



Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

Min ID: MB18-000597

Subject: VISIT TO KALGOORLIE – 13 AND 14 JUNE 2018

Recommendation:

That you **note** the contents of the briefing.

Noted / Please discuss

Matthew Canavan **Date:** / /2018

Comments:

s22

Clearance Officer:

Kristina Anastasi
A/g General Manager
Onshore Minerals Branch
Resources Division
s22

Contact Officer:

s22
Mining and Investment Section
s22

MLO Version: 13/June/2018

Attachments

A: Trip itinerary

B: Schedule (as provided by Mr Wilson's office)

s22

D: Meetings – Key contacts, maps, issues and talking points (in sequential order of trip)

s22

s22

s22

H: Media article: Pressure rises for WA mining sector amid dramatic fall in skilled workers

ATTACHMENT A

Itinerary

s22

Thursday, 14 June 2018

Event	Time	Event	Location
-------	------	-------	----------

s22

4	12.00noon	Cameco uranium discussion	Mr Wilson's Office
---	-----------	---------------------------	--------------------

s22

ATTACHMENT B

s22

Full Schedule: Thursday, 14 June 2018

s22

s22

12noon	Uranium meeting	s22 confirmed	- Cameco -	Rick Wilson's Office, 345 Hannan St - Car parking out front of office	s22 Office.	- RW	s22 s22 s22	- Cameco - Vimy Resources
--------	------------------------	------------------	------------	---	----------------	------	-------------------	------------------------------

s22

Pages 6-16 have been removed from Document 1 as irrelevant information
under section 22 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

Event 4: Uranium meeting with Mr Simon Williamson, CEO, Cameco Australia

Time: 12.00 pm – 1.30 pm
Venue: Mr Rick Wilson's Office, 345 Hannan St, Kalgoorlie.
Contact: s22 Electorate Officer; ph: s22
Attendees: Mr Simon Williamson, CEO, Cameco Australia

Key points

- Environmental approvals for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project have been the subject of multiple state court challenges from conservation groups and traditional owners. Details regarding the legal challenges and background to the project follow.
- Mr Simon Williamson, General Manager of Cameco Australia (Cameco), wrote to the Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) regarding this project on 22 May 2018; you received a copy of this letter. Cameco is concerned that DoEE intends to delay Commonwealth approval until the WA Supreme Court of Appeal hands down its decision.
- Cameco contends that the failed legal challenges are misconceived in law and these challenges should not be used to delay further environmental approvals. Cameco is concerned that should a federal election be called, the process will be delayed again, potentially for another two years.
- Cameco has indicated that it will continue to work closely with DoEE regarding the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act) application, and would also appreciate any assistance you or your office may be able to provide.
- DoEE has confirmed to us that under the assessment process of the EPBC Act (EPBC 2009/4906) a decision on the Yeelirrie mine proposal has now been reached. Minister Frydenberg will provide an opportunity for you, other Ministers and the company to review and provide further feedback on his decision. These comments will inform Minister Frydenberg's final decision, potentially with conditions applied.
- While the Western Australian and Federal decisions are separate, DoEE will be conscious of the appeal and the scrutiny that its decision will likely attract.
- Mr Williamson is also meeting with DoEE representatives on 27 June 2018 to further discuss his application and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with your office on 28 June 2018 to provide you with an update on the meeting outcomes.

Legal Challenges

- On 9 March 2018, the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) and members of the Tjiwarl Native Title group announced the filing of an appeal against the Supreme Court's recent decision to uphold the project's environmental approval. They argue that if the project goes ahead it 'will cause the extinction of multiple species unique to the Yeelirrie area'.
- On 8 February 2018, the Supreme Court of WA dismissed an appeal against the WA Minister's environmental approval.
- On 16 January 2017, after consideration of the Appeals Convenor findings and the broader commercial and economic considerations of the project, the WA Government granted state approval for the Yeelirrie project, subject to 17 conditions.
- In August 2016, the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) recommended that the WA Environment Minister not approve the project due to one of nine key environmental approvals (relating to subterranean fauna) not being met. Cameco stated that it would work to address the concerns and progress the project.
 - Twenty (20) appeals were received against the EPA report. The report found that Cameco had not satisfactorily demonstrated that it could address the risk to subterranean stygofauna.

- Cameco's proposal met the EPA's objectives relating to the other eight factors, including potential impacts to flora and vegetation and to human health, as well as rehabilitation and decommissioning.
- On 15 December 2014, the EPA set the highest possible level of assessment for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project proposal – a Public Environmental Review (PER). The PER was released on 21 September 2015.

Yeelirrie Uranium Project background

- The Yeelirrie Uranium Project is wholly owned by Cameco Corporation
- Cameco is a publicly listed Canadian-based uranium producer, providing approximately 18 per cent of the world's production from its mines in Canada, US and Kazakhstan. The company is also involved in uranium processing and enrichment.
- Cameco acquired Yeelirrie from BHP Billiton in 2012 for \$430 million.
- The Yeelirrie Uranium Project is located in the northern Goldfields region of Western Australia, approximately 660 km north east of Perth and 420 km north of Kalgoorlie.
- Yeelirrie is Australia's largest known undeveloped uranium deposit with an estimated resource of 128.1 million lbs (measured and indicated). Geoscience Australia (2012) estimated that the deposit contains around 52,500 tonnes uranium oxide.
- The project is estimated to produce an average of 3,850 tonnes uranium oxide or 8.49 million pounds per annum with a peak of 7,500 tonnes or 16.5 million pounds per annum, over the 15-year operational life of the mine.
- Ore will be mined from shallow open pits. The open pit mine is estimated to be 9 km long, 1.5 km wide and 10 m deep.
- During the construction phase, Cameco estimates that it will employ 1,200 people, reducing to an estimated 225 people for the operational phase.
- The WA Government does not permit the export of uranium from WA port facilities. Consequently, any uranium produced at Yeelirrie would need to be transported by road to the Port of Adelaide or Darwin for shipping to China.
- Cameco proposes to transport the uranium concentrate using the existing heavy haulage route from Yeelirrie along the Goldfields Highway to Norseman, along the Eyre Highway to Port Augusta and then the Princes Highway to Adelaide. Transport will be undertaken in accordance with the strict codes and regulations overseen by state, national and international organisations for the shipping of uranium concentrate.
- Cameco has indicated that the uranium concentrate will be used to generate clean electricity in nuclear power plants around the world.

Pages 19-33 have been removed from Document 1 as irrelevant information
under section 22 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*



Australian Government
**Department of Industry,
 Innovation and Science**

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

Min ID: MB18-000562

For Action

Subject: CAMECO YEELIRRIE URANIUM PROJECT

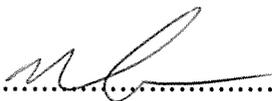
Timing: Routine

Recommendations: That you

1. **Note** the progress of environmental approvals for this project and the content of the briefing.
2. **Sign** the attached correspondence to Minister Frydenberg (Attachment C).

Noted / Please discuss

Signed / Please discuss

Matthew Canavan  Date: 11 / 7 / 2018

Comments:

Key Points:

1. Environmental approvals for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project have been the subject of multiple state court challenges from conservation groups and traditional owners. Details regarding the legal challenges and background to the project are at Attachment A and B.
2. Mr Simon Williamson, General Manager of Cameco Australia (Cameco), wrote to the Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) regarding this project on 22 May 2018; you received a copy of this letter. Cameco was concerned that DoEE intended to delay Commonwealth approval until the WA Supreme Court of Appeal hands down its decision.
3. Cameco contended the failed legal challenges are misconceived in law, and these challenges should not be used to delay further environmental approvals. Cameco was also concerned that should a federal election be called, the process would be delayed again.
4. Mr Williamson has advised us that he recently met with the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Minister for the Environment and Energy, and he also met with DoEE representatives on Wednesday, 27 June 2018.
5. It is understood Minister Frydenberg has now asked DoEE to progress assessment of the Yeelirrie application for approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act*. DoEE has advised Mr Williamson it may take 4-8 weeks to reach a decision. Officials from DoEE also advised us that this was an indicative timeframe, noting the sensitivities and complexities of the project proposal. You will be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed decision before a final decision is made.
6. While the Western Australian and Commonwealth decisions are separate, DoEE is undoubtedly conscious of the current appeal and the scrutiny that its decision is likely to attract.

Consultation: DoEE, Cameco Australia.

Clearance Officer:
 Michael Sheldrick
 General Manager
 Onshore Energy Branch
 Resources Division

Contact Officer:
 s22
 Mining & Investment
 s22

s22

MLO Version: 4/7/2018

Combined documents - Page 12 of 46

ATTACHMENTS

- A: Legal challenges - summary
- B: Project background
- C: Letter for signature

**Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan****Minister for Resources and Northern Australia**

MB18-000562

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
Minister for the Environment and Energy
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

COPY

11 JUL 2018

Dear Minister *Tosh,*

I write in relation to assessment of environmental approvals for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project in Western Australia.

I understand you recently met with Mr Simon Williamson, General Manager of Cameco Australia about the company's concerns regarding the Commonwealth process for assessing the project and that as a result, your department is now progressing the approvals process. I welcome this outcome as Yeelirrie is an important project which has already successfully progressed through extensive state environmental assessments and court challenges.

Given the significant delays already experienced by Cameco in relation to Yeelirrie, I would appreciate the Department of the Environment and Energy completing its processes expeditiously and I look forward to reviewing your proposed decision on the project shortly.

Thank you for ensuring progress of the Commonwealth environmental approval for this project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'm. canavan', followed by a horizontal line.

Matthew Canavan

ATTACHMENT A

Legal Challenges

- On 9 March 2018, the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA) and members of the Tjiwarl Native Title group announced a filing of an appeal against the Supreme Court's recent decision to uphold the project's environmental approval. They argue that if the project goes ahead it 'will cause the extinction of multiple species unique to the Yeelirrie area.'
- On 8 February 2018, the Supreme Court of WA dismissed an appeal against the WA Minister's environmental approval.
- On 16 January 2017, after consideration of the Appeals Convenor findings and the broader commercial and economic considerations of the project, the WA Government granted state approval for the Yeelirrie project, subject to 17 conditions.
- In August 2016, the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) recommended that the WA Environment Minister not approve the project due to one of nine key environmental approvals (subterranean fauna) not being met. Cameco stated that it would work to address the concerns and progress the project.
 - Twenty (20) appeals were received against the EPA report. The report found that Cameco had not satisfactorily demonstrated that it could address the risk to subterranean stygofauna.
 - The report concluded that of the nine factors assessed, one – Subterranean Fauna – was unable to meet the EPA's environmental objectives. The other eight factors, including potential impacts to Flora and Vegetation and to Human Health, as well as Rehabilitation and Decommissioning, met the objectives.
- On 15 December 2014, the EPA set the highest possible level of assessment for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project proposal – a Public Environmental Review (PER). The PER was released on 21 September 2015.

ATTACHMENT B

Yeelirrie Uranium Project background

- The Yeelirrie Uranium Project is wholly owned by Cameco Corporation a publicly listed Canadian based uranium producer, producing around 18 per cent of the world's production from its mines in Canada, USS and Kazakhstan. The company is also involved in uranium processing and enrichment.
- Cameco acquired Yeelirrie from BHP Billiton in 2012 for \$430 million.
- The Yeelirrie Project is located in the Northern Goldfields region of Western Australia, approximately 660 km north east of Perth and 420 km north of Kalgoorlie (see map below).
- Yeelirrie is Australia's largest known undeveloped uranium deposit with an estimated resource of 128.1 million lbs (measured and indicated). Geoscience Australia (2012) estimates that the deposit contains around 52,500 tonnes uranium oxide.
- The project is estimated to produce an average of 3,850 tonnes uranium oxide or 8.49 million pounds per year with a peak of 7,500 tonnes or 16.5 million pounds per year, over the 15-year operational life of the mine.
- Ore will be mined from shallow open pits. The open pit mine is estimated be 9 km long, 1.5 km wide and 10 m deep.
- During the construction phase Cameco estimates that it would employ 1,200 people, reducing to an estimated 225 people for the operational phase.
- The WA Government does not permit the export of uranium from WA port facilities. Therefore, any uranium produced at Yeelirrie would need to be transported by road to the Port of Adelaide or Darwin for export to China.
- Cameco has proposed to transport the uranium concentrate using the existing heavy haulage route from Yeelirrie along the Goldfields Highway to Norseman, along the Eyre Highway to Port Augusta and then the Princes Highway to Adelaide. The transport will be undertaken in accordance with the strict codes and regulations overseen by state, national and international organisations for the shipping of uranium concentrate.
- Cameco has indicated that the uranium concentrate would be used to generate clean electricity in nuclear power plants around the world.

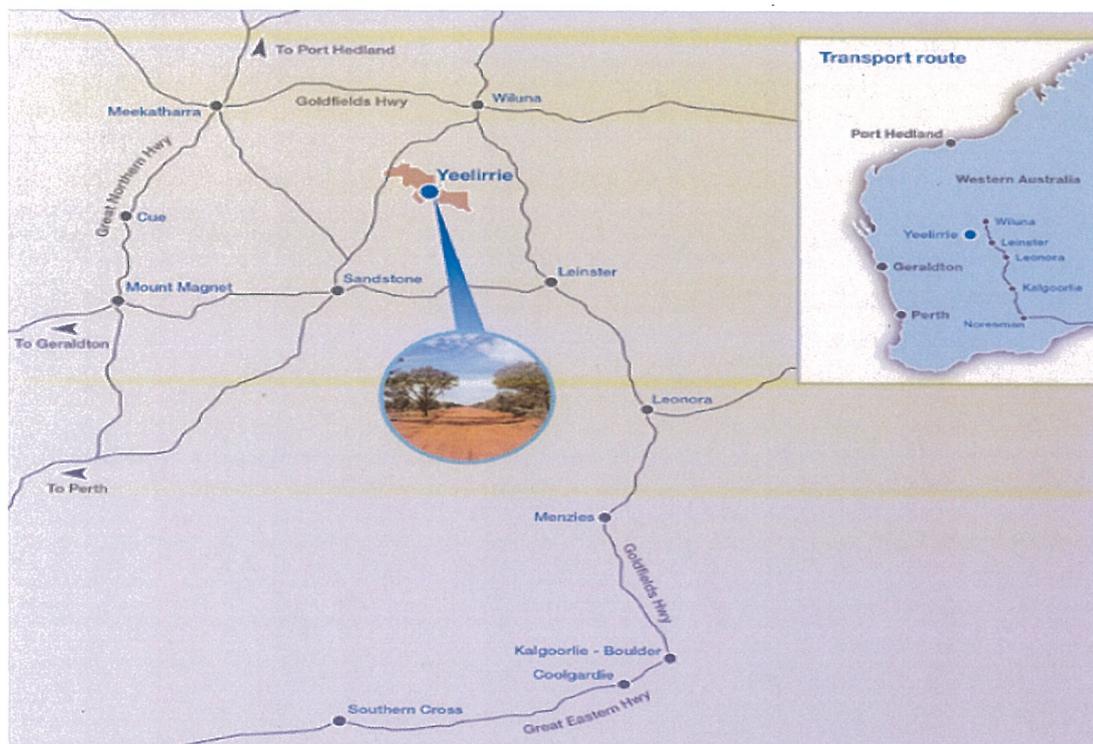


Figure 1: Map of Yeelirrie Project and transportation route



Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan

Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

MB18-000562

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
Minister for the Environment and Energy
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

11 JUL 2018

Dear Minister *Josh,*

I write in relation to assessment of environmental approvals for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project in Western Australia.

I understand you recently met with Mr Simon Williamson, General Manager of Cameco Australia about the company's concerns regarding the Commonwealth process for assessing the project and that as a result, your department is now progressing the approvals process. I welcome this outcome as Yeelirrie is an important project which has already successfully progressed through extensive state environmental assessments and court challenges.

Given the significant delays already experienced by Cameco in relation to Yeelirrie, I would appreciate the Department of the Environment and Energy completing its processes expeditiously and I look forward to reviewing your proposed decision on the project shortly.

Thank you for ensuring progress of the Commonwealth environmental approval for this project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'm. canavan', written over a horizontal line.

Matthew Canavan



Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

Min ID: MC19-000980

For Action

Subject: INVITATION TO COMMENT ON PROPOSED APPROVAL DECISION - YEELIRRIE URANIUM MINE, SHIRE OF WILUNA, WA (MELISSA PRICE)

Timing: Routine

Recommendations: That you	
1. Note the proposed decision by Minister Price and sensitivities associated with the development of this project.	Noted/Please discuss
2. Sign the letter at <u>Attachment A</u> to the Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for Environment.	Signed/Not signed/Please discuss
Matthew Canavan	Date: 20 / 3 / 2019
Comments: <i>I would like to get to BIA and concern first.</i>	

Key Points:

1. The Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for the Environment, has advised you that she is proposing to approve Cameco Australia's Yeelirrie Uranium Mine with conditions under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Yeelirrie project will be an open cut mine and includes a processing plant and associated infrastructure in the Shire of Wiluna, Western Australia (**MC19-000980** refers).
2. You have the opportunity to comment on the proposed decision before a final decision is made. A letter to Minister Price responding to the proposed decision is at Attachment A. The project is within Minister Price's electorate of Durack.
3. Western Australian environmental approvals for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project have been the subject of multiple court challenges from conservation groups and traditional owners. Details regarding the legal challenges and background to the project, including the discussion with Simon Williamson, General Manager, Cameco Australia, are at Attachment B.
4. **Sensitivity:** On 14 March 2019, Mr Williamson advised departmental officers of Cameco's concerns with the proposed conditions of approval. He specifically noted that conditions 10, 10a and 10b related to the management of *Atriplex Yeelirrie* (a type of low-growing salt tolerant shrub endemic to the area of the mine) including establishing a viable population of the plant away from the mine site, may take a further five to seven years and make the project unviable. According to Mr Williamson, this may be a showstopper for any further investment in the Yeelirrie project by Cameco.
5. The project is located in the Federal Electorate of Durack. Regional data is at Attachment C.

Consultation: Geoscience Australia, Office of the Chief Economist, Northern Australia and Major Projects Division.

Clearance Officer:

Dale Rentsch
General Manager
Onshore Energy Branch
Resources Division

s22

Contact Officer:

s22
Mining and Investment Section

s22

MLO Version: 15/3/2019

ATTACHMENTS

- A: Letter to Minister Price commenting on the proposed decision on the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine
- B: Details on the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine project and sensitivities
- C: Regional details of the Durack electorate, WA



Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan

Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

MC19-000980

The Hon Melissa Price MP
Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 5 March 2019 seeking my views concerning your proposed approval of the Yeelirrie open cut uranium mine in the Shire of Wiluna, Western Australia.

I am pleased a decision is being made regarding the development of the Yeelirrie uranium mine. Mining projects are important to supporting jobs in regional communities across Australia. The Yeelirrie uranium mine will create 1200 construction jobs and 225 operational jobs in regional Western Australia. I understand that the Yeelirrie project is scheduled to produce 7500 tonnes of uranium oxide per year, for nuclear power operations around the world. The Yeelirrie uranium mine will be the first uranium mine to have received both State and Commonwealth approvals in Western Australia.

I understand that the management of the *Atriplex Yeelirrie* was identified in the conditions approved by the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority. However the conditions suggested by your department (proposed conditions 10, 10a and 10b) go further. I am concerned that these conditions will prevent progressing the development of Cameco Yeelirrie project from anywhere between five to seven years and put at risk its progression as a viable mine.

My department has advised that Cameco has been engaging with your department on the proposed draft conditions, specifically around conditions 10, 10a and 10b and consideration of the revision of these conditions. I understand that Cameco is seeking to make these conditions consistent with the State environmental approval where possible, and are open to it including a set of clear milestones and reporting requirements, similar to the proposed conditions regarding the Night Parrot and Malleefowl habitat.

In addition, Geoscience Australia has advised that it considers the Western Australia Environment Protection Authority conditions for the project are adequate. They suggest that, as an avenue for streamlining reporting and compliance monitoring for the project, the management plans, reports, reviews, updates (State Conditions 6 and 7), including non-compliance notification (State Conditions 4.5 and 4.6), be submitted to your department along with the relevant WA authority.

I would encourage you and your department to continue to engage with Cameco Australia and consider conditions that ensure that potential impacts are carefully managed while still providing certainty for an investment pathway to enable the development and operation of this project.

The contact in my department on this matter is s22 Manager, Mining and Investment, Resources Division, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science on s22

Thank you for notifying me of your proposed decision.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Canavan



ATTACHMENT B

CAMECO AUSTRALIA – YEELIRRIE URANIUM MINE

Resource Project Brief	
Name	Yeelirrie Uranium Mine
PDMS	MB18-000562, MC18-001698
Status	Waiting on Commonwealth Environmental approvals
Mine Type	open cut
Commodity	Uranium
Location	420 km north of Kalgoorlie
Electorate	Durack
Department Contact	s22
Last Update	12/03/2019

Project Data
<p>Ownership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yeelirrie Uranium Project is 100 per cent owned by Cameco Corporation a publicly listed Canadian based uranium producer, producing around 18 per cent of the world's uranium production from its mines in Canada, USS and Kazakhstan. • The company is also involved in uranium processing and enrichment. • Cameco acquired Yeelirrie from BHP Billiton in 2012 for US\$430 million. • Cameco has indicated that the uranium concentrate would be used to generate clean electricity in nuclear power plants around the world. • Uranium makes up 11 per cent of global electricity generation. <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the construction phase Cameco estimates that it would employ 1,200 people, reducing to an estimated 225 people for the operational phase. <p>Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeelirrie is Australia's largest known undeveloped uranium deposit with an estimated resource of 128.1 million lbs (measured and indicated). • Geoscience Australia (2012) estimates that the deposit contains around 52,500 tonnes of uranium oxide. • It is estimated the project will produce an average of 3,850 tonnes of uranium oxide or 8.49 million pounds per year. • At peak production the mine will produce 7,500 tonnes or 16.5 million pounds per year. • Ore will be mined from shallow open pits with the mine area being approximately 9 km long, 1.5 km wide and 10 m deep. • The mine is expected to commence production in 2022 and to have a mine life of 22 years, with three years in pre-production. • The Western Australian (WA) Government does not permit the export of uranium from WA port facilities. • Any uranium produced at Yeelirrie would need to be transported by road to the Port of Adelaide or Darwin for export.

- Cameco is proposing to transport the uranium concentrate using the existing heavy haulage road route from Yeelirrie along the Goldfields Highway to Norseman, along the Eyre Highway to Port Augusta and then the Princes Highway to Adelaide.
- The transport will be undertaken in accordance with the strict codes and regulations overseen by state, national and international organisations for the shipping of uranium concentrate.

Sensitivities

- This project has been the subject of a number of challenges, including court cases.
- An appeal is currently under consideration by Court of Appeal in relation to the decision of the former WA Government to approve the development (more details below)
- Cameco contends that the legal challenges have no basis in law and these challenges should not be used to delay further environmental approvals.
- Cameco also argues that should a federal election be called, this would delay the process again, potentially for another two years.
- Staff from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science met with Mr Simon Williamson, General Manager Cameco Australia to discuss the conditions for approval.
- Mr Williamson raised concerns for condition 10, 10a, and 10b of the proposed approval, clearing of the Western *Atriplex Yeelirrie* population.
- The condition requires Cameco establish a viable population of Western *Atriplex Yeelirrie* before the project can commence development.
- Mr Williamson argued that this condition may take five to seven years to be met, further delaying the development of the mine.
- He proposed changing the condition to reflect the condition approved by the West Australian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).
- The EPA condition states that Cameco must maintain the population of Western *Atriplex Yeelirrie* throughout the project. The EPA condition does not prevent Cameco from commencing operations.
- Should the mine be developed, Cameco would need to apply to the Minister for Resources for a Mineral Export Permission under regulation 9 of the *Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958* in order to export the uranium.

Environmental Approvals

- On 16 January 2017, after consideration of the Appeals Convenor findings and the broader commercial and economic considerations of the project, the WA Government granted state approval for the Yeelirrie project, subject to 17 conditions.
- The former Western Australian Minister for the Environment, The Hon Albert Jacob approved the project.
- The decision was met with criticism due to Minister Jacob approving the mine sixteen days prior to entering pre-election caretaker mode.
- In August 2016, the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) recommended that the WA Environment Minister reject the project due to one of nine key environmental approvals (subterranean fauna) not being met.
- Cameco stated that it would work to address the concerns and progress the project.
 - The report concluded that of the nine factors assessed, one – Subterranean Fauna – was unable to meet the EPA's environmental objectives. The other

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

eight factors, including potential impacts to Flora and Vegetation and to Human Health, as well as Rehabilitation and Decommissioning, met the objectives.

- Twenty appeals were received against the EPA report.
- The report found that Cameco had not satisfactorily demonstrated that it could address the risk to subterranean stygofauna.
- The WA Appeals Convenor argued that the project should not proceed, because it may lead to the extinction of these species of subterranean stygofauna.

Environmental Concerns

- The WA EPA considered, given the uncertainty as to the distribution of some species of subterranean fauna, that those species could go extinct if the project proceeds. The EPA argued that the project cannot be implemented to meet its environmental objective for Subterranean Fauna.
- It is unclear if the effected stygofauna contribute to any ecological processes.
- The stygofauna are not a threatened species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- The Commonwealth Minister for Environment has proposed 30 conditions for the proposed approval.
- As part of the proposed Commonwealth approval, the Minister for the Environment stated that the proponent must ensure that groundwater drawdown at bores within the south-east site is less than 0.5 metres for the life of the approval.
- This controlling provision is designed to manage the impacts on subterranean fauna species.
- The approval requires the proponent to engage a qualified fauna ecologist to undertake a survey of Night Parrots in the area. The proponent must provide results of the survey to the Department of Environment and Energy (DEE) within three months.
- Cameco must submit a Night Parrot Management Plan and have it approved by the Minister for the Environment, before the project can proceed.
- The approval requires the proponent to compensate for the loss of Mallee fowl habitat in the proposed area by legally securing an offset area for the life of the approval of the project.
- Cameco must submit an Offset Strategy for the compensation of loss of the Mallee fowl habitat to the Minister for the Environment for approval, before the project can proceed.
- Geoscience Australia reviewed the proposed conditions and recommended Cameco submit any management plans, reports, reviews and updates required by the State Conditions, to DEE as well.

Legal Challenges

- On 8 February 2018, the Supreme Court of WA dismissed an appeal against the WA Minister's environmental approval, lodged by the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA).
- The CCWA argued that Minister Jacob's approval was wrong at law because the minister approved the project against the recommendation of the EPA.
- On 9 March 2018, the CCWA and members of the Tjiwarl Native Title group announced a filing of an appeal against the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the project's environmental approval.

- The appeal was rejected in the Supreme Court.
- On 5 March 2019, the CCWA and the Tjiwarl Native Title group announced they would challenge the decision in the Court of Appeals. <http://www.kinmining.com.au/>

ATTACHMENT C

Durack Electorate, Western Australia (WA) Regional Data

- The Durack electorate covers a large area from Kununurra in the north to Quairading in the south, and includes coastal islands.
- The area covers the mining region of the Pilbara and the tourism regions of Kimberley.
- The electorate is currently held by The Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for the Environment.

KEY ELECTORATE STATISTICS

Major towns/cities	Geraldton, Broome, Carnarvon, Derby, Dongara, Kalbarri, Karratha, Kununurra, Meekatharra, Merredin, Moora, Mukinbudin, Narembeen, Newman, Port Hedland and Tom Price.
Electorate Description	Rural
Size (km ²)	1,629,858 sq km
Electors enrolled	96,642
Population *	181,764 (54.3 per cent male, 45.7 per cent female)
Median age *	35
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (identify as) *	30,305 (16.7 per cent)

LOCAL ECONOMIC DATA

Unemployment (No. of persons)	5,685 (6.3 per cent)
Employed full-time	58,600 (65.2 per cent)
Employed part-time	19,303 (21.5 per cent)
Key industries	Mining, tourism, fishing, and agriculture.
Median weekly household income *	\$1656.00
Median monthly mortgage repayments *	\$1,733.00
Median weekly rent *	\$188.00

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census QuickStats.

Pages 10-30 have been removed from Document 4 as irrelevant information
under section 22 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*

COPY

**Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan****Minister for Resources and Northern Australia**

MC19-000980

The Hon Melissa Price MP
Minister for the Environment
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

05 APR 2019

Dear Minister

Melissa

Thank you for your letter of 5 March 2019 seeking my views concerning your proposed approval of the Yeelirrie open cut uranium mine in the Shire of Wiluna, Western Australia.

I am pleased a decision is being made regarding the development of the Yeelirrie uranium mine. Mining projects are important to supporting jobs in regional communities across Australia. The Yeelirrie uranium mine will create 1200 construction jobs and 225 operational jobs in regional Western Australia. I understand that the Yeelirrie project is scheduled to produce 7500 tonnes of uranium oxide per year, for nuclear power operations around the world. The Yeelirrie uranium mine will be the first uranium mine to have received both State and Commonwealth approvals in Western Australia.

I understand that the management of the *Atriplex Yeelirrie* was identified in the conditions approved by the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority. However the conditions suggested by your department (proposed conditions 10, 10a and 10b) go further. I am concerned that these conditions will prevent progressing the development of Cameco Yeelirrie project from anywhere between five to seven years and put at risk its progression as a viable mine.

My department has advised that Cameco has been engaging with your department on the proposed draft conditions, specifically around conditions 10, 10a and 10b and consideration of the revision of these conditions. I understand that Cameco is seeking to make these conditions consistent with the State environmental approval where possible, and are open to it including a set of clear milestones and reporting requirements, similar to the proposed conditions regarding the Night Parrot and Malleefowl habitat.

In addition, Geoscience Australia has advised that it considers the Western Australia Environment Protection Authority conditions for the project are adequate. They suggest that, as an avenue for streamlining reporting and compliance monitoring for the project, the management plans, reports, reviews, updates (State Conditions 6 and 7), including non-compliance notification (State Conditions 4.5 and 4.6), be submitted to your department along with the relevant WA authority.

I would encourage you and your department to continue to engage with Cameco Australia and consider conditions that ensure that potential impacts are carefully managed while still providing certainty for an investment pathway to enable the development and operation of this project.

The contact in my department on this matter is s22 Manager, Mining and Investment, Resources Division, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science on s22

Thank you for notifying me of your proposed decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'm. canavan', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Canavan



Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

Min ID: MC19-000980

For Action

Subject: INVITATION TO COMMENT ON PROPOSED APPROVAL DECISION -
YEELIRRIE URANIUM MINE, SHIRE OF WILUNA, WA (MELISSA PRICE)

Timing: Routine

Recommendations: That you

- 1. Note the proposed decision by Minister Price and sensitivities associated with the development of this project.
- 2. Sign the letter at Attachment A to the Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for the Environment.

Noted/Please discuss

Signed/Not signed/Please discuss

Matthew Canavan

Date: 5 / 4 / 2019

Comments:

Key Points:

- 1. The Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for the Environment, has advised you that she is proposing to approve Cameco Australia's Yeelirrie Uranium Mine with conditions under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Yeelirrie project will be an open cut mine and includes a processing plant and associated infrastructure in the Shire of Wiluna, Western Australia (MC19-000980 refers).
- 2. You have the opportunity to comment on the proposed decision before a final decision is made. A letter to Minister Price responding to the proposed decision is at Attachment A.
- 3. Western Australian environmental approvals for the Yeelirrie Uranium Project have been the subject of multiple court challenges from conservation groups and traditional owners. Details regarding the legal challenges and background to the project, including the discussion with Simon Williamson, General Manager, Cameco Australia, are at Attachment B.
- 4. The department also sought advice from Geoscience Australia (GA), regarding the proposed approval. While GA's comments do not specifically address all proposed conditions, it noted that it considered the state conditions as generally adequate. GA's comments are at Attachment C.
- 5. The project is within Minister Price's electorate of Durack. Regional data is at Attachment E.
- 6. **Sensitivity:** On 14 March 2019, Mr Williamson advised departmental officers of Cameco's concerns with the proposed conditions of approval. He specifically noted that conditions 10, 10a and 10b related to the management of *Atriplex Yeelirrie* (a type of low-growing salt tolerant shrub endemic to the area of the mine) including establishing a viable population of the plant away from the mine site, may take a further five to seven years and make the project unviable. According to Mr Williamson, this may be a showstopper for any further investment in the Yeelirrie project by Cameco.
 - a. On 16 March 2019, Mr Williamson provided the department with a copy of Cameco's response to the Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) in response to the proposed conditions. The response highlights that proposed condition 10 provides Cameco

with no certainty for a project schedule to be developed and proposes it be consistent with the relevant WA State Conditions of approval (see Attachment D).

Consultation: GA, Office of the Chief Economist, Northern Australia and Major Projects Division, Cameco.

Clearance Officer:

Dale Rentsch
General Manager
Onshore Energy Branch
Resources Division
Ph: s22
Mob: s22

Contact Officer:

s22
Mining and Investment Section
Ph: s22
Mob: s22

MLO Version: 28/3/2019

ATTACHMENTS

- A: Letter to Minister Price commenting on the proposed decision on the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine
- B: Further detail on the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine project and sensitivities
- C: Cameco's response to the proposed approval conditions for the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine
- D: GA's comments on the proposed approval conditions for the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine
- E: Regional details of the Durack electorate, WA

ATTACHMENT B

CAMECO AUSTRALIA – YEELIRRIE URANIUM MINE

Resource Project Brief	
Name	Yeelirrie Uranium Mine
PDMS	MB18-000562, MC18-001698
Status	Waiting on Commonwealth Environmental approvals
Mine Type	open cut
Commodity	Uranium
Location	420 km north of Kalgoorlie
Electorate	Durack
Department Contact	s22
Last Update	12/03/2019

Project Data
<p>Ownership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yeelirrie Uranium Project is 100 per cent owned by Cameco Corporation a publicly listed Canadian based uranium producer, producing around 18 per cent of the world's uranium production from its mines in Canada, USS and Kazakhstan. • The company is also involved in uranium processing and enrichment. • Cameco acquired Yeelirrie from BHP Billiton in 2012 for US\$430 million. • Cameco has indicated that the uranium concentrate would be used to generate clean electricity in nuclear power plants around the world. • Uranium makes up 11 per cent of global electricity generation. <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the construction phase Cameco estimates that it would employ 1,200 people, reducing to an estimated 225 people for the operational phase. <p>Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeelirrie is Australia's largest known undeveloped uranium deposit with an estimated resource of 128.1 million lbs (measured and indicated). • Geoscience Australia (2012) estimates that the deposit contains around 52,500 tonnes of uranium oxide. • It is estimated the project will produce an average of 3,850 tonnes of uranium oxide or 8.49 million pounds per year. • At peak production the mine will produce 7,500 tonnes or 16.5 million pounds per year. • Ore will be mined from shallow open pits with the mine area being approximately 9 km long, 1.5 km wide and 10 m deep. • The mine is expected to commence production in 2022 and to have a mine life of 22 years, with three years in pre-production. • The Western Australian (WA) Government does not permit the export of uranium from WA port facilities. • Any uranium produced at Yeelirrie would need to be transported by road to the Port of Adelaide or Darwin for export.

- Cameco is proposing to transport the uranium concentrate using the existing heavy haulage road route from Yeelirrie along the Goldfields Highway to Norseman, along the Eyre Highway to Port Augusta and then the Princes Highway to Adelaide.
- The transport will be undertaken in accordance with the strict codes and regulations overseen by state, national and international organisations for the shipping of uranium concentrate.

Sensitivities

- This project has been the subject of a number of challenges, including court cases.
- An appeal is currently under consideration by Court of Appeal in relation to the decision of the former WA Government to approve the development (more details below)
- Cameco contends that the legal challenges have no basis in law and these challenges should not be used to delay further environmental approvals.
- Cameco also argues that should a federal election be called, this would delay the process again, potentially for another two years.
- Staff from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science met with Mr Simon Williamson, General Manager Cameco Australia to discuss the conditions for approval.
- Mr Williamson raised concerns for condition 10, 10a, and 10b of the proposed approval, clearing of the Western *Atriplex Yeelirrie* population.
- The condition requires Cameco establish a viable population of Western *Atriplex Yeelirrie* before the project can commence development.
- Mr Williamson argued that this condition may take five to seven years to be met, further delaying the development of the mine.
- He proposed changing the condition to reflect the condition approved by the West Australian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).
- The EPA condition states that Cameco must maintain the population of Western *Atriplex Yeelirrie* throughout the project. The EPA condition does not prevent Cameco from commencing operations.
- Should the mine be developed, Cameco would need to apply to the Minister for Resources for a Mineral Export Permission under regulation 9 of *the Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations 1958* in order to export the uranium.

Environmental Approvals

- On 16 January 2017, after consideration of the Appeals Convenor findings and the broader commercial and economic considerations of the project, the WA Government granted state approval for the Yeelirrie project, subject to 17 conditions.
- The former Western Australian Minister for the Environment, The Hon Albert Jacob approved the project.
- The decision was met with criticism due to Minister Jacob approving the mine sixteen days prior to entering pre-election caretaker mode.
- In August 2016, the WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) recommended that the WA Environment Minister reject the project due to one of nine key environmental approvals (subterranean fauna) not being met.
- Cameco stated that it would work to address the concerns and progress the project.
 - The report concluded that of the nine factors assessed, one – Subterranean Fauna – was unable to meet the EPA's environmental objectives. The other

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

eight factors, including potential impacts to Flora and Vegetation and to Human Health, as well as Rehabilitation and Decommissioning, met the objectives.

- Twenty appeals were received against the EPA report.
- The report found that Cameco had not satisfactorily demonstrated that it could address the risk to subterranean stygofauna.
- The WA Appeals Convenor argued that the project should not proceed, because it may lead to the extinction of these species of subterranean stygofauna.

Environmental Concerns

- The WA EPA considered, given the uncertainty as to the distribution of some species of subterranean fauna, that those species could go extinct if the project proceeds. The EPA argued that the project cannot be implemented to meet its environmental objective for Subterranean Fauna.
- It is unclear if the effected stygofauna contribute to any ecological processes.
- The stygofauna are not a threatened species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- The Commonwealth Minister for Environment has proposed 30 conditions for the proposed approval.
- As part of the proposed Commonwealth approval, the Minister for the Environment stated that the proponent must ensure that groundwater drawdown at bores within the south-east site is less than 0.5 metres for the life of the approval.
- This controlling provision is designed to manage the impacts on subterranean fauna species.
- The approval requires the proponent to engage a qualified fauna ecologist to undertake a survey of Night Parrots in the area. The proponent must provide results of the survey to the Department of Environment and Energy (DEE) within three months.
- Cameco must submit a Night Parrot Management Plan and have it approved by the Minister for the Environment, before the project can proceed.
- The approval requires the proponent to compensate for the loss of Mallee fowl habitat in the proposed area by legally securing an offset area for the life of the approval of the project.
- Cameco must submit an Offset Strategy for the compensation of loss of the Mallee fowl habitat to the Minister for the Environment for approval, before the project can proceed.
- Geoscience Australia reviewed the proposed conditions and recommended Cameco submit any management plans, reports, reviews and updates required by the State Conditions, to DEE as well.

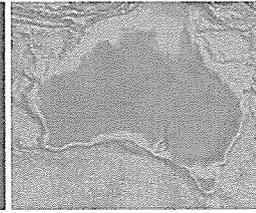
Legal Challenges

- On 8 February 2018, the Supreme Court of WA dismissed an appeal against the WA Minister's environmental approval, lodged by the Conservation Council of WA (CCWA).
- The CCWA argued that Minister Jacob's approval was wrong at law because the minister approved the project against the recommendation of the EPA.
- On 9 March 2018, the CCWA and members of the Tjiwarl Native Title group announced a filing of an appeal against the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the project's environmental approval.

- The appeal was rejected in the Supreme Court.
- On 5 March 2019, the CCWA and the Tjiwarl Native Title group announced they would challenge the decision in the Court of Appeals. <http://www.kinmining.com.au/>



Australian Government
Geoscience Australia



Cnr Jerrabomberra Avenue
and Hindmarsh Drive,
Symonston ACT 2609
GPO Box 378,
Canberra, ACT 2601 Australia
Phone: +61 2 6249 9111
Facsimile: +61 2 6249 9999
Web: www.ga.gov.au
ABN 80 091 799 039

**Mining and Investment
Onshore Energy Branch
Resources Division
Department of Industry, Innovation and Science**

8 March 2019

Attn: s22

Re: GA comments on proposed approval decision and controlling provisions for the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine (EPBC 2009/4906), Western Australia.

Thank you for seeking our input to comments on the proposed EPBC approval of the Yeelirrie Uranium Mine. The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science sought Geoscience Australia's comments on 7 March 2019.

Geoscience Australia provided advice to the DoEE on the Public Environmental Review (PER) and Cameco's responses to the PER comments in October 2015 and March 2016 respectively. GA officers were also part of a site visit hosted by the proponent, involving Commonwealth and State regulators, in November 2015. GA's advice focussed on groundwater related matters, tailings management, mine closure and rehabilitation, and transport of uranium ore concentrates.

The PER submitted by Cameco provided a comprehensive project overview, including thorough consideration of technical and other issues arising from the development. The risk assessments conducted appropriately addressed the identified risks with appropriate measures discussed to manage these. Risks from impacts via groundwater, tailings management, closure and rehab and transport were well considered and described.

GA considered that the proposed mining, ore processing technologies and tailings management facility were all in accordance with accepted engineering practices for uranium projects and can be considered 'best practice'. However, questions about the geochemical characterisation of the tailings material and closure design in the PER remained.

The subsequent responses to GA's comments by Cameco were satisfactory, and addressed the issues raised. In addition, Cameco made commitments relating to several GA comments. GA considered that the Yeelirrie development represents a relatively small disruption which will be managed and mitigated to a large extent by proposed closure and rehabilitation activities.

The proposed Federal conditions of approval refer to the WA Minister for the Environment Approval Statement 1053¹, conditions 8 through 16 to regulate impacts to the whole environment, including groundwater. Providing that WA approval conditions 11, 12, 13, and 16 are met, then impacts to the

¹ WA approval conditions

groundwater environment are likely to be managed appropriately given the anticipated overall minor level of impact from this development in a regional context. Geoscience Australia notes that the proposed Federal approval conditions are different to those for earlier approved uranium developments, including the Expansion of Olympic Dam (EPBC 2005/2270), Beverley North Extension (EPBC 2009/5138), Wiluna Uranium Project (EPBC 2009/5174) and Kintyre Uranium Project (EPBC 2010/5637). Whilst different from earlier approvals, the approach to the Yeelirrie project seeks to streamline regulation and reduce regulatory burden by relying on the State Conditions wherever possible. This is mirrored in the EPBC Act approval conditions of the Mulga Rocks Uranium Project (EPBC 2013/7083).

Geoscience Australia notes that the proposed Federal approval conditions do not require the review of any management plans under the State Conditions by the Federal Minister. Geoscience Australia notes that proposed Federal condition 16 requires that records relating to the action are made available to the Department of the Environment and Energy upon request.

Geoscience Australia considers that the State Conditions are generally adequate as they currently stand. Geoscience Australia recommends that the proponent be required to submit any management plans, reports, reviews and updates required by the State Conditions (State Conditions 6 and 7) to the Department of Environment and Energy. Requirements to notify the Department of the Environment and Energy of any non-compliance according to the timeframes set out in State Conditions 4-5 and 4-6 should also be considered.

The proposed Federal conditions of approval relating to groundwater focus on protecting stygofauna and troglifauna within the project area. These particular aspects of groundwater ecology lie outside GA's area of expertise.

If you have any queries on this, please contact me on [s22](tel:0892222222)

Kind regards,



Dr Hashim Carey
A/g Director - Groundwater Advice, Groundwater Branch,
Environmental Geoscience Division
Geoscience Australia



16th March 2019

Major Projects West Section
Assessment (WA, SA, NT) & Post Approvals Branch
Department of the Environment and Energy
GPO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601

CAMECO AUSTRALIA
Level 3 1060 Hay Street
West Perth
WA 6005, Australia

PO Box 1395
West Perth
WA 6872, Australia

Tel 08 9480 0675
www.camecoaustralia.com

By email: Assessments.West@environment.gov.au

Response to the invitation to comment on the proposed approval decision, Yeelirrie uranium mine, Shire of Wiluna, WA (EPBC 2009/4906)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed approval conditions for the Yeelirrie project. Thank you also for the opportunity to meet to discuss the proposed conditions.

I offer the following comments for your consideration.

Condition 1

We note the reference to the Conditions of the Western Australian Ministerial approval (Ministerial Statement 1053, dated 16th January 2017) ("State Conditions"). We also note that a number of the proposed approval conditions would be completely satisfied by implementation of the State Conditions, in particular, proposed conditions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, relating to groundwater monitoring and management. These are a duplication of the intent of State Conditions 11 and 12. We encourage you to avoid duplication where possible by deferring to existing conditions.

Condition 2

Condition 2 refers to a "south-east site", an area covering a significant portion of the south-east borefield and including the location of three restricted subterranean fauna. As drafted, the condition significantly limits the abstraction of groundwater from this portion of the south east borefield by restricting drawdown across the "south-east site" to 0.5m. This is a considerable impact on groundwater abstraction to protect the habitat of the three species.

Cameco has previously committed to managing drawdown to protect the habitat of the three species by limiting drawdown to 0.5m at the location of the three species.

We propose that the condition be amended to reflect this commitment to provide for protection for the three species without restricting groundwater abstraction over the remainder of the south-east site.

Alternatively we propose deference to State Condition 12-4(5) which we believe meets the same objective.

Condition 3

We suggest the condition is ambiguous and reference should be made to a spatial element to describe/establish the 0.5m groundwater drawdown contour. This could be achieved by referencing Figure 9-17 of the Yeelirrie Uranium Project Public Environmental Review (PER), which is a publically available document.

Conditions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

We understand the intent of conditions 4 to 8 is to set out requirements for (one) a baseline groundwater survey and (two) a groundwater management plan. However we suggest that the conditions setting out requirements and timing for each plan are confusing and suggest that for clarity, the requirements for the two plans are set out in separate conditions.

We suggest that State Conditions 11 and 12 meet the above intent, however if there is a preference to have new (Federal) conditions we propose the following for your consideration.

Firstly, a standalone condition for a Groundwater Baseline Monitoring/Survey Plan which could require the following,

- identification of the network of monitoring bores, (names and locations)
- monitoring frequency
- monitoring program (levels and analytes)
- audit and reporting requirements.

We propose that this condition should be submitted, approved, implemented and reported on prior to substantial commencement.

Secondly, we believe the condition for a Groundwater Management Plan should include the elements listed as condition 4 (b) to (g) in the proposed approval conditions and in the State Condition 12. Further we suggest the timing for this should be different to the monitoring plan. It should follow the monitoring plan, recognising that many of the elements required in the Management Plan are not determined until the completion of the definitive feasibility study which would include further groundwater studies. In effect the Groundwater Management Plan should be required to be approved, but not implemented, prior to substantial commencement similar to the requirements of the State Condition 12.

Conditions 4 to 8 also include the requirement for review by approved external groundwater and subterranean fauna specialists.

While there may be some value in having a subterranean fauna specialist review the Management Plan, we suggest there is no purpose for a subterranean fauna specialist to review the baseline monitoring plan as set out in the conditions as the Plan would only report monitoring data.

We note that condition 7 requires the monitoring plan to be reviewed every two (2) years and that condition 8 requires the review to be conducted every five (5) years, neither of which aligns with the State requirement for a review of their version of the Management Plan every three (3) years. Aligning the review dates would reduce duplication and cost and should be an objective we all aim for.

Condition 9

Condition 9 uses the word “action” which is a term generally used to describe the approved project – “the approved action”.

One interpretation of condition 9 is that we cannot commence any of the approved project without evidence from a suitably qualified subterranean fauna specialist, and as such this is a contradiction of the project approval.

Cameco has previously committed to not mining Area 1 to protect the troglofauna that occurs within Area 1. We suggest that the condition be amended to require that Cameco not mine Area 1 until we have found the species or habitat outside of the impact zone, as approved by a subterranean fauna specialist, thus providing for protection of the species.

Condition 10

Cameco considers that condition 10 as set out is also a contradiction of the project approval. We also consider that the requirements set out in the condition are perhaps unprecedented in the extent of what is required to be achieved prior to the commencement of the project and could mean that the project would not proceed.

As there are no other natural populations of *Atriplex yeelirrie* (western genotype) outside of the development envelope, this condition requires us to establish a “viable population” prior to commencement of mining. Viable population is defined as “the survival of a self-sustaining population of mature individuals. In an arid environment where the natural populations of *Atriplex yeelirrie* demonstrate significant boom and bust cycles in response to climatic conditions this could take a very long time, up to or exceeding 10 to 20 years. This has been recognised by the State Condition 17 which allows mining to commence while working toward the objective of a viable population. In recognition of the scale of the task and the potential impact of variables out of our control, including for example the weather, the State Condition allows 20 years to achieve the objective.

You have argued that the State Condition 17 puts all of the risk on the environment and no responsibility on Cameco to meet the objective. We disagree. We also point out that the proposed approval condition 10 gives us no certainty to plan a project development schedule.

We have discussed some options to manage the environmental risk and provide more certainty around the potential to create a viable population. We propose that a condition requiring the implementation of a research program timed to be completed prior to the commencement of mining would achieve this objective.

The proposed condition could require the completion of the tasks listed below (as listed by the State Ministerial Condition 17-2 (1) to (11), prior to substantial commencement of mining,

- (1) identify the ecology, ecophysiology and habitat requirements and determinants of the western population;
- (2) identify the number of mature plants that each translocation site should support;
- (3) identify the appropriate sex ratio distribution;
- (4) describe the plant material to be used for translocation, to promote the viability of the species:

Response to proposed approval decision, Dept for the Environment.
16th March 2019
Page 4

- (5) identify suitable translocation sites similar to those within the western population of the Yeelirrie paleochannel through investigations such as but not limited to impacts to the receiving environment, soil investigations, drainage, land tenure and potential long term protection of the site;
- (6) undertake a trial translocation program, testing surface and sub-surface soils through relocation and potential seeding techniques;
- (7) confirm that irrigation would be feasible for the first two years at each translocation site;
- (8) describe the ongoing protection measures afforded to the translocated plants from threats including fire and future exploration and mining;
- (9) identify completion criteria to demonstrate that the translocated plants have established, are reproducing and have built-up a soil-stored seedbank;
- (10) identify timeframes and responsibilities for implementation;
- (11) identify reporting procedures, including the format, timing and frequency for the reporting of monitoring data against the completion criteria.

We believe bringing forward the completion of these tasks would demonstrate our commitment to the objective of establishing a viable population, provide some comfort about the ability to achieve a viable population and thereby remove some of the risk from the environment.

Conditions 11 to 14 (Night parrot conditions)

No comment.

Conditions 15 (Malleefowl conditions)

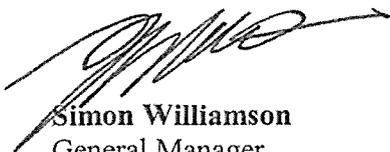
No comment.

Standard administrative conditions

No comment.

Again we thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed approval decision. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Simon Williamson
General Manager
Cameco Australia Ltd

cc: s22

Department of Industry

Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan, Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor, Western Australia

ATTACHMENT E

Durack Electorate, Western Australia (WA) Regional Data

- The Durack electorate covers a large area from Kununurra in the north to Quairading in the south, and includes coastal islands.
- The area covers the mining region of the Pilbara and the tourism regions of Kimberley.
- The electorate is currently held by The Hon Melissa Price MP, Minister for the Environment.

KEY ELECTORATE STATISTICS

Major towns/cities	Geraldton, Broome, Carnarvon, Derby, Dongara, Kalbarri, Karratha, Kununurra, Meekatharra, Merredin, Moora, Mukinbudin, Narembeen, Newman, Port Hedland and Tom Price.
Electorate Description	Rural
Size (km ²)	1,629,858 sq km
Electors enrolled	96,642
Population *	181,764 (54.3 per cent male, 45.7 per cent female)
Median age *	35
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (identify as) *	30,305 (16.7 per cent)

LOCAL ECONOMIC DATA

Unemployment (No. of persons)	5,685 (6.3 per cent)
Employed full-time	58,600 (65.2 per cent)
Employed part-time	19,303 (21.5 per cent)
Key industries	Mining, tourism, fishing, and agriculture.
Median weekly household income *	\$1656.00
Median monthly mortgage repayments *	\$1,733.00
Median weekly rent *	\$188.00

**Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census QuickStats.*

Cameco made a number of suggestions to support the development of the project, while also ensuring they meet the enviro needs of the area.

Document 6



16th March 2019

Major Projects West Section
 Assessment (WA, SA, NT) & Post Approvals Branch
 Department of the Environment and Energy
 GPO Box 787
 CANBERRA ACT 2601

CAMECO AUSTRALIA

Level 3 1060 Hay Street
 West Perth
 WA 6005, Australia

PO Box 1395
 West Perth
 WA 6872, Australia

Tel 08 9480 0675
www.camecoaustralia.com

By email: Assessments.West@environment.gov.au

Response to the invitation to comment on the proposed approval decision, Yeelirrie uranium mine, Shire of Wiluna, WA (EPBC 2009/4906)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed approval conditions for the Yeelirrie project. Thank you also for the opportunity to meet to discuss the proposed conditions.

I offer the following comments for your consideration.

Condition 1

We note the reference to the Conditions of the Western Australian Ministerial approval (Ministerial Statement 1053, dated 16th January 2017) ("State Conditions"). We also note that a number of the proposed approval conditions would be completely satisfied by implementation of the State Conditions, in particular, proposed conditions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, relating to groundwater monitoring and management. These are a duplication of the intent of State Conditions 11 and 12. We encourage you to avoid duplication where possible by deferring to existing conditions.

Condition 2

Condition 2 refers to a "south-east site", an area covering a significant portion of the south-east borefield and including the location of three restricted subterranean fauna. As drafted, the condition significantly limits the abstraction of groundwater from this portion of the south east borefield by restricting drawdown across the "south-east site" to 0.5m. This is a considerable impact on groundwater abstraction to protect the habitat of the three species.

Cameco has previously committed to managing drawdown to protect the habitat of the three species by limiting drawdown to 0.5m at the location of the three species.

We propose that the condition be amended to reflect this commitment to provide for protection for the three species without restricting groundwater abstraction over the remainder of the south-east site.

Alternatively we propose deference to State Condition 12-4(5) which we believe meets the same objective.

Condition 3

We suggest the condition is ambiguous and reference should be made to a spatial element to describe/establish the 0.5m groundwater drawdown contour. This could be achieved by referencing Figure 9-17 of the Yeelirrie Uranium Project Public Environmental Review (PER), which is a publically available document.

Conditions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

We understand the intent of conditions 4 to 8 is to set out requirements for (one) a baseline groundwater survey and (two) a groundwater management plan. However we suggest that the conditions setting out requirements and timing for each plan are confusing and suggest that for clarity, the requirements for the two plans are set out in separate conditions.

We suggest that State Conditions 11 and 12 meet the above intent, however if there is a preference to have new (Federal) conditions we propose the following for your consideration.

Firstly, a standalone condition for a Groundwater Baseline Monitoring/Survey Plan which could require the following,

- identification of the network of monitoring bores, (names and locations)
- monitoring frequency
- monitoring program (levels and analytes)
- audit and reporting requirements.

We propose that this condition should be submitted, approved, implemented and reported on prior to substantial commencement.

Secondly, we believe the condition for a Groundwater Management Plan should include the elements listed as condition 4 (b) to (g) in the proposed approval conditions and in the State Condition 12. Further we suggest the timing for this should be different to the monitoring plan. It should follow the monitoring plan, recognising that many of the elements required in the Management Plan are not determined until the completion of the definitive feasibility study which would include further groundwater studies. **In effect the Groundwater Management Plan should be required to be approved, but not implemented, prior to substantial commencement similar to the requirements of the State Condition 12.**

Conditions 4 to 8 also include the requirement for review by approved external groundwater and subterranean fauna specialists.

While there may be some value in having a subterranean fauna specialist review the Management Plan, we suggest there is no purpose for a subterranean fauna specialist to review the baseline monitoring plan as set out in the conditions as the Plan would only report monitoring data.

We note that condition 7 requires the monitoring plan to be reviewed every two (2) years and that condition 8 requires the review to be conducted every five (5) years, neither of which aligns with the State requirement for a review of their version of the Management Plan every three (3) years. Aligning the review dates would reduce duplication and cost and should be an objective we all aim for.

Condition 9

Condition 9 uses the word “action” which is a term generally used to describe the approved project – “the approved action”.

One interpretation of condition 9 is that we cannot commence any of the approved project without evidence from a suitably qualified subterranean fauna specialist, and as such this is a contradiction of the project approval.

Cameco has previously committed to not mining Area 1 to protect the troglifauna that occurs within Area 1. We suggest that the condition be amended to require that Cameco not mine Area 1 until we have found the species or habitat outside of the impact zone, as approved by a subterranean fauna specialist, thus providing for protection of the species.

Condition 10

Cameco considers that condition 10 as set out is also a contradiction of the project approval. We also consider that the requirements set out in the condition are perhaps unprecedented in the extent of what is required to be achieved prior to the commencement of the project and could mean that the project would not proceed.

As there are no other natural populations of *Atriplex yeelirrie* (western genotype) outside of the development envelope, this condition requires us to establish a “viable population” prior to commencement of mining. Viable population is defined as “the survival of a self-sustaining population of mature individuals. In an arid environment where the natural populations of *Atriplex yeelirrie* demonstrate significant boom and bust cycles in response to climatic conditions this could take a very long time, up to or exceeding 10 to 20 years. This has been recognised by the State Condition 17 which allows mining to commence while working toward the objective of a viable population. In recognition of the scale of the task and the potential impact of variables out of our control, including for example the weather, the State Condition allows 20 years to achieve the objective.

You have argued that the State Condition 17 puts all of the risk on the environment and no responsibility on Cameco to meet the objective. We disagree. We also point out that the proposed approval condition 10 gives us no certainty to plan a project development schedule.

We have discussed some options to manage the environmental risk and provide more certainty around the potential to create a viable population. We propose that a condition requiring the implementation of a research program timed to be completed prior to the commencement of mining would achieve this objective.

The proposed condition could require the completion of the tasks listed below (as listed by the State Ministerial Condition 17-2 (1) to (11), prior to substantial commencement of mining,

- (1) identify the ecology, ecophysiology and habitat requirements and determinants of the western population;
- (2) identify the number of mature plants that each translocation site should support;
- (3) identify the appropriate sex ratio distribution;
- (4) describe the plant material to be used for translocation, to promote the viability of the species;

- (5) identify suitable translocation sites similar to those within the western population of the Yeelirrie paleochannel through investigations such as but not limited to impacts to the receiving environment, soil investigations, drainage, land tenure and potential long term protection of the site;
- (6) undertake a trial translocation program, testing surface and sub-surface soils through relocation and potential seeding techniques;
- (7) confirm that irrigation would be feasible for the first two years at each translocation site;
- (8) describe the ongoing protection measures afforded to the translocated plants from threats including fire and future exploration and mining;
- (9) identify completion criteria to demonstrate that the translocated plants have established, are reproducing and have built-up a soil-stored seedbank;
- (10) identify timeframes and responsibilities for implementation;
- (11) identify reporting procedures, including the format, timing and frequency for the reporting of monitoring data against the completion criteria.

We believe bringing forward the completion of these tasks would demonstrate our commitment to the objective of establishing a viable population, provide some comfort about the ability to achieve a viable population and thereby remove some of the risk from the environment.

Conditions 11 to 14 (Night parrot conditions)

No comment.

Conditions 15 (Malleefowl conditions)

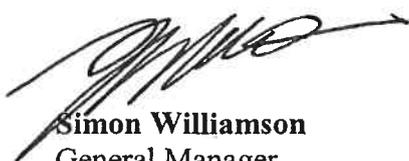
No comment.

Standard administrative conditions

No comment.

Again we thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed approval decision. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Simon Williamson
General Manager
Cameco Australia Ltd

cc: [s22](#) Department of Industry

Senator the Hon. Matthew Canavan, Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

Rick Wilson MP, Member for O'Connor, Western Australia