

Making a Public Submission under the WA Environmental Approvals process

Projects that may have a significant impact on the environment are assessed by the EPA under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (WA).

There are 2 levels of assessment:

- Assessment on Proponent Information (**API**): This is the lowest level of assessment and doesn't include public comment.
- Public Environmental Review (**PER**): This is the highest level of assessment, and includes public consultation.

The company wishing to undertake a project is called the Proponent.

The following steps are an overview of the first steps in the EPA environmental assessment process:

- 1) The Proponent submits a referral to the EPA
- 2) The EPA advertises the Proponent's referral on its website, and the **public has 7 DAYS** to make a submission.
 - a. The Public Submissions are done using an **online form** on the EPA website
 - b. The Public Submissions are **limited to 500 words**
 - c. The Public Submission needs to **pick which level of assessment** the Project should have (API or PER) **and why**
- 3) Once the 7 days are over, the EPA looks at the public submissions and decides which level of assessment is appropriate. The EPA then advertises its decision on the website
 - a. If the EPA sets an API level of assessment, there is no further chance for public comment
 - b. If the EPA sets a PER level of assessment, there will be further opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed project. This includes a 4 – 12 week public comment process where you have the chance to read the Proponent's PER document and raise your concerns.

The EPA sets a PER level of assessment if the proposed project meets any one of the following criteria:

- The proposal is of regional and/or State-wide significance.
- The proposal has several significant environmental issues, some of which are complex or of a strategic nature.
- Substantial and detailed assessment of the proposal is required to determine whether, and if so how, the environmental issues could be managed.
- The level of interest in the proposal warrants a public review period.

So you want to have a say about bauxite mining in the Avon and Hills area.... Where to from here?

Stage 1

- 1) Keep an eye on the EPA website to see if proposed bauxite mining projects have been referred to the EPA:
<https://consultation.epa.wa.gov.au/>
(or you can subscribe to the EPA's automatic notification service on the website)
- 2) Have a look at the online referral Public Submission form
- 3) If you want to have the chance to have a say in the assessment process, you will need to ask the EPA to set a **PER** level of assessment as soon as the bauxite mining proposal has been referred to the EPA.
Don't forget you only have 7 days to get your public submission in!
- 4) You only have 500 words to explain why you think the proposed project should be assessed at a PER level– use them wisely! Be short and to the point - Lists are a great way to save words
- 5) Wait for the EPA's announcement to see what level of assessment has been set.... **And then we'll tackle Stage 2 – we will provide more information on Stage 2 in the future, stay tuned to www.ahmag.com.au**

More details on the EPA environmental impact assessment process can be found here: www.epa.wa.gov.au/EIA