

# Notice

## Environmental Protection Act 1994

### Information request

*This information request is issued by the administering authority under section 140 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to request further information needed to assess an application for a site-specific environmental authority.*

COMET RIDGE MAHALO NORTH PTY LTD  
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notices@cometridge.com.au

ATTN: Tor Raymond Mccaul

Your reference: A-EA-NEW-100521948

Our reference: C-EA-100522020

### Further information is required to assess an application for a site-specific environmental authority

#### 1. Application details

The Application for a site-specific environmental authority was received by the administering authority on 20 October 2023

The application reference number is: A-EA-NEW-100521948

Land description: PL1128

#### 2. Information request

The administering authority has considered the abovementioned application and is writing to inform you that further information is required to assess the application (an information request).

The information requested is provided below:

General	
1	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>An Environmental Management Plan is referenced in section 7.1.5.1 of the 'Supporting Information Report'. However, it is not provided in the application material.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Please provide the Environmental Management Plan.</li></ol>
2	<p><u>Issue</u></p>

	<p>Table 12 in Appendix D 'Ecological Assessment Report' predicts an overall 156.92ha of vegetation clearing required for the project. Table 17 in the 'Supporting information report' predicts an overall 178.27ha of vegetation clearing required for the project.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please confirm the overall vegetation clearing required for the project. Include any required changes to the areas of the regulated vegetation that are proposed to be cleared.</li> </ol>
3	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>Appendix C' Groundwater Impact Assessment Report' models that, "<i>the predicted maximum magnitude of subsidence is approximately 2 mm (0.002 m) for the Project Case, which is predicted to occur within the southwestern sector of the Project area where the coals are deepest. For the Cumulative Case, the maximum predicted subsidence was 2 cm (0.02 m), however this occurred in association with the Mahalo development to the south where the coal seams are deeper and predicted drawdown is greater. In the Cumulative Case, the maximum predicted subsidence within the Project area was roughly 10 mm (0.01 m)</i>".</p> <p>It is noted that the southwestern sector of the project area includes the Humboldt Creek and is mapped as strategic cropping area (SCA). Figure 7 'mapped areas of regional interests' highlights the portion of the project area with mapped SCA and overlays the proposed infrastructure within the SCA. It is suggested in the report that a RIDA will not be required for the project, however impacts to existing land use needs to be considered in the application.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What consultation has transpired with landholders, where project disturbance will intersect planned or existing cropping?</li> <li>2. Please quantify the disturbance extent in hectares to cropping land.</li> <li>3. Further information is required on the modelled subsidence predicted for the SCA area where there is proposed project disturbance. Provide a discussion on what impact subsidence may have on the local hydraulic regime and surface water flows to the Humboldt Creek and Rockland Creek.</li> <li>4. Please provide detailed rehabilitation methods for proposed disturbance within the SCA. Further information should include a discussion on the management measures which will be implemented to minimise the impacts of the project on cropping land use.</li> </ol>
4	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>The 'Greenhouse Gas Assessment Report' identifies that, "The Project will contribute only a small fraction to national and State GHG emissions inventory at &lt;0.0027% and &lt;0.008% per annum respectively".</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please confirm whether this percentage is reflective of 'scenario 1' scope 3 emissions, where all CSG produced is combusted for domestic energy production.</li> </ol>
5	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>The 'Appendix D- Ecological Assessment Report' states the export pipeline is out of scope for the application, as export pipeline alignments are still under investigation.</p>

	<p>Please note that when an amendment to an existing environmental authority is proposed, the significant residual impact (SRI) assessment relates to the cumulative impacts of the entire project - i.e. impacts proposed in both the existing authority and any additional impacts proposed in the amendment.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further information is required to clarify how produced gas will be connected to domestic supply. Further information should address any foreseen future expansions to the project area to accommodate pipeline transportation and whether these will be included as an amendment to the environmental authority or applied for as a separate environmental authority.</li> </ol>
<b>Flora and Fauna</b>	
6	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>The surveys did not include the properties Memooloo and Struan. These properties are in the south-east of the development area and are proposed to have a combined 5 vertical wells and 5 lateral wells, gathering lines and new access tracks.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please provided the survey reports relevant to the Memooloo and Struan properties to confirm the on-ground biodiversity values for this area which may be impacted by the proposed activity. Otherwise, please provide further information to justify why ecological surveys were not required for the properties.</li> </ol>
7	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>The survey identified the presence of the northern free-tailed bat <i>Ozimops lumsdenae</i> but has not provided information on how the identification of this species from the endangered large-eared pied bat <i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i> was made. Without a good reference call data bank, these species can be difficult to differentiate.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information is required on the source of ultrasonic reference material and methodology used to distinguish bat vocalisation recordings and match to the identified species. Further information should detail how the echolocation calls of <i>Ozimops lumsdenae</i> were distinguished from those of <i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i>.</li> </ol>
8	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>The bat survey noted the presence of <i>Nyctophilus</i> spp. It is of importance to understand how Corben's long-eared bat <i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i> was ruled out of this identification. The distribution of <i>N. corbeni</i> has been described within 30km of the subject lands. This species has recently been taxonomically separated from long-eared bat <i>N. timoriensus</i> resulting in limited confirmed records and the potential underestimation of the species distribution. The presence or otherwise of both the large-eared pied-bat <i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i> and Corben's long-eared bat <i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i> is required to assess the impacts of the proposal and needs to be established prior to the SRI assessment.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm the identity of the bat species noted on the project area and surrounding the project area.</li> <li>Information is required to clarify why <i>Nyctophilus corbeni</i> was not identified in the project area, despite its nearby documented presence.</li> <li>Should additional bat species be identified, complete an assessment of the impact the project may present on the species including an SRI assessment if required.</li> </ol>
9	<p><u>Issue</u></p>

The ecological assessment report identifies no significant residual impacts to prescribed environmental matters (PEMs) engaged by the project. However, all PEMs impacted by the project require identification for authorisation on the environmental authority.

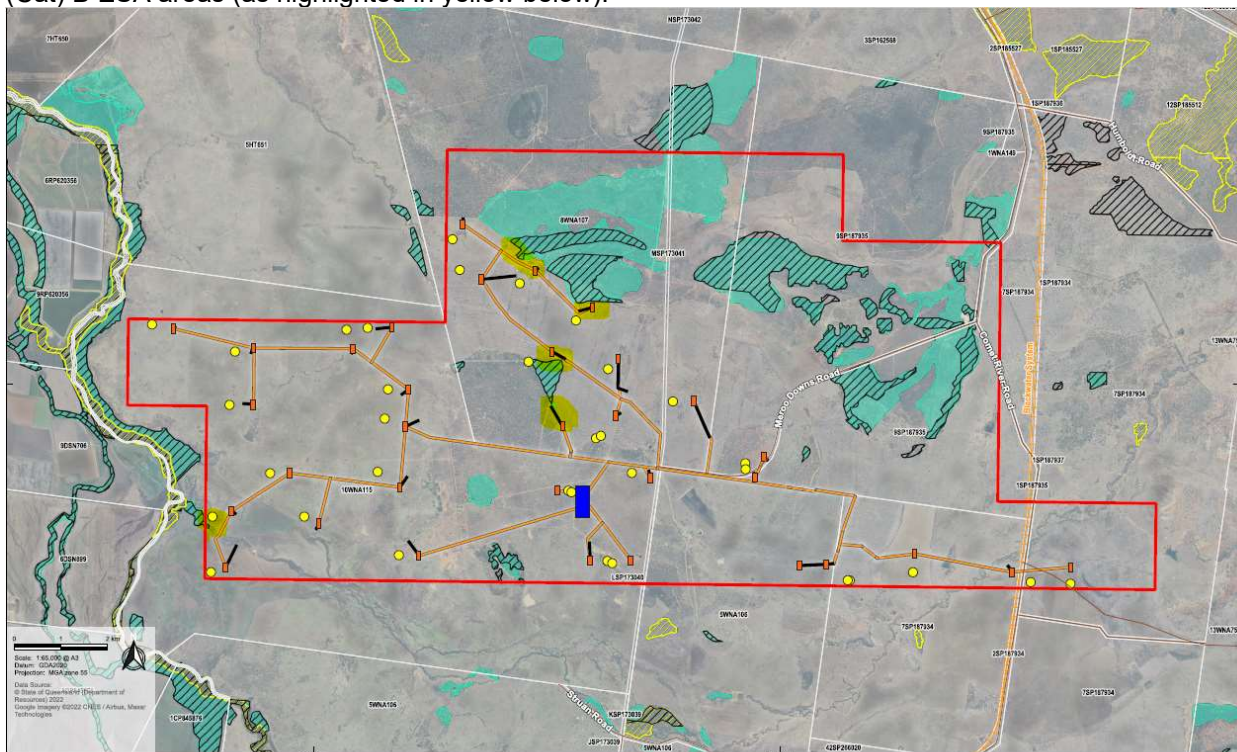
Action required

1. Quantify the relevant impacted PEMs in table below as applicable to the project:

Prescribed Environmental Matters (Schedule 2 of the Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014)	Location of impact	Maximum extent of impact of total area on site (ha)		Significant residual impact And Offset Required
<b>REGULATED VEGETATION</b>				
Endangered prescribed regional ecosystem – insert RE ID				
<i>e.g. 11.9.5 (mid-dense)</i>				
Of concern prescribed regional ecosystem (not within an urban area) – insert RE ID				
<i>e.g. 11.3.2 (sparse)</i>				
Prescribed regional ecosystems (not within an urban area) that intersect a wetland on the vegetation management wetlands map – insert RE ID				
<i>e.g. 11.10.8 (dense)</i>	<i>PLXXX</i>	<i>2.3 ha</i>		
An area of essential habitat (not in an urban area) on the essential habitat map for an animal that is critically endangered wildlife, endangered wildlife or vulnerable wildlife or a plant that is critically endangered wildlife, endangered wildlife or vulnerable wildlife – insert species name				
For native vegetation clearing - essential habitat (not in an urban area) for an animal that is near threatened wildlife or a plant that is near threatened wildlife – insert species name				
Regional ecosystems (not within an urban area) within the defined distance from the defining banks of a relevant watercourse or relevant drainage feature – insert RE ID				
<i>e.g. 11.3.2 (sparse)</i>	<i>PLXXX</i>	<i>1ha</i>	<i>2ha</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>e.g. 11.3.18 (sparse)</i>	<i>PLXXX</i>	<i>1ha</i>		
<b>CONNECTIVITY AREAS</b>				
Connectivity area that is a regional ecosystem (not in urban area) – insert RE ID				
<b>WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES</b>				
A wetland in a wetland protection area – insert reference				
A wetland of high ecological significance shown on the map of Queensland wetland environmental values – insert reference				
A wetland or watercourse in high ecological value waters – insert reference				
<b>DESIGNATED PRECINCTS IN STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS</b>				
Designated precinct in a strategic environmental area – insert reference				
<b>PROTECTED WILDLIFE HABITAT</b>				
An area that is shown as a high risk area on the flora survey trigger map and that contains plants that are critically endangered wildlife, endangered wildlife or vulnerable wildlife - insert area and species names				

	<p><i>e.g Acacia wardellii (Thomby Range wattle) (Near threatened)</i></p> <p>An area that is not shown as a high-risk area on the flora survey trigger map that contains plants that are critically endangered wildlife, endangered wildlife or vulnerable wildlife – insert area and species names</p>				
	<p><i>e.g Ooline (Cadellia pentastylis) Vulnerable</i></p> <p>A koala habitat area</p>				
	<p>Habitat for an animal that is critically endangered wildlife, endangered wildlife or vulnerable wildlife or a special least concern animal – insert area and species name</p>				
	<p><i>e.g Glossy black cockatoo (Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami) Vulnerable</i></p> <p><b>PROTECTED AREAS</b></p> <p>A protected area - national park (all classes)</p>				
	<p>A protected area – conservation park</p>				
	<p>A protected area – resources reserve</p>				
	<p>A protected area – special wildlife reserve</p>				
	<p>A protected area – nature refuge</p>				
	<p><b>HIGHLY PROTECTED ZONES OF STATE MARINE PARKS</b></p> <p>A highly protected area of a relevant Queensland marine park.</p>				
	<p><b>FISH HABITAT AREAS</b></p> <p>A declared fish habitat area – insert reference</p>				
	<p><b>WATERWAY PROVIDING FOR FISH PASSAGE</b></p> <p>Any part of a waterway (not in an urban area) providing for passage of fish – insert reference</p>				
	<p><b>MARINE PLANTS</b></p> <p>Marine plant (not in an urban area) – insert reference</p>				
	<p><b>LEGALLY SECURED OFFSET AREA</b></p> <p>Legally secured offset area – insert reference</p>				
10	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>The application material states that the project will not disturb Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) or their protection zones. However, Figure 14 ‘mapped environmentally sensitive areas’ of the ‘Supporting</p>				

Information Report' depicts some indicative vertical wells and access tracks adjacent mapped Category (Cat) B ESA areas (as highlighted in yellow below).



<b>Legend</b> 		<b>Infrastructure (Indicative only)</b> 		<b>Gas production wells</b> 		<b>Environmentally sensitive areas</b> 		 Comet Ridge Mahalo North CSG Project Environmental Authority Supporting Information Report for a Petroleum Lease Figure 14 Mapped environmentally sensitive areas
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**Action required**

1. Please confirm the buffer distances between the mapped Cat B ESA on Figure 14 and the adjacent proposed disturbance.
2. Should the proposed disturbance impact the primary or secondary protection zone, please quantify the extent to which disturbance impacts within ESAs and their associated protection zones using the below table. These impacts should be listed against each protection zone trigger (i.e. Category B, Category C, and for each listing of 'Essential Habitat' or 'Of Concern', etc.). If certainty cannot be provided, justification should be provided that outlines appropriate risk management strategies to avoid impacts.

Tenure	Description of Infrastructure	Max Disturbance footprint (ha)	ESA Protection Zone	Coordinates
e.g., PL276	e.g., Gas Trunkline – Alfred FCS to Petrie Creek CPP		e.g., PPZ and SPZ of Category B ESA	e.g., -26.289358, 149.720436  -26.29579, 149.7563

11 Issue

	<p>The Appendix D section 7.1.8.1 'construction impacts' states that pipeline crossings may be required at Humboldt Creek.</p> <p>It must be noted that Cat B regulated vegetation within the defining distance to a defined bank of a watercourse or drainage line is considered a prescribed environmental matter.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide the confirmed defined bank for the Humboldt Creek and other watercourses or drainage lines which will be disturbed from the activity and apply the defining distances.</li> <li>2. Confirm the structural category of the creek and proposed width of clearing.</li> <li>3. Regardless of whether an SRI will occur, the extent of the impact to the PEM must be quantified, please refer to item 6.</li> </ol>
<b>Noise</b>	
12	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>There is a very high probability that the noise monitoring results presented in Table 4-4 is impacted from wildlife, possibly insects. This can be seen in the comparison of LA90 values across the time period, and how it increases in the evening period significantly. Background levels in the evening and night periods (without the influence of wildlife) in a remote location as such should decrease to a level far below that presented in this table.</p> <p>Insect and wildlife noises do elevate the 'logged levels', however, they generally do not contribute towards annoyance to human environment.</p> <p>It is considered best practice to remove insect noise from consideration of the background noise, so as to not elevate noise assessment results for the background noise level.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please provide a spectral analysis of the noise monitoring. If it is demonstrated that the noise monitoring results are impacted from insect noise, provide a noise assessment with adjusted background noise values.</li> </ol>
<b>Air</b>	
13	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>Table 1 of the Air Report lists the ambient air quality objectives for Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2019 (EPP (Air)) and the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (Air NEPM). The Air NEPM values presented for NO<sub>2</sub> and CO have been superseded by the updated objective in 2021. The latest Air NEPM emission standards consider emerging evidence about the health impacts of NO<sub>x</sub> and other emissions, as reported by the World Health Organisation.</p> <p><u>Action required</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please provide a discussion on how the activity emissions will contribute to the best practice ambient emission concentrations in line with the most recent NEPM values.</li> </ol>
14	<p><u>Issue</u></p> <p>Appendix G- 'Air Quality Assessment'- provides an air quality technical report for the project but includes no details on emission controls. The report uses a NO<sub>x</sub> emission rate of 6.15 g/s for each of the engine parameters for the gas compressing equipment. This is substantially above emission rates that could be considered best practice. For comparison, the US performance standard for NO<sub>x</sub> for engines of this type is 2g/hp/hr. The emissions rate proposed is equivalent to approximately 11.65 g/hp/hr. The EU directive</p>

2015/2193 would place a limit of 190 mg/Nm<sup>3</sup> for new engines, and the standard of concentration under the NSW Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2021 is 450 mg/m<sup>3</sup> at 3% O<sub>2</sub>.  
Further, the report uses a CO emission rate of 4.80 g/s for each of the engine parameters for the gas compressing equipment. The standard of concentration for CO emissions for engines of this type under the NSW Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2021 is 125 mg/m<sup>3</sup> at 3% O<sub>2</sub>.

Action required

1. In order to develop reasonable conditions, please identify what NO<sub>x</sub> controls will be put in place to ensure that best practice emission rates can be achieved.
2. For each of the release points proposed, complete the Table-Point source air release limits as shown below.
- 3.

Release point and description	Min. release height above ground (m)	Min. velocity (m/sec)	Min. temperature (°C) <delete if not applicable>	Contaminant	Max. concentration release limit (g/s)	Max. mass release limit <delete if not applicable>	Monitoring Frequency
<i>Example</i>	5	37.56	852K	CO	4.8 g/s		

**Surface Water Impacts**

15

Issues:

The Environmental Values (EVs) for the Comet River Sub-Basin waters in Table 5 of section 3.6 'environmental values and water quality objectives' indicates that 'primary and secondary recreation' as well as 'cultural and spiritual values' are relevant to the proposed activities. No further information was provided detailing if there are any Native Title claims over the project area and what considerations have been made to accommodate cultural and spiritual environmental values.

Action required:

1. Please confirm if other types of surface water uses such as "recreation" and "cultural and spiritual uses" were considered in the assessment. If no consideration was given, assess impacts of the project on those types of water uses.
2. Please provide further information on the project impacts to cultural and spiritual environmental values of surface and groundwater and explain how cultural values will be protected.

**3. Actions**

The abovementioned application will lapse unless you respond by giving the administering authority -

- (a) all of the information requested; or
- (b) part of the information requested together with a written notice asking the authority to proceed with the assessment of the application; or
- (c) a written notice –
  - i. stating that you do not intend to supply any of the information requested; and
  - ii. asking the administering authority to proceed with the assessment of the application.

Should the information request require an EIS process or applicant to submit a progressive rehabilitation and closure (PRC) plan then it must be completed and submitted.



A response to the information requested must be provided by 6 September 2024 (the information response period). If you wish to extend the information response period, a request to extend the period must be made at least 10 business days before the last day of the information response period.

The response to this information request or a request to extend the information response period can be submitted to the administering authority by email to [EnergyandExtractive@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:EnergyandExtractive@des.qld.gov.au).

If the information provided in response to this information request is still not adequate for the administering authority to make a decision, your application may be refused as a result of section 176 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, where the administering authority must have regard to any response given for an information request.

#### 4. Human rights

A human rights assessment was carried out in relation to this decision, and it was determined that no human rights were engaged by this decision.

#### 5. Review and appeal rights

You may apply to the administering authority for a review of this decision within 10 business days after receiving this notice. Information about your review rights is attached to this notice or search 'DES Internal review and appeals' at [business.qld.gov.au](http://business.qld.gov.au). This information is guidance only and you may have other legal rights and obligations.

If you require clarification on any items within this information request, please contact Camilla Scott, Senior Environmental Officer, on 3516 0420.

*Rachel BDean*

Signature

31 January 2024

Date

Rachel Burgess-Dean  
Executive Director  
Department of Environment, Science and Innovation  
Delegate of the administering authority  
*Environmental Protection Act 1994*

**Enquiries:**

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