

Approval notice and statement of reasons

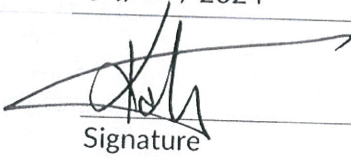
Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016 (NT) (Regulations)

Interest holder	Central Petroleum Mereenie Pty Ltd ABN: 95 009 718 183 NZOG Mereenie Pty Ltd ABN: 72 650 386 360 Macquarie Mereenie Pty Ltd ABN: 36 616 486 974 Cue Mereenie Pty Ltd ABN: 22 650 385 336 Nominated Operator: Central Petroleum Limited (CTP)
Petroleum interest(s)	Production Licence 4 and 5 (OL4 and OL5)
Environment management plan (EMP) title	Mereenie Oil and Gas Field
EMP document reference	9900-630-PLN-0004
Regulated activity	The regulated activity includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civil activities, including maintenance of firebreaks, well sites, roads and access tracks and erosion and sediment control • well operations and production • operation of production facilities including gathering and processing of hydrocarbons for processing to sales point • well workovers • installation of upgraded wellhead equipment, safety systems and infield flowlines • progressive rehabilitation • support activities including accommodation, waste and wastewater handling, power generation, water supply and chemical storage and handling • care and maintenance activities. No drilling or hydraulic fracturing is proposed in the EMP.
Is the EMP a new plan submitted under reg 6 or a revision of a current plan submitted in accordance with reg 18, or regs 15 and 17?	This is a revision of a current plan submitted in accordance with reg 18.
Was the regulated activity referred ¹ for consideration whether environmental impact assessment was required?	No
Was environmental impact assessment ² required?	N/A
Has an environmental approval ³ been issued for the regulated activity?	N/A

¹ This means a referral under the *Environment Protection Act 2019 (NT) (EP Act)* and/or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act)*.

² This means a requirement for an environmental impact assessment to be conducted under the EP Act and/or the EPBC Act.

³ This means an approval granted under the EP Act and/or the EPBC Act.

Has an Authority Certificate under the Northern Territory <i>Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989</i> been issued for the regulated activity?	Yes
Date an EMP compliant with reg 8 was first submitted under reg 6	19 December 2022
Date within which the EMP was published for comment under reg 8A, if applicable	N/A
Date further information was required and submitted under reg 10, if applicable	Requested 28 February 2023, received 5 June 2023 Requested 4 July 2023, received 24 July 2023
Date of resubmission notice under reg 11(2)(b), if applicable	Issued 7 March 2023
Date EMP was resubmitted under reg 11(3), if applicable	Received 5 June 2023 Further modified and received 24 July 2023 Further modified and received 21 November 2023
Date a notice setting out a proposed timetable for consideration of the EMP was issued under reg 11(2A), or reg 11(3)(c), if applicable	18 December 2023
Proposed timetable given in notice under reg 11(2A), or reg 11(3)(c), if applicable	12 January 2024
Where provided under s29B of the <i>Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012 (NT) (NT EPA Act)</i> , the dates the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) was requested to, and provided, advice on EMP	Date of Minister's request for advice: 25 February 2019 Date of NT EPA Advice: 18 December 2023 NTEPA2022/0179-006~0001
Date of decision	08/01/2024
Decision maker	 Signature

Hon Kate Worden MLA,
Minister for Environment, Climate Change
and Water Security

1 Approval notice

- I approve the EMP under 11(3)(a)(i)
- The approval is subject to the following conditions:

Reporting Conditions

Condition 1: Within three business days of 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December of each year, the interest holder must submit to Onshoregas.DEPWS@nt.gov.au a report with the following information:

- regulated activities completed in the previous quarter;
- regulated activities to be conducted in the next quarter, including estimated duration;
- the date any conditions of this approval were completed in the previous quarter;

1 Approval notice

- iv. the date any conditions of this approval are due for completion in the next quarter; and
- v. monitoring and compliance activities to be conducted in the next quarter based on commitments in the approved EMP, relevant to the stage of a regulated activity.

Condition 2: By 1 October of each year, the interest holder must submit to Onshoregas.DEPWS@nt.gov.au a completed Annual Environmental Performance Report for the preceding 12 month period of 1 July to 30 June. The Report must be completed in accordance with the *Onshore Petroleum Annual Environmental Performance Reporting Guideline* (21 December 2023).

Condition 3: During the Wet Season (as defined in the Code), the interest holder must submit to Onshoregas.DEPWS@nt.gov.au weekly reports detailing the outcome of daily inspection reports for secondary containment in use and, where relevant, the type and date of corrective actions taken, or date proposed to be taken, in response to issues identified in the daily inspection reports.

Condition 4: The interest holder must submit the weekly reports required by condition 3 by 5pm ACST each Monday for the preceding week or part thereof.

Condition 5: The interest holder must submit recordable incident reports to Onshoregas.depws@nt.gov.au no later 5 pm ACST 15 days after the end of each quarter, being 15 April, 15 July, 15 October and 15 January each year while the approved plan remains in force, and must be submitted regardless of whether an incident occurred during the reporting period or not.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Conditions

Condition 6: By 31 October of each year, the interest holder must submit to Onshoregas.DEPWS@nt.gov.au the emissions report required by clause D.6.2 of the Code, which must:

- i. calculate emissions in accordance with the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (Measurement) Determination 2008;
- ii. document actual annual greenhouse gas emissions from conduct of the regulated activity estimated and reported under the *Commonwealth National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (NGER Act)* versus predicted emissions in the EMP (CTP6-4);
- iii. demonstrate the actual emissions, including fugitive emissions from the landfarm, the crude oil tanks and any other sources, have been verified by an auditor registered under the Register of Greenhouse and Energy Auditors established under section 75A of the NGER Act;
- iv. include a summary of all regulated activities conducted which have contributed to greenhouse gas emissions during the reporting period; and
- v. account for differences between actual and predicted emissions with reference to all parts of the regulated activity with potential to create greenhouse gas emissions.

FOOTNOTE 1: Clause D.6.2(b) of the Code requires actual annual greenhouse gas emissions to be provided even where emissions are below the NGER Act threshold of 25 ktCO₂-e for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions reporting.

1 Approval notice

Incident Management Conditions

Condition 7: The interest holder must record all accidental releases of liquid contaminant or hazardous chemicals in a site spill register, which records:

- i. the liquid contaminant or hazardous chemical spilled or leaked;
- ii. the GPS co-ordinates of the location of the spill or leak;
- iii. the source and volume of the spill or leak;
- iv. the volume of impacted soil removed for disposal and the depth of any associated excavation; and
- v. the corrective actions taken or proposed to be taken to prevent recurrence of an incident of a similar nature.

Rehabilitation Conditions

Condition 8: Within 90 days of the anniversary of the approval of the EMP (CTP6-4), and thereafter annually, the interest holder must provide a rehabilitation report to onshoregas.depws@nt.gov.au, which:

- i. identifies the rehabilitation activities undertaken in the preceding 12 month period;
- ii. provides the dates rehabilitation monitoring was undertaken during the preceding 12 month period;
- iii. analyses and compares rehabilitation progress against analogue sites and the rehabilitation criteria in the EMP;
- iv. includes corrective actions identified for rehabilitated areas and the date those corrective actions were implemented, or the date they are proposed to be implemented; and
- v. is accompanied by geospatial files (as shapefiles and inclusive of metadata) identifying the areas rehabilitated during the preceding 12 month period.

Wastewater Management Conditions

Condition 9: The interest holder must not introduce wastewater into any flare pit unless demonstrated to be impervious, in accordance with conditions 10 to 13 below.

Condition 10: The interest holder must undertake performance testing of any flare pit(s) proposed to contain wastewater that demonstrates the impervious nature of the flare pit.

Condition 11: The interest holder must provide to Onshoregas.depws@nt.gov.au within 28 days of completion of performance testing a report detailing:

- i. the performance test(s) used to determine flare pit permeability;
- ii. the performance test acceptance standards applied; and
- iii. the results of the performance test(s) applied for each flare pit.

Condition 12: The interest holder must undertake and keep records of a visual inspection of the flare pit prior to the commencement of any activity that could result in the introduction of any wastewater. The visual inspection should be sufficient to detect structural defects which could influence the capacity of the flare pit to contain wastewater.

1 Approval notice

Condition 13: The interest holder must undertake repeat performance testing of a flare pit if any of the following conditions are met:

- i. more than 12 calendar months have passed between use of a flare pit to contain wastewater, or
- ii. a visual inspection of the flare pit identifies structural defects in the integrity of the liner, or
- iii. if instructed to by an Inspector.

Condition 14: If flare tanks are to be used for storage of wastewater, they must have secondary containment.

Condition 15: The interest holder must undertake six-monthly testing of the quality of all wastewater produced from petroleum wells, consistent with clause C.5.5(c) of the Code of Practice: Onshore Petroleum Activities in the Northern Territory (2019) (the Code), with the first testing to be undertaken within six months of the date of approval of the EMP.

Condition 16: The interest holder must provide a report consistent with the requirements of regulation 37B(2) to Onshoregas.depws@nt.gov.au within 90 days of the second testing event referred to in condition 15, inclusive of a full human health risk assessment, in accordance with regulations 37B(2A) and 4A.

Condition 17: The interest holder must review the results of testing undertaken in condition 15 to ensure:

- i. the wastewater and spill management practices in the EMP remain appropriate for the concentrations of analytes detected; and
- ii. the storage, treatment and transport of wastewater remain consistent with legislated requirements for NORMs and listed waste; and
- iii. the human health risk assessment undertaken in accordance with condition 16 remains applicable to the type and concentrations of analytes detected.

Groundwater Monitoring Conditions

Condition 18: The interest holder must undertake six-monthly groundwater monitoring at established groundwater monitoring bores (RN017898, RN017657, RN004620, RN013861 and RN018955) in the Mereenie Field.

Condition 19: Within 90 days of the anniversary of the approval date of the EMP (CTP6-4), and each subsequent year, the interest holder must submit to Onshoregas.DEPWS@nt.gov.au an interpretative report of groundwater quality which includes:

- i. identification of any change to groundwater quality or level attributable to conduct of the regulated activity and discussion of the significance and cause of any such observed change;
- ii. interpretation of any statistical outliers observed from baseline measured values for each of the analytes listed in Table 6 of the Code;
- iii. a summary of the results including descriptive statistics;
- iv. discussion of any trends observed.

2 Material considered

1. The following material has been taken into account in making this decision:
 - a. Mereenie Oil and Gas Field Environment Management Plan, dated 21 Nov 2023.
 - b. The principles of ecologically sustainable development referenced in reg 5A and the approval criteria set out in reg 9(1).
 - c. The NT EPA advice provided at my request under s29B of the NT EPA Act.
 - d. The Authority Certificate issued under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*.
 - e. The Code of Practice: Onshore Petroleum Activities in the Northern Territory (**the Code**) as set out in reg 4A.
 - f. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade advice that the Well Operations Management Plans approved for the regulated activity meet the requirements of the Code.

3 Statement of reasons

1. The EMP meets the approval criterion in reg 9(1)(a), because it contains all the information required by Schedule 1 of the Regulations. reg 9(1)(a)
2. I have taken into account the approval criterion in reg 9(1)(b) by noting the nature and scale of the regulated activity and bearing it in mind during my consideration of the impacts and risks. In particular, I note that: reg 9(1)(b)
 - a. The nature of the regulated activity is as follows:
 - i. The continuation of production activities, including ongoing workovers, upgrading above-ground infrastructure with new wellhead equipment, safety systems and the installation and replacement of gathering lines. All activities covered under this EMP are within existing disturbance footprints. The EMP shows an adequate consideration of potential impacts and risks of the regulated activity and proposes appropriate controls, in line with the Code.
 - b. The scale of the regulated activity is as follows:
 - i. Activities are ongoing and will be conducted on the existing disturbed footprint.
 - ii. The interest holder employs a consistent operational workforce, with additional resources for specific discrete activities, such as workovers.
3. The approval criteria in reg 9(1)(c) requires that I be satisfied that the activity will be carried out in a manner by which the environmental impacts and environmental risks of the activity will be reduced to a level that is both: (i) as low as reasonably practicable; and (ii) acceptable. In assessing whether the EMP meets the approval criteria, I note that my decision is a prescribed decision (under reg 5A) for s 6A of the Act, and as such requires me to consider and apply the principles of ecologically sustainable development. In accordance with reg 12(3), I provide the following information about how the EMP meets the approval criteria, and the manner in which I have taken into account the principles of ecologically sustainable development when considering whether or not the plan meets the approval criteria. reg 9(1)(c)
4. The principles of ecologically sustainable development are defined at Sections 18-24 of the *Environment Protection Act 2019*, and I address each in turn:
 - a. The decision-making principle (s 18 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires effective integration of long-term and short-term environmental and equitable

considerations, and for processes to provide for community involvement in relation to decisions and actions that affect the community. Related to this, I note the following

- i. The regulated activity is low impact, ongoing and well understood, given the more than 40 years of operation in the region, and the extensive surveys and studies that have been undertaken in that time.
 - ii. Public consultation on the EMP was not required under the Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016, as the EMP does not propose drilling or hydraulic fracturing activities. The public was made aware that the EMP was under assessment via the DEPWS website.
 - iii. Next, I have considered short-term and long-term environmental impacts of carrying out the regulated activity. Environmental impacts include direct and indirect effects on the physical, biological, economic, cultural and social aspects of the environment, and may include cumulative impacts or occur over time.
 - iv. The information before me suggests short-term environmental impacts are negligible with the proposed mitigation measures in place.
 - v. The information before me suggests long-term environmental impacts are negligible with the proposed mitigation measures in place. I note the predicted cumulative greenhouse gas emissions do not exceed the threshold for a large emitter, and I have set a condition to ensure actual emissions are documented and reported.
 - vi. There is no particular contest between economic, social and environmental considerations that requires further mention.
 - vii. Taking an integrated view of long-term and short-term environmental and equitable considerations, I am satisfied that the considerations on balance and taken together support approval of the EMP.
- b. The precautionary principle (s 19 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) applies when there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, and requires that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. I have applied the precautionary principle as follows:
- i. There is some information that indicates the regulated activity may threaten serious or irreversible environmental damage, namely from the contribution of greenhouse gas emissions to climate change impacts.
 - ii. Where a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage does warrant the application of the principle, it is necessary to consider if there is a significant degree of uncertainty as to the nature and scope of the environmental damage that may occur, in relation to the regulated activity under consideration. There is some uncertainty as to the contribution the emissions from the proposed activities in this EMP will have on climate change. The effect of the uncertainty is reduced on the basis that the interest holder's cumulative emissions across all current EMPs does not exceed 100,000 tCO₂-e per annum, which is the threshold in the NT Greenhouse Gas Emissions Management for New and Expanding Large Emitters. The interest holder commits to minimising flaring and routine venting is avoided. On this basis, I do not consider that the threat involves scientific uncertainty of a degree that triggers the application of the precautionary principle.

- iii. To ensure greenhouse gas emissions are understood, I have imposed a condition requiring provision of annual report of actual emissions, confirmed by an auditor registered under the Register of Greenhouse and Energy Auditors.
 - iv. I am satisfied that the regulated activity does not pose a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage. While conduct of the regulated activity will likely result in short-term and minor environmental impacts, I am satisfied the measures identified by the interest holder are effective to prevent a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage.
- c. The principle of evidence-based decision-making (s 20 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires decisions to be made on the best available evidence in the circumstances that is relevant and reliable. I am of the view that the evidence before me satisfies this requirement for the following reasons: I am satisfied that the best available evidence has been obtained because:
 - i. The EMP was developed by persons who have professional qualifications, training, skills and experience on the subject matter of environment, safety, risk management, and petroleum development and operations.
 - ii. The interest holder employed a comprehensive process to obtain relevant information including environmental assessments, baseline studies, stakeholder engagement and cultural heritage surveys.
 - iii. The EMP has undergone review and assessment by a multi-disciplinary team in DEPWS and NT government agencies, which has informed my decision on the EMP.
 - iv. The interest holder has modified the EMP to address areas of uncertainty or requiring clarification.
 - v. No concerns regarding the sufficiency of information to support the EMP are apparent in the outcomes of stakeholder engagement. On the contrary, they indicate, and I am satisfied, that the information before me is comprehensive.
 - vi. I believe the information regarding the proposed regulated activity adequately provides the best available evidence in the circumstances that is relevant and reliable to the evidence-based decision-making process.
- d. The principle of intergenerational and intra-generational equity (s 21 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations. I have given consideration to the impact on present and future generations as follows:
 - i. This criterion requires me to turn my mind to whether the benefits of the proposal disproportionately burden present or future generations, or particular groups or communities of present or future generations.
 - ii. I have considered the use of groundwater and am satisfied that the proposed use will not result in either short-term or long-term impacts to other groundwater users.
 - iii. I have considered protection of groundwater from pollution and have set a condition requiring ongoing groundwater monitoring to be conducted.
 - iv. I have considered the protection of cultural heritage and am satisfied that conduct of the regulated activity will not impact on preservation of cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations.

- v. I have considered whether the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of each of these relevant groups and conclude that on the balance, the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is not reduced by the regulated activity for each identified group or community.
- vi. The environmental burdens of the regulated activity will not disproportionately affect particular stakeholders.
- vii. I consider that cumulative emissions are not significant when considered in context of 2020 NT and Australian emissions, which were approximately 17.32 million tonnes and 498.11 million tonnes respectively.
- viii. Cultural values relating to sacred sites will be protected through the application of Authority Certificates issued to the interest holder under the Northern Territory *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* and measures for reporting on discovery of archaeological sites during civil maintenance activities.
- ix. Accordingly I do not believe that the carrying out of the regulated activity in accordance with the EMP would have an effect contrary to the principle of inter or intra-generational equity.
- e. The principle of sustainable use (s 22 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that natural resources should be used in a manner that is sustainable, prudent, rational, wise and appropriate. In applying this principle, I have considered the following:
 - i. I note the findings of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing (HFI) in the NT that states: "... in the short to medium term, the Australian National Energy Market is likely to require higher levels of flexible, gas-fired generation, which can provide a reliable, low emissions substitute for ageing coal-fired generation, and essential security services to complement variable renewable electricity generation."⁴
 - ii. I note the NT Government's implementation of all the recommendations of the HFI, including establishment of the NT Government's Policy Statement on Management of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Onshore Gas Industry. This Policy Statement commits to amendment of the NT legislative framework to require a Greenhouse Gas Abatement Plan for all applications for onshore gas production and complements the Australian Government's reforms to the Safeguard Mechanism.
 - iii. No additional groundwater extraction licences are currently required for the regulated activity. Any future consideration of groundwater use will include an application for an extraction licence.
 - iv. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the concept of sustainable use of natural resources has been taken into account.
- f. The principle of biological diversity and ecological integrity (s 23 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that biological diversity and ecological integrity should be conserved and maintained. I have applied this principle as follows:
 - i. I believe the information I have regarding the existing biodiversity and ecosystems that are to be affected by the regulated activity; the effects that are likely; and the mitigation measures reasonably available, is sufficient.

⁴ Refer Section 9.7.4 of the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory*; p 233. Available at: <https://frackinginquiry.nt.gov.au/inquiry-reports?a=494286>

- ii. The regulated activity poses a low risk to the ecosystem within the MacDonnell Ranges and Great Sandy Desert bioregions and the 91 flora and fauna species of conservation significance that could potentially occur in the Mereenie Field or surrounding area. Of these, one listed flora species is known to occur in the Mereenie Field. In addition, one listed fauna species has been detected and two other species are known to occur in the Mereenie Field, with 19 fauna species considered to possibly occur, or likely to occur. No conservation significant flora or fauna have been recorded on, or directly adjacent to (within 50 m) of the Mereenie well sites.
- iii. No additional clearing or disturbance will take place, as part of the activities in this EMP. Additionally, management strategies are outlined in the EMP to reduce risks from the activity in relation to potential impacts on biodiversity. It is often the case that the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity is vital to the achievement of ecologically sustainable development. By their nature, ecosystems are complex and interdependent systems and relationships; this needs to be considered in relation to what preserves their integrity. Biological diversity also represents a wealth of potential natural resources that may provide options for present and future generations. I have born this in mind when considering the weight to be given to the evidence before me regarding the potential impacts of the regulated activity on biodiversity and ecological integrity.
- iv. The measures to conserve and maintain biological diversity and ecological integrity in the EMP are appropriate, given the nature and scale of the regulated activity.
- v. If carried out in accordance with the EMP, the risks of the regulated activity to the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity are considered to be mitigated to an acceptable level
- g. The principle of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms (s 24 *Environment Protection Act 2019*) requires that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, through application of the 'polluter pays' principles, consideration of full life cycle costs of providing goods and services, and pursuing environmental goals in the most cost-effective way. I have applied the principle as follows:
 - i. The pollution and waste that will be generated by the regulated activity in the general course of its operation includes domestic waste, workover fill/cuttings, sewage and grey water, and emissions.
 - ii. I am satisfied that this pollution and waste will be managed by the interest holder at its own cost as set out in the EMP in Sections 3.9.4 and 3.9.5.
 - iii. In relation to the risks of a pollution event that may occur unintentionally during the operations of the regulated activity, I consider that the following measures are in place to ensure the interest holder bears the costs of containment, avoidance, and abatement:
 - (1) impacts and risks associated with contamination of soil, surface water and groundwater, which are managed through meeting mandated requirements for well integrity and clean-up of spills and leaks and remediation of impacted soil
 - (2) impacts and risks associated with loss of containment of wastewater, which are managed through containment measures.
 - iv. In relation to full life cycle costs, it is expected that the regulated activity will continue into the foreseeable future. The interest holder will be required to

take action to remove any residual pollution and waste prior to the return of environmental securities held under this EMP.

- v. All interest holders are required to provide an environmental security related to the activities in an EMP, prior to commencement of the activities.
- vi. Measures are in place to conduct continuous waste management and remediation. Wastewater is managed, as it is produced, via an end point treatment system of solar evaporation ponds. General waste is disposed of, using licenced waste contractors, as it is produced. Contaminated soils are treated in bio-remediation pits.
- vii. With these measures are in place, I am satisfied that the EMP ensures that environmental costs are not left as externalities to be paid for by Territory taxpayers or the local community. They will be fairly paid for by those who stand to benefit from the regulated activity, such as the interest holder, and consumers who choose to purchase the interest holder's products.
- viii. In relation to options to pursue environmental goals in relation to the regulated activity, I have taken into account that these goals should be pursued in the most cost-effective way. This is the case with regard to the conditions set for the maintenance of flare pit liners. The conditions reflect a balanced approach to managing the risk of contamination in a cost effective and reasonable manner.
- ix. I believe approval of the EMP with the conditions I have imposed is consistent with the principle of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.
- h. The NT EPA did not require the EMP to be referred under the *Environment Protection Act 2019*, as the regulated activity does not have the potential to cause a significant impact on the environment. reg 9(3)
- i. The NT EPA reviewed the EMP for the regulated activity against the approval criteria in regulations 9(3)(a) and 9(3)(c) of the Regulations and other matters the NT EPA considered relevant, and has provided advice about the EMP.
- i. The NT EPA has provided the following in relation to the regulated activity and the EMP:
 - i. In accordance with my request under s 29B of the NT EPA Act, the NT EPA reviewed the EMP against the approval criteria in regulation 9(1) of the Regulations and other matters the NT EPA considered relevant, and has provided advice about the EMP. Relevantly:
 - (1) The NT EPA recommended that should the EMP be approved, it be subject to conditions to achieve seven outcomes. The NT EPA's recommendations have informed the conditions of this approval. All conditions are outlined in Section 1(2) of this Approval Notice.
 - (2) The NT EPA concluded that the EMP for the regulated activity, subject to the recommended approval conditions, is appropriate for the nature and scale of the regulated activity and demonstrates that the regulated activity can be carried out in a manner that environmental impacts and environmental risks of the activity will be reduced to a level that is as low as reasonably practical and acceptable.
 - ii. I have considered the NT EPA's advice and recommendations and these have been incorporated where relevant into this statement of reasons and the conditions in the Approval Notice.

- j. The existing environment along with its particular values and sensitivities is appropriately identified in Section 4 of the EMP, and to the extent I do not agree or there is some uncertainty, I have imposed conditions to address the relevant risk or risks. reg 9(1)(c)
- k. I agree with the risk assessment set out in Appendix 1 of the EMP, and to the extent I do not agree I have imposed a condition or conditions to address the relevant risk or risks.
- l. The interest holder's risk assessment is applicable to activities in all seasons and the outcomes are reflected in the EMP that includes, for example a weed management plan, a bushfire management plan, a wastewater management plan, a rehabilitation management plan, an emergency response plan, and erosion and sediment control plan, and a spill management plan. This is consistent with the requirements of the Code that allows for the regulated activity to occur in the wet season months when contingency planning is provided and minimum freeboard in wastewater infrastructure is maintained.
- m. The anticipated environmental impacts are appropriately identified in Sections 6.2 to 6.10 of the EMP. The regulated activity is a continuation of current activities and cumulative effects have been identified and assessed. In EMPs for subsequent stages (if they proceed) the interest holder will need to continue to address cumulative effects.
- n. The EMP demonstrates how the interest holder will comply with relevant requirements of the Code in undertaking the regulated activity. This includes reference to applicable Australian and international standards that have been adopted, as applicable. The EMP cross-references relevant sections of the Code that apply to the mitigation and management measures to enable the reviewer to identify and confirm that the proposed activities comply with the Code, as applicable.
- o. I am satisfied that the interest holder has conducted ongoing stakeholder engagement in accordance with the Regulations. The EMP provides details of stakeholder engagement that meets Regulation 7 and Schedule 1, Clause 9 of the Regulations (Section 5 and Appendix 2). Stakeholder engagement records (Appendix 2) demonstrate that stakeholders did not raise objections about environmental impacts of the proposed activity that required specific changes from the interest holder. The risk assessment in the EMP details the potential environmental impacts of the activity and proposed environmental outcomes to manage impacts on social and cultural surroundings.
- p. There are no environmental impacts or environmental risks relating to the proposed regulated activity that I consider to be unacceptable.
- q. Overall, having regard to the above, I am satisfied that the EMP is appropriate for the nature and scale of the activity, and demonstrates that the regulated activity is to be carried out in manner by which the environmental impacts and environmental risks are reduced to a level that is:
- i. as low as reasonably practicable; and
 - ii. acceptable.