



Application to renew a licence

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

Licence Number	L7815/2001/12
Licence Holder	Northern Star (Thunderbox) Pty Ltd
ACN	107 154 727
File Number	DWERVT16137~2
Premises	North Eastern Goldfields Operations LEINSTER WA 6437 Legal description - Mining tenements L36/155, L36/157, L36/158, L37/61, L37/73, L37/142, L37/166, L37/199, L37/215, L37/216, M36/35, M36/177, M36/421, M36/462, M36/473, M36/494, M36/503, M36/504, M36/512, M36/516, M36/525, M36/527, M36/541, M36/542, M36/582, M36/584, M36/585, M36/586, M36/587, M36/589, M36/599, M36/600, M36/1148, M37/339, M37/340, M37/356, M37/357, M37/358, M37/359, M37/360, M37/361, M37/367, M37/368, M37/437, M37/465 and M37/1148 As defined by the premises map attached to the renewed licence
Date of Report	17 October 2024
Decision	Licence granted

MANAGER WASTE INDUSTRIES

*Officer delegated under section 20
of the Environmental Protection Act 1986*

1. Decision summary

The Delegated Officer has determined, in accordance with the regulatory framework, to process the application to renew Licence L7815/2001/11 without conducting an additional risk assessment.

The licence is issued for 11 years, which is consistent with the *Guidance Statement on Licence Duration 2016*. In renewing the licence, the Delegated Officer has determined to:

- Update the licence version; and
- Update the licence renewal duration by 11 years to expire on 16 October 2035.

As a result of the above, the Delegated Officer decided to grant Licence L7815/2001/12, subject to conditions set out in the attached licence.

2. Regulatory framework

An administrative licence renewal does not require any further environmental assessment of emissions and discharges from the premises, extends the duration of the licence up to 20 years and includes any administrative changes deemed appropriate. The renewal is in line with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's (department) *Work Instruction: Industry Regulation, Licensing position - COVID-19 response* dated October 2022.

In granting the licence, the Delegated Officer has considered and given due regard to the department's regulatory framework and relevant policy documents which are available at [DWER Regulatory documents | Western Australian Government \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au/government/regulatory-documents)

3. Scope of assessment

3.1 Application summary

On 26 May 2024, Northern Star Resources (Thunderbox) Pty Ltd (licence holder) applied to renew licence L7815/2001/11, as the licence is due to expire on 20 October 2024. The licence was granted to the licence holder for the premises located on tenements L36/155, L36/157, L36/158, L37/61, L37/73, L37/142, L37/166, L37/199, L37/215, L37/216, M36/35, M36/177, M36/421, M36/462, M36/473, M36/494, M36/503, M36/504, M36/512, M36/516, M36/525, M36/527, M36/541, M36/542, M36/582, M36/584, M36/585, M36/586, M36/587, M36/589, M36/599, M36/600, M36/1148, M37/339, M37/340, M37/356, M37/357, M37/358, M37/359, M37/360, M37/361, M37/367, M37/368, M37/437, M37/465 and M37/1148 known as the North Eastern Goldfields Operations (the premises) located 40 km southeast of Leinster.

The licence relates to prescribed premises categories as described in Table 1.

Table 1: Premises category description and production design capacity

Prescribed premises category description	Assessed production / design capacity
Category 5 - Processing or beneficiation of metallic or non-metallic ore	7,000,000 tonnes per annual period
Category 6 - Mine dewatering	8,000,000 tonnes per annual period
Category 52 - Electric power generation	38 MW in aggregate.
Category 54 - Sewage facility	140 cubic metres per day
Category 64 - Class II or III putrescible landfill site	7,000 tonnes per annual period
Category 73 - Bulk storage of chemicals etc.	2,500 cubic metres in aggregate

The premises includes the Thunderbox mine as well as a number of satellite mines, including the Bannockburn pit.

The main activities occurring at the premises include processing of gold bearing ore with tailings stored in various Tailing Storage Facilities (TSF), dewatering of the mine pits including storage and discharge of dewatered groundwater, power supply for the entire operations, sewage treatment facilities, putrescible landfill operations, waste rock dumps and fuel storage infrastructure. The premises also includes pipelines, haul roads, administrative buildings and a mine village that accommodates staff.

3.2 Compliance and enforcement actions

There have been seven incidents / complaints identified at the premises recorded by the department in the last five years. There have been no enforcement actions in respect to five of these incidents.

The sixth incident occurred in May 2023 when a saline discharge required vegetation monitoring for a 12 month duration. The monitoring report is due during the last quarter of 2024 when the level of enforcement action can then be determined.

The final incident is alleged unauthorised land clearing that was reported in July 2024. The clearing is being investigated and currently remains under investigation.

The renewal of the licence will have no impact on the vegetation monitoring report findings nor the investigation of the land clearing incident.

3.3 Legal occupancy

The licence holder is a legal entity and has demonstrated legal occupancy of the premises as the holder of the tenements described in the cover of the licence.

3.4 Categories of the licence

The requested categories and the corresponding maximum production capacities for the renewal of the licence are consistent with the categories for which the licence holder currently holds a licence and which have been previously assessed.

3.5 Previous relevant decision reports

As the renewal of this licence is deemed an administrative licence renewal and there is no additional environmental assessment conducted, the Delegated Officer notes for the purpose of transparency and ease of access, the previous relevant decision and amendment reports shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** will be viewable when published.

Table 2: Previous relevant decision reports

Description of decision report	Grant Date	Document No.
Decision Document assessing Tailings, Mine Dewater and Tailings return.	11/11/2016	A1189377
Amendment Report assessing dewatering operations.	11/03/2020	A1875595
Amendment Report assessing TSF leachate.	16/04/2021	A1997112
Amendment Report assessing expansion of mill and power station upgrade.	29/04/2024	A2274372
Amendment Report assessing the recommencement of processing operations at the Bannockburn pit, located in the southern part of the premises.	18/09/2024	DWERDT965880

3.6 Planning approval

The Delegated Officer seeks comments that mining operations and activity has all the necessary approvals granted for the activities at the premises. The Department is aware that planning approval is not required for developments approved under Mining legislation.

4. Summary of changes to the licence conditions

Section 62 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) provides the legal power to attach conditions to licences. Most licences are issued with conditions as per *Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions* (DER, 2015) to prevent, control, abate or mitigate pollution or environmental harm resulting from emissions and/or discharges from the premises.

The changes to the licence are;

- Edit the licence version number to version 12;
- Extend the licence duration to expire on 16 October 2035; and
- Add a missing N1 notification form as Schedule 2.

5. Consultation

The Delegated Officer undertook the consultation for the application to renew the licence as per Table 3.

Table 3: Consultation

Consultation method	Comments received	Delegated Officer's response
Application advertised on the department's website on 20 August 2024 with submissions closing on 11 September 2024	None received by the time submissions closed on 11 September 2024.	N/A
Local Government Authority advised of application on 20 August 2024.	The Shire of Leonora was given till 13 September 2024 to make submission. No submission has been received to date.	N/A
Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) advised of the application on 20 August 2024.	DEMIRS was given till 13 September 2024 to make submission. No submission has been received to date.	DEMIRS had previously provided comment on the licence amendment granted on 18 September 2024, indicating that a granted mining proposal is in place.
Applicant was provided with draft documents 26 September 2024	The Applicant had no comments.	N/A

6. Conclusion

Based on the assessment in this decision report, the Delegated Officer has determined that the application to renew Licence L7815/2001/12 will be granted, subject to conditions commensurate with the determined controls and necessary for administration and reporting requirements.