

Mine Management Bill 2001

The Mine Management Bill 2001 was introduced into the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly on 1 March 2001. The Bill, if enacted, will replace the existing *Mine Management Act 1990* and an associated Bill will amend the *Mining Act 1982*.

The existing legislation is to be replaced by a less prescriptive approach to the regulation of mining activities, in a move towards self-regulation. The new Act will apply to exploration for minerals; mining of minerals and extractive industries; processing of minerals, tailings, spoil heaps or waste dumps and the decommissioning and rehabilitation of mining sites. The legislation will also set standards for health, safety and environmental performance. The Act will not apply to oil or gas operations.

The Bill introduces a general obligation to have a duty of care towards the environment and places responsibility for site rehabilitation on the mine operator.

The Mining Board will be reconstituted to contain members of the industry to advise the Minister on issues such as best practice.

The Department will continue to audit operations, with a particular emphasis on management systems. The Act puts obligations on workers and operators to comply with relevant aspects of the management system.

Operators of mines will have to be authorised by the Minister of Resource Development. The authorisation includes an obligation to create and comply with a Mining Management Plan. Which must take into account the results of any environmental assessment process. Existing operators will have six months in which to apply for an authorisation after the legislation is in force.

Penalties have been raised for breach of health and safety provisions.

The *Mining Act* will be amended to remove provisions relating to environment and safety in lease conditions. These obligations will be taken up in *Mine Management Act* and authorisations issued under that Act.

[with assistance from notes by Angela Leslie, Victorian editor]

Litchfield Planning Concepts and Land Use Objectives

The Litchfield Planning Concepts and Land Use Objectives 2001 were recently released for public comment by the Litchfield local authority. The period for public comment closed on 23 May 2001. The document intends to give effect to outcomes including maintenance and enhancement of rural living, establishing estates for the development of the gas industry, providing a link to the Darwin port, a coordinated approach to the protection of natural habitats, sustainable aquaculture and agriculture and the identification of extractive resources.