

Review into Security and Economic Interests in the Woomera Prohibited Area

Terms of Reference

Objectives

- Undertake research and analysis into the short and long term (20-30 years) national security and economic interests in the Woomera Prohibited Area (WPA) 'the review'.
- Based on the findings of the research and analysis, make recommendations to the Government on approaches to managing the WPA to optimise Australia's national interests as they pertain to the WPA.

Key Tasks

- Undertake research and analysis in order to make qualitative and quantitative assessments of:
 - the balance of national interests, including the magnitude of costs and benefits of economic and national security interests in the WPA, over the short and long-term (20-30 years), including but not limited to:
 - a review of the status of the WPA, potentially including a legal assessment of the powers of the Commonwealth Government over the WPA;
 - a review of the current use of the WPA, including the functions and importance of the different zones therein;
 - an analysis of the WPA's contribution to current and future Defence capability, including the financial and other benefits deriving from Australia's ability to share knowledge and technology with its allies, particularly in light of new and emerging technologies, and the subsequent value of the WPA to alliance and broader international relationships;
 - anticipated future Defence need of the WPA, in particular any potential changes in frequency and scope of activities;
 - an analysis of the value and location of mineral deposits in the WPA, based on present government and industry information, and indicative timeframes and costs to assess further the known potential mineral wealth in the WPA;
 - an assessment of the current and future potential economic value of mineral deposits in the WPA, including potential impacts on employment and government revenues;
 - an analysis of the future potential exploitation of minerals in the WPA, noting emerging technologies and techniques in the mining sector;
 - an analysis of the extent to which mining and economic activity is compatible with Defence use of the WPA and any inherent limits to co-existence, including the issues posed by foreign ownership or control of mining entities; and
 - an analysis of property interests, including but not limited to: native title and indigenous land rights, pastoral leaseholders and the Commonwealth and South Australia.

- Provide recommendations on the current and future best use of the WPA taking into account the competing Defence and mining interests, with proposed mechanisms for achieving an optimal outcome in the broad national interest, including but not limited to:
 - practical measures for maximising co-existence, in the light of the Government's public statement on Woomera of May 2010;
 - the viability of extinguishing existing tenements in current or prospective areas of core Defence activities and potential implications for resources revenue and trade relations;
 - the practicalities of, and the short and long-term implications of, a state government moratorium on granting new tenement licences in areas of core Defence activities, including any financial implications for any current explorers and miners that are affected by the moratorium;
 - the feasibility of shifting or realigning Defence activities within or outside the WPA, including associated costs and timeframes to maximise the potential exploitation of mineral deposits; and
 - a process for on-going monitoring of the balance of the national security and economic interests in the WPA to facilitate the long-term best use of the WPA in the broader national interest.

Project Planning and Administration

The review will be led by Dr Allan Hawke and he will be supported by a small inter-departmental secretariat from relevant agencies on terms to be decided. The review secretariat will be based at Defence. The review secretariat will develop a project plan, for approval by the Steering Group.

The Steering Group will meet regularly to review the progress of, and provide guidance to the review secretariat.

The cost of the review will be met by Defence.

Signed by the co-chairs of the steering committee:

Gordon de Brouwer

Dr Gordon de Brouwer
Deputy Secretary
Economic
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

6 May 2010

Stephen Merchant

Mr Stephen Merchant
Deputy Secretary
Intelligence and Security
Department of Defence

6 May 2010