

Supplementary Submission – Centrifuges

Submitter Number 546

Changes by the proponent to substitute the Tailings Storage Facility with centrifuges, well after the closure of the EES public submissions is beyond belief, although similar action by the proponent occurred following the release of the Scoping Requirements.

Is this a ploy by the mining company to deliberately disrupt the EES process?

The reason given by the proponent for the change to centrifuges was the gross under estimation of the water requirements and to assist with water reclamation.

How could a company with any credibility get this wrong?

The proponent has provided very little technical information on the use of the centrifuges, not meeting deadlines and as of yesterday information was still being received.

How was it possible for the community to fully assess the centrifuges in this timeframe?

CONCERNS REGARDING THE CENTRIFUGES

- Centrifuges are high power consumers adding to the cost and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Increased use of flocculants therefore a greater impact on soils, water and the wider environment.
- Flocculants are toxic to aquatic life (Technical data sheets).
- High risk of contamination of Ground Water Ecosystems within the project area (not fully identified by the proponent).
- Seepage from filled mine voids (as stated by proponent).
- The placement of residue clays into the mine void will prevent consolidation and drying out.
- Effects of rain on filled mine voids and risk of leaching.
- Impacts on grasslands on private land and valuable flora species following construction and eventual removal of concrete pads and buildings to house centrifuges (proponent has denied the existence of native grassland species on private land).
- Increased noise levels and the impact on human health and wellbeing.
- With the increased costs associated with the use of the centrifuges there has not been an independent economic assessment of the mining proposal.

- The effects of increased toxicity levels in the water and residue clay could affect soil biota thus impacting on successful rehabilitation.
- The storage of flocculants on site and the risk of spills and accidents and any impacts to the environment and human health.
- The high risk of contamination of surrounding agricultural and horticultural industries from toxic dust associated with the use of centrifuges.
- Dust contamination on human health.
- Impact on the environment with construction of pipelines and roads to accommodate truck movements with centrifuges use.
- Storage of contaminated water – risks of overspill, leaching and releases and the lack of regulatory processes to prevent contamination of surface and ground water.
- Absence of assessment of risk to the Mitchell and Perry Rivers and Gippsland Lakes of increased use of flocculants.
- Data relating to the effect of use of flocculants on individual native fauna is absent (research not available).
- Assessment lacking on the increased disturbance of construction relating to centrifuge use, and impact on cultural heritage.
- Impact of increased noise levels on native fauna especially aquatic species as noise is amplified in water.
- With the storage of flocculants on site the volatility of this substance adds to the fire risk in the community. The local CFA does not have the safety equipment to respond quickly to any disaster that might escalate.

CONCLUSION

The use of centrifuges is questionable from an economic perspective and consequently the viability of the mine proposal. The environmental impacts and risk to human health are unacceptable from higher toxicity levels relating to the increased use of flocculants. Overall this project needs an independent assessment for the community to fully understand and comprehend the enormity of the associated risks of this mining proposal.

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