



Application for Licence Amendment

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

Licence Number	L6942/1997/13
Licence Holder	BHP Iron Ore Pty Ltd
ACN	008 700 981
File Number	DER2013/000329-1~10
Premises	Eastern Ridge Iron Ore Mine Legal description – Mining Tenement M244SA. As defined by the coordinates in Schedule 2 of the Revised Licence
Date of Report	23 October 2024
Proposed Decision	Revised licence granted

MANAGER, PROCESS INDUSTRIES

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

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1. Decision summary

Licence L6942/1997/13 is held by BHP Iron Ore Pty Ltd (Licence Holder) for the Eastern Ridge Iron Ore Mine (the Premises), located within Mining Tenement M244SA.

This Amendment Report documents the assessment of potential risks to the environment and public health from proposed changes to the emissions and discharges during the operation of the Premises. As a result of this assessment, Revised Licence L6942/1997/13 has been granted.

2. Scope of assessment

2.1 Regulatory framework

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

2.2 Application summary

On 20 June 2024, the Licence Holder submitted an application to the department to amend Licence L6942/1997/13 under section 59 and 59B of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The following amendments are being sought:

- Updates to the operation and compliance monitoring of dust control infrastructure on Orebody 24 stacker boom; and
- Updates to the location of background dust monitors.

This amendment is limited only to changes to Category 5 activities from the Existing Licence. No changes to the aspects of the existing Licence relating to Category 6, 63 and 85 have been requested by the Licence Holder.

2.2.1 Updates to the Orebody 24 stacker boom

The Orebody 24 stacker that loads into the Train Loader is fitted with an internal boom spray and two external boom sprinklers. The Licence Holder has advised that the internal boom spray is in operation when the stacker is running at more than 330 tonnes per hour (tph) and that this equipment does not present any issues with plant operations or calculation of existing compliance monitoring as required by condition 4 of the licence that states:

The licence holder must be able to accurately measure and achieve a rate of 90% or more for the:

(a) Average Monthly Availability of all:

- (i) water sprays on stackers*
- (ii) transfer station and conveyor dust suppression sprays; and*
- (iii) BOC sprays,*

(b) Average Monthly Performance of all stockyard water cannons and irrigation sprays (OB25 OHP only)

within 18 months of the date of issue of this licence for dust control infrastructure at OB24 OHP.

The external boom sprinklers are fitted on the west and east side of the stacker chute and project outwards over the cone of the stockpile. As advised in the meeting with the department on 17 June 2024, two issues occur with the current operation of the boom sprinklers:

1. Operating the boom sprinklers when the stockpile cone is not >70% height is causing flooding inside the base of the cone and causing surging of ore within the Train Loader; and

2. Issues calculating average monthly availability based on the previous requirement for boom sprinklers to be “operational whenever handling ore” as in accordance with condition 3, Schedule 4, Table 12 of the current licence.

Noting these two issues, the Licence Holder is requesting the following changes:

1. To alter the operational specification for the boom sprinklers to avoid flooding. As an alternative the Licence Holder is proposing to operate the boom sprinklers to condition the stockpile when the ore is not running; and
2. Changing the calculation of dust control availability from ‘average monthly availability’ to ‘average monthly performance’, considered to be a more appropriate calculation for the operation of the equipment.

Requested changes to operational requirements of boom sprinklers

Prior to the dust review (dated 16 January 2023), the Licence Holder operated the boom sprinklers manually, where the sprinkler would be activated by an operator whenever the stockpile became dusty for brief periods. This did not involve any automation.

Although the amendment required the boom sprinklers to be “operational whenever handling ore”, the Licence Holder was not able to meet the requirements of the condition based on practical implementation issues.

Following the amendment to the Licence in 2023, the operation of these sprinklers was automated to:

- Automatically cycle on and off when ore is running (as to not cause flooding issues); and
- Auto-mode developed so sprinklers cycle on and off when ore is not running and cone is >70% height.

The automated logic implemented was:

1. When ore is running;
On – 0.5 minutes; and Off – 60 minutes; and
2. When ore is not running:
On – 1 minutes; and Off – 120 minutes.

Requested changes to dust control availability measuring

As defined by the licence, the availability of the boom sprinklers as dust controls are currently calculated by average monthly availability which is defined as “*the combined average percentage availability of equipment, calculated for each calendar month by dividing the time that the equipment is operating, by the time the equipment is required to be operated*”.

The Licence Holder is requesting to change the requirement for boom sprinkler calculation to average monthly performance which is defined as “*the average percentage in automatic mode of equipment, calculated for each calendar month by dividing the time that the equipment is operating in automatic mode, by the time the equipment is required to be operating, taking into account Exclusion Periods if applicable*”.

The Licence Holder is requesting to change this because of the proposed automated operation for the boom sprinklers.

2.2.2 Updates to background dust monitors

The Licence Holder is requesting to include a background monitor ‘WBAQRT011’ for the purpose of monitoring background PM₁₀ levels onto the licence. It is noted that this monitor is being used in the Licence Holder’s other premises licence for Mt Whaleback L4503/1975/14

which is part of the Newman dust monitoring network. The Licence Holder has also requested to relocate two background monitors (WBAQRT022 and WBAQRT011) as it is considered that the current location next to a busy haul road is not appropriate in providing a reading of a true background level. This may have resulted in unreliable emission readings and impacted the quality and effectiveness of management triggers. The proposed new location is approximately 400m west of the current location.

Whilst it is noted that these monitors are not included in the management triggers for this licence, they are for L4503/1975/14 and are relevant to the operation at the Eastern Ridge premises.

The delegated officer sought technical advice from the department's air quality branch (AQB) regarding the relocation of these monitors.

The following advice was provided:

- It appears that relocating background dust monitors could improve the reliability of the collected data by better representing overall background dust conditions. AQB has previously noted that these background monitors are located next to a dirt road, making their readings unreliable for determining background dust levels due to vehicle activities;
- The proposed location by the Licence Holder mainly meets the key siting requirements outlined in AS/NZS 3580.1.1:2016, including appropriate distance from pollution sources, favourable site characteristics, and consideration of meteorological and topographical factors. However, the new site appears to fall short of one general criterion, avoiding localised influences, due to its close proximity to a local dust source;
- It is noted that the proposed dust monitoring location is situated on an exploration drill pad, which is now exposed (i.e. previously cleared of vegetation). This pad could become a source of dust, resulting in data that may not accurately reflect the general background conditions, particularly for data used for the management trigger criteria cited in the licence;
- It is noted that the dust monitor WBAQRT011 is used in the management trigger criteria in the Mt Whaleback licence L4503/1975/14. The conditions for boundary and ambient monitors will only be triggered under westerly winds unless the monitor records PM₁₀ levels of $\geq 100 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This means that the management triggers or actions will be activated during westerly winds, and any significant dust sources to the west would be important and could negate the trigger conditions considered for the boundary and ambient monitors.
- Currently, there are no significant dust sources to the west of the existing monitoring site, and they do not impact the management trigger conditions. However, localised dust from the drilling pad is likely to affect the proposed monitoring site by the Licence Holder, potentially influencing the management trigger levels.

Based on the comments above, AQB has recommended in order to minimise the localised dust impact to the monitors, that the Licence Holder should:

- Relocate the new monitoring site to the west of the drilling pad rather than the south (as originally proposed by the Licence Holder); or
- Consider solutions to minimise the impact of the exposed area, such as apply soil stabilisers or dust suppressants,

Ongoing works

As part of the licence review and subsequent amendment granted on 16 January 2023, the Licence Holder was required to undertake further improvement works to manage dust emissions at the premises. On 16 January 2024, the Licence Holder submitted to the department the *Newman Dust Monitoring Network Review and Improvement Plan* (BHP, 2024).

Whilst the submission has been partially reviewed regarding some proposed changes to the monitoring network (i.e. relocation of monitors under this amendment), the review of the submitted plan is ongoing and pending this review, will make any necessary amendments to current licence conditions as required.

Noting the submission of the *Newman Dust Monitoring Network Review*, the department has made an administrative amendment to the timeframe for the required completion date of the additional PM₁₀ monitor (Condition 8, Table 1, row 1) from “*Within 18 months from the date of issue of this amended Licence*” to “*N/A*” to indicate that the Licence Holder has submitted the review.

2.2.3 Other changes

In addition to the requests above, the Licence Holder is requesting to update the wording in Table 12, Row 10 as detailed in correspondence submitted to the department on 9 May 2023. The requested updates are as followed:

- Clearly define the area as to which these operational requirements for ‘roads and open area’ applies to, specifically the fixed processing area; and
- To note that the speeds specified are for the light vehicles only.

The Licence Holder considers the above changes will update the licence to align with the requirements of the L4503/1975/14.

To ensure consistency with licence L4503/1975/14, the delegated officer has accepted this requested change, particularly as the scope of assessment and conditioning of these activities in the licence is limited to activities under Part V of the EP Act.

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 *Guideline: Risk assessments* (DWER 2020).

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 operation which have been considered in this Amendment Report are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 also details the proposed control measures the Licence Holder has proposed to assist in controlling these emissions, where necessary.

Table 1: Licence Holder controls

Emission	Sources	Potential pathways	Proposed controls
Dust	Operations of Boom Sprinklers on Orebody 24 stacker – specifically any changes to emissions due to	Air / windborne pathway	<u>Previous control:</u> “Boom sprinkler operational whenever handling ore, unless during Exclusion Periods”.

Emission	Sources	Potential pathways	Proposed controls
	change in operational requirements		<u>Proposed control:</u> “Boom sprinklers <i>routinely operated over stockpile</i> whenever handling ore, and <i>routinely operated when not handling ore</i> and the stockpile level is >70%, unless during Exclusion Periods”.

3.1.2 Receptors

In accordance with the *Guideline: Risk assessments* (DWER 2020), the Delegated Officer has excluded employees, visitors and contractors of the Licence Holder'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 2 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 (*Guideline: Environmental siting* (DWER 2020)).

Table 2: Sensitive human and environmental receptors and distance from prescribed activity

Human receptors	Distance from prescribed activity
Town of Newman	Nearest residential receptors 2.9 km south-west from the premises boundary Nearest residential receptor 6.6 km south-west from train loading activity.
Environmental receptors	Distance from prescribed activity
Ethel Gorge Stygobiont Threatened Ecological Community (Critically Endangered)	Located within the eastern portion of the prescribed premises. <i>Proposed changes as part of this amendment are not expected to impact this receptor, and therefore it is not considered further in the risk assessment.</i>
Threatened / priority fauna	No records within the prescribed premises except <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> (Common Sandpiper) located in the southern portion. <i>Proposed changes as part of this amendment are not expected to impact this receptor, and therefore it is not considered further in the risk assessment.</i>
Priority flora <i>Aristida jerichoensis</i> var. <i>subspinulifera</i>	Located within prescribed premises. <i>Whilst dust emissions may impact vegetation in the prescribed premises, the delegated officer considers the main risk to be that to human receptors, and considerations made of dust impacts to human receptors will also reduce dust impacts to other receptors.</i>
Aboriginal heritage sites	Multiple sites within the prescribed premises. <i>The delegated officer has considered the risk assessment to human receptors will capture any risk of emissions to this receptors and therefore it is not considered further in the risk assessment.</i>
Public Drinking Water Source Area	Newman Water Reserve (Priority 1) within the prescribed premises. <i>Proposed changes as part of this amendment are not expected to impact this receptor, and therefore it is not</i>

	<i>considered further in the risk assessment.</i>
Surface water lines and bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several minor surface water lines within the premises and Homestead Creek runs through western portion of the premises; and ○ Fortescue and Warrawanda River to the east of the premises leading into Ophthalmia Dam (directly south-east of premises). <p><i>Proposed changes as part of this amendment are not expected to impact this receptor, and therefore it is not considered further in the risk assessment.</i></p>

3.2 Risk ratings

Risk ratings have been assessed in accordance with the *Guideline: Risk Assessments* (DWER 2020) for those emission sources which are proposed to change 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 Licence Holder 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 Licence Holder's proposed controls to be critical to maintaining an acceptable level of risk, these will be incorporated into the licence as regulatory controls.

Additional regulatory controls may be imposed where the Licence Holder's controls are not deemed sufficient. Where this is the case the need for additional controls will be documented and justified in Table 3.

The Revised Licence L6942/1997/13 that accompanies this Amendment Report authorises emissions associated with the operation of the Premises i.e. category 5 activities.

The conditions in the Revised Licence have been determined in accordance with *Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions* (DER 2015).

Table 3. Risk assessment of potential emissions and discharges from the Premises during operation

Risk Event					Risk rating ¹ C = consequence L = likelihood	Licence Holder's controls sufficient?	Conditions ² of licence	Justification for additional regulatory controls
Source/Activities	Potential emission	Potential pathways and impact	Receptors	Licence Holder's controls				
Operation								
Change to operating requirements for Boom Sprinklers	Dust	Pathway: Air / windborne pathway Impact: Health impacts associated with the inhalation of finer particulates (PM ₁₀) Amenity impacts from TSP and deposited dust	Town of Newman (nearest resident 6.6 km south-west of train loading activity)	Refer to section 3.1.1	C = Major L = Possible High risk	Y	Condition 3: operational requirements for boom sprinklers and boom sprays	Whilst the requested change to the operation of the boom sprinklers means that it will not be conditioning the stockpile into the OHP24 train loader when the conveyor CV1301 is in operation, the delegated officer has considered that the ongoing operation of the boom sprays to suppress fine dust particles on the conveyor will be sufficient in managing dust lift off. Meanwhile, the sprinklers which will mainly condition the stockpile will be automated on and off during stacker operation and will also suppress dust lift off from the stockpile when the stacker is not running.
Relocation of dust monitors	Note: this does not change emission profile. Delegated officer's determination on requested changes discussed in section 5.							

Note 1: Consequence ratings, likelihood ratings and risk descriptions are detailed in the *Guideline: Risk assessments* (DWER 2020).

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

4. Consultation

Table 4 provides a summary of the consultation undertaken by the department.

Table 4: Consultation

Consultation method	Comments received	Department response
Licence Holder was provided with draft amendment on 16 September 2024	The Licence Holder provided comments on 3 October 2024 and 10 October 2024, requesting minor updates to existing condition 7.	Not actioned at this stage. As noted in this amendment report, DWER has received the <i>Newman Dust Monitoring Network Review and Improvement Plan</i> , submitted by the Licence Holder. This plan remains under review by the department. Pending the outcome of this review the department will update/remove the condition at that time, along with associated linking conditions and requirements as necessary.

5. Conclusion

Based on the assessment in this Amendment Report, the delegated officer has determined that a Revised Licence will be granted, subject to conditions commensurate with the determined controls and necessary for administration and reporting requirements.

Dust monitor relocation

The delegated officer has accepted the Licence Holder's request to relocate the dust monitors noting that the current location is not sited appropriately. The delegated officer has conditioned that the new monitors be sited in accordance with standard AS/NZS 3580.1.1 and in particular, that the Licence Holder is required to manage the impacts of any localised dust sources (the exposed exploration pad) by either ensuring sufficient distance to be compliant with standard requirements, or by dust suppression / management on the exposed area.

Changes to operation of boom sprinkler

As discussed in Table 3, the delegated officer has accepted the changes to the operation of the boom sprinklers, noting that the internal boom sprays (which will be operated at all times during the loading of ore) are considered the main equipment for controlling dust fines from the stacker boom during deposition into the Train Loader. The delegated officer has conditioned the Licence Holder's proposed additional control to operate the boom sprinklers even when ore is not running.

As discussed in section 2.2.1, the change from calculating the compliance of the operation of boom sprinklers from 'average monthly availability' to 'average monthly performance' will have no additional implications to the operation of the equipment regarding exclusion periods, given the existing operational requirements for boom sprinklers.

Noting the installation of the internal boom sprays (as required in previous condition 8, Table 1), the delegated officer has updated the definition for 'exclusion period' to refer to the operational requirement in Table 12.

5.1 Summary of amendments

Table 5 provides a summary of the proposed amendments and will act as record of implemented changes. All proposed changes have been incorporated into the Revised Licence as part of the amendment process.

Table 5: Summary of licence amendments

Condition no.	Proposed amendments
Cover page	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include correct date of issue from '16 January 2023' to '12 November 2015'; and • Addition to specify 'date of amendment'.
Licence history	Addition of the scope of this amendment.
Condition 4	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a)(i): specify 'boom' sprays on the stackers; • (b): addition of '(time in auto mode)' to be consistent with the L4503/1975/14 licence, and inclusion of the 'boom sprinklers on stackers' for the calculation of average monthly performance; • As it has been more than 18 months since the licence was amended (16 January 2023), the regulatory requirement has been updated to state that all dust control equipment now needs to be accurately measured and achieved.
Table 1	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove requirement for installation of stockpile sprays (OB24 OHP); and • Addition of siting specification for the installation / relocation of two background dust monitors (WBAQRT022 and WBAQRT011).
Table 3	Updates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add dust monitor 'Background 3 – PM10 (WBAQRT011); and • Naming convention of monitors in accordance with updated Figure 5.
Conditions 4, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 18	The department notes that the original condition text permitted a delay in required actions being undertaken until 16 January 2024. Consequently, the relevant text has been updated to require the licence holder to undertake the respective condition actions without a delay.
Definitions, Table 9	Update the definition of 'Exclusion periods' to refer to the operational requirements for the boom sprays (Table 12), now that they have been installed as required under condition 8.
Figure 5	Updated Figure 5 to show locations of all dust monitors.
Table 12	Changes to Table 12: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to Row 10, Column 2 to specify 'Boom sprays' as a different function equipment to 'Boom Sprinklers'; • Update to Row 10, Column 3 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ update operation of boom sprinklers to operate routinely during ore handling, and routinely when not handling; and ○ removal for reference to boom sprays 'once installed in accordance with Condition 8' since these have since been installed, • Update to Row 10, Column 4 to specify 'Boom sprays'; • Update to Row 13, Column 3 to specify the operational requirements for 'roads and open areas' are defined to the ore processing areas and that the speeds refer to the movement of light vehicles only.

References

1. BHP 2024, *Newman Dust Monitoring Network Review and Improvement Plan*;
2. Department of Environment Regulation (DER) 2015, *Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions*, Perth, Western Australia.
3. Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) 2020, *Guideline: Environmental Siting*, Perth, Western Australia.
4. DWER 2020, *Guideline: Risk Assessments*, Perth, Western Australia.
5. Environmental Technologies & Analytics (ETA) 2024, *Newman Operations: Dust Monitoring Network Review 2022*.

Appendix 2: Application validation summary

SECTION 1: APPLICATION SUMMARY					
Application type					
Amendment to licence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current licence number:	L6942/1997/13		
		Relevant works approval number:		N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date application received	20 June 2024				
Applicant and Premises details					
Applicant name/s (full legal name/s)	BHP Iron Ore Pty Ltd (008 700 981)				
Premises name	Eastern Ridge Iron Ore Mine				
Premises location	Mining Tenement M244SA as defined by the coordinates in the Licence.				
Local Government Authority	Shire of East Pilbara				
Application documents					
HPCM file reference number:	DER2013/000901-2~10				
Key application documents (additional to application form):	Attachment 8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide rationale to changes for boom sprinklers & suggested changes to licence conditions; new figure for dust monitors (incl. new location for WBAQRT011 and WBAQRT022) 				
Scope of application/assessment					
Summary of proposed activities or changes to existing operations.	Refer to section 2.2 of this Amendment Report.				
Category number/s (activities that cause the premises to become prescribed premises)					
Table 1: Prescribed premises categories					
Prescribed premises category and description	Assessed production or design capacity	Proposed changes to the production or design capacity (amendments only)			
Category 5: processing or beneficiation of metallic or non-metallic ore	41,000,000 tonnes per annual period	N/A			
Category 6: mine dewatering	18 gigalitres per annual period	N/A			
Category 63: class I inert landfill site	10,000 tonnes per annual period	N/A			
Category 85: sewage facility	52 cubic metres per day	N/A			
Legislative context and other approvals					
Has the applicant referred, or do they intend to refer, their proposal to the EPA under Part IV of the EP Act as a significant proposal?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Managed under Part V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessed under Part IV <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hold existing MS.			
Does the applicant hold any existing Part IV Ministerial Statements relevant to the application?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Ministerial statement No: 478 (OB23), 1037 and 1105			
Has the proposal been referred and/or assessed under the EPBC Act?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Has the applicant demonstrated occupancy (proof of occupier status)?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Other evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Has the applicant obtained all relevant planning approvals?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Iron Ore (Mount Newman) Agreement Act 1964</i>
Has the applicant applied for, or have an existing EP Act clearing permit in relation to this proposal?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No clearing is proposed.
Has the applicant applied for, or have an existing CAWS Act clearing licence in relation to this proposal?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A - No clearing is proposed.
Has the applicant applied for, or have an existing RIWI Act licence or permit in relation to this proposal?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	GWL 74556 and GWL 182237
Does the proposal involve a discharge of waste into a designated area (as defined in section 57 of the EP Act)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Is the Premises situated in a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA)?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Name: Newman Water Reserve Priority: P1 Are the proposed activities/landuse compatible with the PDWSA (refer to <u>WQPN 25</u>)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the Premises subject to any other Acts or subsidiary regulations)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Iron Ore (Mount Newman) Agreement Act 1964</i>
Is the Premises within an Environmental Protection Policy (EPP) Area?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Is the Premises subject to any EPP requirements?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Is the Premises a known or suspected contaminated site under the <i>Contaminated Sites Act 2003</i> ?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	