L = likelihood	consequence controls sufficient?		Justification for additional regulatory controls
Construction								
Category 85: Sewage Facility	Dust	Air/windborne pathway causing	No receptor in vicinity	Refer to Section 3.1	N/A	Y	N/A	The minor construction works (equipment placement) are not expected to generate significant dust emissions.  There is not considered to be a pathway to residential receptors due to distance.  The general provisions of the EP Act are considered sufficient in regulating dust emissions in the event of any issues
Construction of WWTP Infrastructur e and placement of equipment	Noise	impacts to health and amenity	No receptor in vicinity	Environment al Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997	N/A	Y	N/A	The minor construction works (equipment placement) are not expected to generate significant noise emissions.  There is not considered to be a pathway to residential receptors due to distance.  The Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 (Noise Regulations) apply in the event of any issues
Commissioni	ng							
Irrigation of treated wastewater to spray-filed	Odour	Air/windborne pathway causing impacts to health and amenity	No receptor in vicinity	Refer to Section 3.1	N/A	Y	N/A	There is not considered to be a pathway for odour emissions to residential receptors due to distance.
Discharge of treated Wastewater to land (irrigation spray-field)	Discharge of untreated / partially treated wastewater to land as a result of spills / unintended release of	Overtopping / leaks of WWTP tanks resulting in effluent containing high levels of nutrients may impact the health of	Overtopping / leaks of WWTP tanks resulting in effluent containing high levels of nutrients may impact the health of	Refer to Section 3.1	Medium (Minor; Unlikely)	Y	Condition 1 infrastructure and equipment specifications. Condition 5 operational controls during commissioning Condition 6	In the event of overtopping of WWTP or leaks of untreated sewage from tanks, low level impacts could occur.  The majority of the WWTP facility will be skid mounted and placed in a cleared area and therefore vegetation is unlikely to be affected.  Overtopping or leaks from tanks are unlikely to occur due to the controls the Applicant has proposed (i.e. high level alarms fitted to tanks, visual inspection of facility daily).

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Risk Event					Risk rating <sup>1</sup>		2	
Source/Acti vities	Potential emission	Potential pathways and impact	Receptors	Applicant controls	C = consequence L = likelihood	consequence controls sufficient?	Conditions <sup>2</sup> of works approval	Justification for additional regulatory controls
	wastewater from WWTP	surrounding vegetation and cause a reduction in soil quality resulting in plant death.	surrounding vegetation and cause a reduction in soil quality resulting in plant death.				authorised discharge points.	Commissioning period will be for a period of 6 months.  Therefore, the final risk rating for this risk event has been deemed to be medium
	Discharge of treated wastewater to land (irrigation field)	Pipeline leaks resulting in treated effluent being released to land which may impact the health of surrounding native vegetation and soils.	Pipeline leaks resulting in treated effluent being released to land which may impact the health of surrounding native vegetation and soils.	Refer to Section 3.1	Medium Minor Unlikely	Y	Condition 1 infrastructure and equipment specifications Condition 5 operational controls during commissioning Condition 6 authorised discharge points Condition 7 monitoring of discharge water quality during commissioning	Whilst not expected, irrigation of effluent to land is allowed for during commissioning. During commissioning the quality of treated wastewater discharged may not be representative of levels expected during operations. In the event of a leak from the delivery pipelines, low level onsite impacts may occur.  Pipelines will be placed within a cleared mining area where little to no native vegetation will be present. Pipeline leaks are unlikely due to pipelines being buried and therefore being protected from damage and the short duration of commissioning phase.  The risk rating for this risk event is therefore, been deemed to be medium.
	Odour	Air/windborne pathway causing impacts to health and amenity	No receptor present	Refer to Section 3.1	N/A	Y	N/A	There is not considered to be a pathway for odour emissions to residential receptors due to distance.
	Treated Effluent	Sewage spill during operation of the WWTP causing soil contamination / seepage to groundwater	Terrestrial ecosystems Groundwater: depth to groundwater is expected to be approximately	Refer to Section 3.1	Medium Minor Unlikely	Y	Condition 1 infrastructure and equipment specifications.  Condition 13 operational controls during	The design effluent quality values of the WWTP will meet or exceed the standards outlined in the Australian Guidelines for Sewage Systems – Effluent Management (ANZECC, 1997) (see Table 3).

Risk Event			Risk rating <sup>1</sup>	Applicant Con	Candisiana?			
	Potential emission	Potential pathways and impact	Receptors	Applicant controls	C = consequence L = likelihood	consequence controls sufficient?	Conditions <sup>2</sup> of works approval	Justification for additional regulatory controls
		eutrophication of surface water Risk to human health Risk to fauna.	37 m bgl.  Surface Water: None, the nearest receptors are non perennial drainage lines located at least 800 m from the proposed facility.				time limited operations.  Condition 14 authorised discharge points.  Condition 15 monitoring of emissions during time limited operations.	The Applicant has proposed to undertake quarterly monitoring of the discharge quality to ensure it continues to meet the expected design effluent quality values.  The Applicant has prepared the Application in accordance with WQPN 22, even though the note specifies that it does not apply to treated municipal wastewater (sewage) which requires specific approval under the <i>Health Act 1911</i> . However, for this assessment it is considered useful for risk assessing nutrient application rates to control eutrophication risk.  In order to comply with the nutrient application rates outlined in WQPN 22 for soil type D (i.e. 480 kg/hectare/year for N and 120 kg/hectare/year for P) based on the average wastewater quality and maximum volume 30 kL/day discharge from the WWTP the irrigation area has been sized at 13,600 m².  The impact of longer term discharge to the irrigation field on the environment is deemed to be moderate as specific consequence criteria are at risk of not being met if treatment targets are not maintained. The application of nutrient laden wastewater to land where no vegetation is available for nutrient uptake during operations may have mid-level on-site impact on soils. The lack of vegetation for nutrient uptake is not ideal and DWER would prefer irrigation fields to occur within a vegetated areas.  The likelihood of this risk event occurring is unlikely as a result of the applicant's controls e.g limiting discharge to 30 kL/day (a flow meter will be installed to monitor discharge volume), discharge will occur only during shut down periods, and sprayfield is within an area with a high evaporation rate and field has been sized in accordance with WQPN 22.)  The risk rating for this event is therefore deemed to be Medium.

Note 1: Consequence ratings, likelihood ratings and risk descriptions are detailed in the Guidance Statement: Risk Assessments (DER 2017).

Note 2: Proposed applicant controls are depicted by standard text. **Bold and underline text** depicts additional regulatory controls imposed by department.

#### 4. Consultation

Table 1 provides a summary of the consultation undertaken by the department. A reply email accepting the draft instrument in full and waiving the comment period was received on 14 January 2022.

**Table 1: Consultation** 

Consultation method	Comments received	Department response			
Application was advertised on the department's website on 30/11/2021.	None received	N/A			
Local Government Authority advised of proposal on 6/12/2021.	comment not received	N/A			
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) advised of proposal on 6/12/2021	comment not received	N/A			
Applicant was provided with draft documents on 11/01/2022.	14/01/2022 – Drafts accepted. Remainder of consultation period waived	Noted			

#### 5. Conclusion

Based on the assessment in this Decision Report, the Delegated Officer has determined that a works approval will be granted, subject to conditions commensurate with the determined controls and necessary for administration and reporting requirements.

#### 6. References

- 1. Works Approval (W6604/2021/1) application form and supporting documentation 20/09/2021 Robe River Mining Co. Pty Ltd
- 2. National Water Quality Management Strategy, Australian Guidelines for Sewage Systems Effluent Management, Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) 1997
- 3. Department of Environment Regulation (DER) 2016, Guidance Statement: Environmental Siting, Perth, Western Australia.
- 4. DER 2017, Guidance Statement: Risk Assessments, Perth, Western Australia.
- 5. DER 2015, Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions, Perth, Western Australia.
- 6. DWER, June 2019 Guideline: Decision Making Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
- 7. DOW, 2008. Water Quality Protection Note 22: Irrigation with nutrient-rich wastewater. Department of Water, Perth.

# **Appendix 2: Application validation summary**

PART 1: APPLICATION SUMMARY												
Application type												
1.1	What type of application has the applicant submitted, as indicated in the first section of the <i>IR-F01</i> application form?											
	Works approval	$\boxtimes$										
	Licence		Relevant works approval number:				None					
	Renewal		Current licence number:									
	Amendment to works approval		Current works approval number:									
	Amendment to licence		Current licence number:									
	American to accine		Relevant works approval number:					N/A				
	Registration		Current works approval number:				None					
Clearing		Yes	No	Prop	osed Action	/ Notes	if applic	cable)				
Does the application include a request for clearing under a works approval or licence?		est for		$\boxtimes$	appro ID 96 Camp The r the in camp	A clearing value of 20.95 ha has been approved in accordance with POW Reg ID 96051, which permits activity type Campsite and upgrade to WWTP.  The replacement WWTP will be located in the immediate area of the existing mobile camp and is completed in accordance with POW Reg ID 71524.						
	If yes, has the request already been referred to the Native Vegetation Regulation Branch?		$\boxtimes$		Date	of referral:						
Prescribed premises categories		Yes	No	Prop	osed Action / Notes (if applicable)							
1.3	Has the applicant specified all prescribed premises categories that are relevant to the activities on the premises?		$\boxtimes$		Listed	sted 85 – Sewage Facility						
Verification		Yes	No	Prop	osed Action	/ Notes (	(if applic	cable)				
1.4	Has the correct type of application been applied for?		$\boxtimes$									
1.5	Has a response been provided to all applicable sections of the application form?		$\boxtimes$									
1.6	Date application received:		20/09/2021									
1.7	HPRM file reference number:		DWERDT506222									