

Huntly mine transition and Pinjarra refinery production increase

Environmental assessment



Social surroundings (heritage)



Alcoa has been operating in Western Australia since 1963. Our Huntly and Willowdale mines send mined bauxite to our Pinjarra and Wagerup refineries where it's refined into alumina, the material used to make aluminium.

Aluminium plays a key role in decarbonisation. It's found in solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles, medical equipment and more. We continue to rely on it every day.

The assessment

We are seeking approval to transition Huntly Bauxite Mine to new operating areas and increase alumina production at Pinjarra Alumina Refinery by 5%. This requires assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and approval by the State and Commonwealth Governments to ensure it meets environmental standards and minimises impacts to the environment, cultural values and local communities.

Transitioning to new mine regions is essential for the continued operation of the Huntly mine and Pinjarra refinery. This project will protect thousands of ongoing local jobs, helping sustain the regional economy.

Alcoa acknowledges the cultural significance of Noongar and historic heritage in the South West and we are committed to protecting cultural heritage across all our operations. We collaborate closely with Traditional Owners, through the Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporation (GKB AC), to implement appropriate management of Aboriginal heritage places, including carrying out detailed heritage assessments to inform our Environmental Review Document.

EPA environmental objective aims to

protect social surroundings related to the proposal, including Aboriginal and historic heritage, from significant harm.

Key terms

Aboriginal heritage – Includes both tangible and intangible cultural elements significant to Aboriginal people and of importance and significance to Western Australia. These places and objects are valued for their social, spiritual, historical, scientific, and/or aesthetic importance.

Historic heritage – Refers to sites, artefacts, and structures from the post-European settlement period, including remnants from the early colonial era and later developments.

Proposed activities

Alcoa's proposed mining activities that could impact heritage areas include:

Clearing native vegetation.

Emissions of dust and water run-off.

Construction, mining, refining and other operational activities.

Physical presence of infrastructure, altering the cultural landscape.

Potential impacts

Alcoa recognises the importance of protecting Aboriginal and historic heritage values through collaboration with Traditional Owners and compliance with heritage legislation. Mining activities have the potential to impact heritage places and features in the following ways:

Aboriginal heritage – Direct or indirect disturbance, destruction or alteration to culturally significant places, objects, or traditions and their linkages to the bio-physical environment.

Historic Heritage – Direct or indirect disturbance to heritage listed sites, structures or cultural landmarks and their linkages to the bio-physical environment.

Managing impacts

Alcoa prioritises the protection of heritage places and features, aiming for avoidance wherever possible and applying mitigation measures to minimise disturbance.

Avoid

- Conduct comprehensive heritage surveys before any land disturbance, involving Traditional Owners and relevant stakeholders, supported by appropriately qualified and skilled heritage practitioners.
 - Adjust mine plans and infrastructure to avoid impacts on heritage sites wherever feasible.
- Identified Aboriginal heritage places include:
 - Culturally significant landscape features, including rivers and other waterways,
 - Archaeological sites and artefacts evidencing traditional use of the forest.
- Historic heritage places that have been identified and will be avoided include:
 - Italian Prisoner of War Camp – World War II heritage place
 - Water Well – Historical water source
 - Holyoake (Log Landing) – Former timber industry facility
 - Shield trees – trees modified during forestry operations to serve as location markers

Minimise

- Reduce unavoidable disturbance as much as possible (the minimum) through appropriate mine layout or infrastructure design.
- If an Aboriginal heritage site cannot be avoided, proceed only in accordance with regulatory processes.
 - Obtain legal consent (e.g., Section 18 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972) in consultation with Traditional Owners through the GKB AC.
 - Apply appropriate management measures to ensure disturbance is kept to the minimum necessary (guided by co-developed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plans as required).
- Provide workforce training and inductions that include cultural heritage obligations, management procedures and overall cultural awareness.

Heritage management at Alcoa

Through proactive heritage surveys, stakeholder consultation, and strict compliance with heritage laws, Alcoa ensures that heritage sites are identified and avoided wherever possible. Where avoidance isn't possible, approvals are obtained, and impacts are appropriately managed during development.

This includes controlling and monitoring ground disturbing activities to prevent inadvertent impacts. The effectiveness of these controls will be assessed through ongoing auditing.

Alcoa actively manages and monitors its impacts on the biological and physical environment, which also protects any cultural heritage values associated with the environment itself.



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