

WIMMERA PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – APPROVALS

How does the assessment and approvals process work, and how long will it take?

Iluka requires a range of statutory approvals under State and Commonwealth law before the Wimmera Project can proceed.

Victoria's environmental assessment and approvals process requires a rigorous evaluation of the environmental impacts of a proposed project. For certain projects, an integrated assessment of potentially significant adverse effects of the project is required, prior to any statutory decision making under state and federal law, including the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* (MRSD Act) and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

On 17 July 2019, the Victorian Minister for Planning determined that an assessment through an Environment Effects Statement (EES) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) was required for the Wimmera Project.

Iluka is currently preparing the EES for submission to the Victorian Government. The Minister's assessment of the project's effects will in turn inform statutory decision-makers responsible for the project's approvals.

The approvals process, from initial referral to the relevant state and Commonwealth ministers to securing statutory approvals, takes several years.

A breakdown of the process is outlined below:

1. *Baseline studies (in progress)*

As part of the approvals process, proponents are required to undertake a comprehensive range of studies to understand the environmental, agricultural, social and economic values in the proposed development area. Collectively these are known as baseline studies, and they are an essential first step in any development project to inform project design and additional study work to be undertaken in subsequent phases of the approvals process.

2. *Environment Effects Statement (in progress)*

Iluka is currently preparing the EES for the Wimmera Project, in accordance with the approved scoping requirements.

The EES is not an approval document. Rather, its purpose is to provide a sufficiently detailed description of the project, the potential adverse environmental effects of the proposed activities, including proposed measures to avoid, mitigate, manage and monitor any adverse environmental effects during project implementation. For assessment of environmental effects under the EE Act, the meaning of 'environment' includes physical, biological, heritage, cultural, social, health, safety, and economic aspects.

The EES will be informed by a comprehensive set of studies and assessments which consider potential impacts of the proposed activities in detail. Iluka has engaged EMM Consulting Limited to prepare

the EES for the Wimmera Project, along with various independent consultants to undertake different studies.

Representatives from relevant agencies, local government and statutory authorities have been appointed to a Technical Reference Group to support Iluka's preparation of the EES.

Iluka expects to submit the EES to the Minister for Planning for public exhibition in 2026. The EES will be exhibited for 30 business days for public comment.

Upon completion of the EES, the Minister for Planning will issue an assessment of the acceptability of the project's environmental effects. Relevant decision makers must consider this assessment prior to issuing statutory and other approvals.

Further information about the EES process can be found on the [Department of Transport and Planning](#) website.

Regulatory approvals (licences, permits, approved documents) including the mining lease cannot be assessed without first obtaining the Minister's decision. The EES process is accredited to assess impacts on matters of national environmental significance under the EPBC Act. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will decide whether the project is approved, and if so, under what conditions, after having considered the Victorian Minister for Planning's decision under the EE Act.

Further details on the EPBC Act process can be found on the [Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#) website.

3. *Regulatory Approvals (not started)*

The key statutory approvals required under Victorian legislation include:

- an approved Mine Work Plan and a mining licence under the MRSD Act
- an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- planning approval under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* for activities such as the water pipeline and accommodation camp
- approval for works within the road reserve under the *Road Management Act 2004* and *Local Government Act 1989*

A number of other approvals will be required for the project to proceed (e.g. for vegetation removal, construction of groundwater monitoring bores and water abstraction) and these will be determined throughout the course of the EES.

What opportunity do I have to put forward my view?

There are several opportunities for the public to provide comments during the formal assessment and approvals process.

In addition to the ongoing opportunity to provide feedback to Iluka via our engagement channels, community information sessions, and stands at local events, the EES process also provides formal opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the project to the Victorian Government. Comments can be provided during the public notice period of the draft scoping requirements for the EES (this stage is now complete), during the public exhibition of the EES, and at the Inquiry and Advisory Committee hearing.



Iluka has also engaged EMM Consulting to undertake a social impact assessment (SIA) for the project, for which a wide range of stakeholders were offered the opportunity to provide input. The formal consultation process for the SIA has now ended, and findings will help Iluka to better understand key social impacts and opportunities in the region. The SIA will form part of the EES for assessment by the Victorian Government.

If you would like to stay up to date with future opportunities for engagement, please contact us to be added to the project email list at wimmera.project@iluka.com.

How will my views make a difference?

Feedback received during the engagement process, including through the SIA, is taken on board by the project team to inform planning. Feedback is considered by our consultants as they prepare EES studies and provide recommendations on impact management and mitigation, and this information will be considered by the Minister for Planning when the EES is submitted.

Additionally, once the EES is submitted, Iluka will receive a copy of all comments received through the public exhibition phase. It is a requirement that Iluka responds to each of these comments. Consideration will be given to all comments, and Iluka will provide a formal response on how the comment is/has been addressed.