
MINUTE 10 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Hydrology/Hydrogeology Peer Review: Scope of Work
Central and Southern Block Mining Project [FTAA-2512-1153]

(16 May 2026)

- [1] This Minute addresses the scope of work for the hydrology/hydrogeology peer review.
- [2] The Panel has appointed Mr Philip Kelsey to undertake this review, in response to the views expressed at the Convenor Conference about the need for specialist hydrology input, and having invited suggestions as to suitably qualified and experienced experts in this field from participants prior to the Panel Overview Conference.
- [3] The Panel is requesting that Mr Kelsey provides expert opinion to assist the Panel in its consideration of hydrology and hydrogeology related issues raised by the Substantive Application, including to:
 - (i) Inform a Panel request for information (RFI) under s67 of the FTAA to the applicant; and
 - (ii) Participate in a Panel facilitated conference with experts (on proposed consent conditions of relevance to hydrology and hydrogeology (including monitoring and managing potential impacts on streams and wetlands). We note in this regard that the Panel had previously indicated facilitated expert conferencing would be undertaken however we now consider that overseeing that conferencing as a panel will be more effective and efficient in focussing on mitigation and conditions to address issues of contention between respective experts.
- [4] The scope of work is:
 - (i) To review two independent technical assessment reports appended to the substantive application:
 - a. Appendix I – Hydrology Assessment
 - b. Appendix N - Hydrogeology Assessment (Groundwater Effects)

- (ii) To provide the reviewer's opinion of whether the data relied on and any assumptions made in reaching the conclusions in these assessment reports are sufficiently robust; i.e. to identify any material gaps/omissions in the data, or assumptions that in the reviewer's opinion mean the conclusions reached in these reports are not valid or need to be qualified (and if so how, to what extent).
 - (iii) To provide the reviewer's opinion on the conclusions/findings in the two assessment reports, with reasons for any material differences of opinion regarding those findings/conclusions.
 - (iv) To identify any specific issues on which the Panel should seek further information.
 - (v) To comment on proposed conditions of consent/mitigation (including for monitoring) as recommended in the two assessment reports in terms of their effectiveness/appropriateness in managing relevant effects, and any improvements that could/should be made for that purpose, along with hydrogeology related monitoring and mitigation as recommended in Appendix K - Terrestrial Ecology - Wetlands and Vegetation Assessment Redacted.
- [5] There will an opportunity to respond or file material in reply to the advice received from Mr Kelsey.
- [6] In paragraph [3](i) above the Panel advises our intention to issue an RFI to the applicant which will follow the applicant's response to the written comments received to the section 53 notice. The RFI will be based on the comments, the applicant's response to comments, and our own reading of application documents. However, the Panel notes there are discrepancies between Appendix K and N as to both the numbers and numbering of the various wetlands identified (and as to how many would be mined/removed). It is possible that this has resulted from the different grouping of the range of water bodies identified as wetlands in Appendix N for hydrogeology modelling purposes,¹ as wetlands/natural inland wetlands for ecological purposes in Appendix K.²
- [7] The future RFI would include a request for revised mapping to adopt a consistent numbering system, or at least allow a comparison and correlation

¹ 88, of which 13 are said to be being mined.

² 30, of which 7 are being mined.

between the two mapping/numbering systems. However it would assist the Panel, and Mr Kelsey, if the revised mapping could be produced as soon as possible.

- [8] The Panel invites comments on the scope of work set out above, to be received by close of business **19 May 2026**.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Serjeant', written in a cursive style.

Dave Serjeant

Central and Southern Block Mining Project Expert Panel Chair