

FACT SHEET

MINERAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2013

The *Mineral Resources Development Act 1995* (MRDA) provides for the development of mineral resources consistent with sound economic, environmental and land use management.

The Act has proved to be an effective tool in the orderly administration of mineral tenements in the State.

A review of the Act undertaken by Mineral Resources Tasmania identified a number of shortcomings in the current Act concerning general administration and more specifically a lack of provision to provide title for the production of petroleum and geothermal products.

Definitions

A number of new definitions of terms have been proposed in the amendments to the Act that clearly define and clarify the intent of those terms and associated provisions provided for within the Act:

Leases and licences

Amendments have been proposed in the Bill that provides consistency and clarity in the administration of all mineral tenements. These proposed amendments include the addition of provisions for each type of tenure that are consistent as far as practicable relating to process and tenure.

Production Licences

It is proposed that the amendment Bill provide for the introduction of a new category of title, that being a Production Licence for geothermal substances or on-shore petroleum, should current exploration efforts discover commercially extractable geothermal or petroleum resources.

Proposed amendments relating to Production Licences include provisions that allow for the granting of title over relatively large areas to cover defined resources whilst still allowing for tenements to be provided for other mineral categories within the Production Licence area where their coexistence would not interfere with the exploitation of the geothermal or petroleum resource.

Royalty

Proposed amendments to royalties have been included that relate to the production of petroleum and geothermal resources being activities that require the payment of royalties as per other mineral categories.

Prospecting Licences

The proposed amendments will provide for a new category of prospecting licence that will allow a person to conduct prospecting activities with a group of people without the need for all members of that group to hold individual licences. The **Group Prospecting Licence** will facilitate registered tour operators to include prospecting activities as a part of a tour.

Geological Investigations

New amendments are provided that give the Director of Mines the ability to approve geological investigations, within an area that is the subject of an application for a lease, licence or permit under the *Crown Lands Act 1976* or the *Forestry Act 1920*, to prove or disprove the mineral prospectivity of that area. This provision is intended to help prevent competition for natural resources within a particular area of land.

Areas of Geological Significance

Proposed amendments have been included that provide for the creation of Areas of Geological Significance by the Minister that will allow for the declaration of an area to be geologically significant. This provision will not change the land tenure or management of that area but will simply serve to highlight an area as being of scientific interest or significance and that the Director of Mines permission is required prior to exploring, fossicking or prospecting within this area.

Records Kept by a Licensee

Proposed amendments relating to the records to be kept by the holder of a Production Licence have been made. These amendments bring the record keeping and reporting requirements for the producers of petroleum or geothermal substances into line with those of the holders of a Mining Lease. These amendments provide clarity to licensees regarding the information that they are required to keep and records to be maintained that will also allow for the effective administration of those Production Licences.

Mine Plans

Proposed amendments have been made that provide for the regular production of Mine Plans by lessees. It is vital that accurate and up to date plans are maintained for existing mines for monitoring of progress, resource evaluation, future exploration and development knowledge and for mine safety reasons.