



Application for Licence Amendment

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

Licence Number	L8558/2011/1
Licence Holder	Sandfire Resources NL
ACN	105 154 185
File Number	APP-0026496
Premises	DeGrussa Copper-Gold Project Legal description – Mining Tenement M52/1046 MEEKATHARRA WA 6642 As defined by the Premises maps attached to the Revised Licence
Date of Report	15 April 2025 (FINAL)
Decision	Revised licence granted

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1. Decision summary

The Delegated Officer has determined to make amendments to Licence L8558/2011/1. The amendments are administrative in nature therefore they do not alter the risk profile of the Premises, providing that activities, emissions and receptors as stated in existing approvals remain unchanged.

This Amendment Report documents the amendments made pursuant to section 59 and 59(B) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act).

The decision report for the existing licence will remain on the department's website for future reference and will act as a record of the department's decision making.

2. Scope of assessment

2.1 Regulatory framework

In amending the licence, 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

Licence L8558/2011/1 is held by Sandfire Resources NL (Licence Holder) for the DeGrussa Copper-Gold Project (the Premises), located at Mining Tenement M52/1046.

The Premises relates to the categories and the assessed production/design capacity under Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection Regulations 1987* (EP Regulations) which are defined in existing Licence L8558/2011/1.

On 25 November 2024, the Licence Holder submitted an application to the department to amend Licence L8558/2011/1 under section 59B of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The amendment is for the following:

- (i) Remove Category 6 (Mine Dewatering);
- (ii) Remove reference to DeGrussa Tailings Storage Facility (DTSF) Lift 5; and
- (iii) Amend inspection schedule for the DeGrussa TSF.

2.2.1 Category 6: Mine Dewatering

The Licence Holder has requested to remove Category 6 from the licence. Mine dewatering at the Premises ceased in October 2022, coinciding with the DeGrussa mine closure. All the infrastructure and associated infrastructure for the North Creek Discharge point and Central Drainage Discharge point were decommissioned.

Based on the above, the department has:

- Removed Category 6 as a prescribed activity;
- Removed the requirement to conduct inspection on the dewatering discharge pipelines and points (Condition 5);
- Removed the point source emissions to surface water conditions (previous Condition 10); and associated limits (previous Condition 11); and
- Removed the monitoring requirements for point source emissions to surface water (previous Condition 17).

2.2.2 Category 5: DTSF Stage 5 embankment lift

The DTSF Stage 5 embankment lift was not constructed and there is no intention to recommence ore processing at the Premises or initiate the Stage 5 embankment lift. The Licence Holder has requested to remove reference to this lift and associated conditions.

The department has removed previous Condition 9 for the DTSF Stage 5 construction requirements under this amendment.

2.2.3 Inspection schedule for the DeGrussa TSF

The Licence Holder has requested to reduce or remove the inspection schedule for the DTSF as processing at the Premises stopped in May 2023 and the TSF has been decommissioned, with no intention to recommence ore processing.

The Licence Holder has stated that there is no supernatant pond on the DTSF surface, and the surface is dry. As the tailings stack desiccates and consolidates, the surface has begun to settle and compress. Settlement depth has been measured up to 1.5 m in the centre and less (approximately 0.05-0.1 m) around the outer edges. Freeboard is therefore increasing, with consolidation reducing the volume of the tailings stack by 200,000 m³ since June 2023 and creating a substantial gain in dam freeboard capacity.

The Licence Holder provided results from geotechnical inspection undertaken between May 2023 and April 2024 at the DTSF (TSFRPL 2023 and 2024), a summary of the findings regarding aspects controlled under Part V is provided below:

- The surface of the DTSF is heavily desiccated.
- There were no visible signs of embankment distress in the external walls of the DTSF and there were no visible signs of seepage. Groundwater levels in the monitoring bores around the DTSF continue to fall.
- The pipelines to the various facilities are decommissioned but are yet to be removed.
- The mine dewatering, process water and Run of Mine (ROM) runoff ponds are also considered to be structurally sound, with no evidence of seepage from the embankments and/or structural distress, such as cracking of the containment earthworks.
- The Process Water Ponds and ROM Pad Runoff Ponds are located to the north of the process plant and bounded by an access road to the west and the ROM pad to the east. These facilities are high density polyethylene (HDPE) lined and with the exception of the main process water pond where water is being retained for dust suppression purposes and emergency use, such as fire-fighting, all ponds are dry.
- Water-return from the DTSF averaged 58% over the period from September 2019 to process plant closure on May 2023.
- Risk of DTSF overtop:
 - (i) Overtop for a rainfall event equivalent to or larger than the 1 in 10,000 48-hour Probable Maximum Precipitation (PMP) if there is void storage capacity available in the desiccation cracks.
 - (ii) Overtop for a rainfall event equivalent to or larger than the 1 in 10,000 36-hour PMP if there is no void storage capacity available in the desiccation cracks.
 - (iii) Overtopping might not occur for a rainfall event equivalent to the 1 in 10,000 72-hour PMP if there is no void storage capacity available in the desiccation cracks and the windrow at Crest RL 2581 m is considered to be acceptable to provide short-term holding capacity for this extreme storm event.

- The summary of tonnes of tailings discharged to the DTSF and slurry density (as shown in Table 1):

Table 1: Tailings discharged to DTSF between 2012-2023

Year	Period	Process Tonnage (tonnes per annum to DTSF)	Slurry density (% solids by weight average)	Process Tonnage (tonnes per annum to Paste)
1	2012/2013	950,940	45	
2	2013/2014	865,280	45	
3	2014/2015	574,147	36	624,919
4	2015/2016	684,888	40	589,080
5	2016/2017	701,791	40	655,728
6	2017/2018	657,924	35	720,786
7	2018/2019	500,269	21	832,210
8	2019/2020	553,521	32	787,193
9	2020/2021	678,088	26	583,105
10	2021/2022	723,643	26	664,885
11	2022/2023	567,678	27	563,311

3. Consultation

Table 2 provides a summary of the consultation undertaken by the department.

Table 2: Consultation

Consultation method	Comments received	Department response
Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) was consulted on 26 February 2025	<p>DEMIRS provided comments on 14 March 2025.</p> <p>DEMIRS confirmed that a Mine Closure Plan (Revision 4, dated 1 March 2024) is currently under assessment (Reg ID 123808).</p> <p>DEMIRS noted that while this assessment has not yet been finalised, there is no mention of the licence amendment or categories in the closure plan. The closure plan has confirmed that mine dewatering ceased at the premises in late October 2022 and ore processing ceased in May 2023. It is noted that a pit lake has formed in the DeGrussa Open Pit since ceasing dewatering, and that the deposition of tailings into the TSF concluded in May 2023 and is now decommissioned.</p>	The department notes DEMIRS comments.
Licence Holder was provided with draft amendment on 28 March 2025.	The Licence Holder provided comments on 14 April 2025. Refer to Appendix 1.	Refer to Appendix 1.

4. Conclusion

Based on the assessment in this Amendment Report, the Delegated Officer has determined that an amended licence will be granted, subject to conditions commensurate with the determined controls and necessary for administration and reporting requirements.

4.1 Summary of amendments

Table 3 below provides a summary of the proposed amendments and will act as a record of implemented changes. All proposed changes have been incorporated into the Revised licence as part of the amendment process.

Table 3: Summary of licence amendments

Condition no.	Proposed amendments
Numbering	Conditioning numbering updated throughout licence as required.
Front page licence	Category 6 removed.
Condition 1, Table 1	Category 6 removed.
Condition 3, Table 2	Reference to TSF removed.
Condition 5, Table 3	Reference to tailing pipelines, return water pipelines, dewatering pipelines and discharge points removed from the inspection schedule. The inspection for the TSF embankment freeboard has been reduced from daily to monthly.
Previous Condition 8	Deleted.
Previous Condition 9	Condition requirements for the DTSF Stage 5 lift and discharge points were removed.
Previous Condition 10	Emissions for dewatering discharge points were removed.
Previous Condition 11	Emissions limits for dewatering points were removed.
Previous Condition 12	Condition to minimised erosion and scouring impacts of dewatering was removed.
Condition 10	Administrative updates – retaining quarterly monitoring requirements.
Previous Condition 17	Dewatering condition was removed.
New Condition 17	Updated in line with current licence format.
New Condition 19	Updated in line with current licence format. Updated in line with conditions as applicable.
Previous Condition 27	Construction reporting condition removed.
Previous Condition 28	Notification requirements removed.
Definitions	Definitions were updated accordingly.
Schedule 1: Maps	Figures 1-5 were updated to improve legibility and remove some redundant infrastructure no longer on the licence.

References

1. Department of Environment Regulation (DER) 2015, Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions, Perth, Western Australia.
2. Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) 2020, Guideline: Environmental Siting, Perth, Western Australia.
3. DWER 2020, Guideline: Risk Assessments, Perth, Western Australia.
4. TSF Reviews Pty Ltd (TSFRPL) 2023 and 2024, *RE: 2023 DeGrussa TSF Annual Geotechnical Operational Review and Decommissioning Review*, West Perth, Western Australia.

Appendix 1: Summary of Licence Holder's comments on draft amendment

Condition	Summary of Licence Holder's comment	Department's response
Condition 3, Table 2	Consider removing text stating "tailings underdrainage should otherwise be reused within the Processing Plant" from Table 2 as this is not relevant as ore processing is no longer being undertaken at the Premises.	The department has removed the text as requested.
Schedule 1: Maps	Consider updating Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6 with updated figures supplied. These figures are more legible than those currently included in the Schedule 1.	Figures have been updated as requested.
Draft Amendment Report, Section 3: Consultation	There is no mention of the licence amendment or categories in the DeGrussa Mine Closure Plan because this plan was submitted several months prior to the licence amendment. Sandfire notified DEMIRS of their intent to amend L8558 to align with a request to amend M52/1046 tenement conditions relating to the DeGrussa TSF on 22 November 2024.	Noted. No changes have been made to the Consultation table (Table 2) of this Amendment Report since those were the comments DEMIRS provided to the department at that time.