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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to document the process for planning, gaining approval, and executing the exploration programme outlined by the WesCEF Exploration team in the Corporate Plan and formally approved in the concurrent financial year budget.

### 1.2 Scope

The objectives of the planning process are to ensure the four pillars of the exploration business are upheld.

- Maintain the reputation of WesCEF, through ensuring legal compliance, environmental and cultural heritage stewardship, and stakeholder engagement

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- Maintain all project tenure in good standing to ensure its mineral endowment potential is realised, and strategic tenements to the business are retained
- Implement the exploration programme to assist further business decisions based on potential additions to mineral resources
- Review domestic and global strategic/battery metal opportunities for assessing impact on existing WES projects, or for potential acquisition

## 1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

**Exploration Manager:** Develop a strategy that delivers the core business objectives and implement/execute a plan that adheres to all health and safety and legislative conditions applied to those activities. Ensure all reporting requirements are met across the tenement package and thus ensure tenure is maintained in good standing.

**Principal Geologist:** Assist in the development of the technical strategy within the exploration group and review/guide the technical understanding of the broader team when assessing exploration projects. Review all technical aspects documented by the Exploration team both in internal and external reports

**Senior Geologists:** Responsible for implementation of the Exploration strategy goals through the day-to-day management of the broader exploration team. Senior Geologists are responsible for the training of exploration team members and the review of activities, reports required to maintain tenure in good standing across all projects.

**Geologists:** contribute to planning, and execution of work programmes prescribed in the corporate plan. Maintain GIS database.

**Principal Land Access and Tenure:** Responsible for the maintenance and continuous improvement of the tenement management framework and processes within the exploration team. The principal is also responsible for the management of the Heritage and Environment advisor and Tenement Specialist activities and ensuring these are completed in a timeous manner.

**Heritage and Environment Advisor:** Ensuring external environment and heritage approvals required for the exploration programme are obtained timeously, in order to maintain the tenements in good standing and maintain compliance, and supervision of on-ground environmental and cultural heritage activities.

**Tenements Specialist:** ensuring all Mining Act related compliance actions are completed and accurate in order to maintain the tenements in good standing.

**Accountant ALM:** ensuring costs of the exploration program are captured and reported appropriately.

**Wesfarmers Corporate Solicitors Office (CSO):** provide legal advice to the exploration team to ensure compliance with legislation and commercial agreements.

**Land Access Team:** Includes Principal Land Access and Tenure, Tenement Specialist and Heritage and Environment Advisor who work together to ensure all aspects of land access are considered.

All: if Responsible Officer for a project, ensuring costs of all work organised/undertaken are appropriately apportioned by tenement and commodity for compliance with *Mining Act 1978 and Mining Regulations 1981* statutory reporting and where applicable, to ensure costs are charged to the correct cost centre.

## 2 Legislation

The following list is not exhaustive and other legislation may also apply depending on the circumstance.

### Mining Act 1978 (WA)

Statutory tenement obligations originate from the *Mining Act 1978* and *Mining Regulations 1981*. The *Mining Act* is administered by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (**DEMIRS**). Key drivers in exploration planning arise from the *Mining Act* including:

- Certain mining tenements, being Mining Leases, Exploration Licences and Prospecting Licences, carry minimum annual expenditure conditions imposed by sections 82, 62 and 50 of the *Mining Act* and regulation 31, 21 and 15 of the *Mining Regulations 1981*. The expenditure requirement for a tenement is based on its age, size and type. The older a tenement gets, the higher the holding costs.
- the compulsory requirement to surrender 40 per cent of an exploration licence after six (6) years to ensure targets are identified and progressed.
- Tenements have fixed terms (variable depending on tenement type) which in most cases can be extended; however, drilling is typically required in order to obtain an extension.

The *Mining Act* also stipulates that a Programme of Work must be lodged in the prescribed manner and approved by the Minister (or a prescribed official) prior to an explorer or prospector conducting any ground disturbing activities with mechanised equipment.

### Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 (WA)

The *Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022* imposes general duty of care provisions to maintain safe and healthy workplaces at mining operations and protect people at work from hazards.

### Native Title Act 1993

Native title recognises the traditional rights and interests to land and waters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Under the *Native Title Act 1993*, native title claimants can make an application to the Federal Court to have their native title recognised by Australian law.

### Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* is concerned with protection of places of significance to Aboriginal people, irrespective of the ownership of the land or where native title rights are extinguished.

### Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (WA)

All native plants and animals are protected in Western Australia under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). The removal of native vegetation (or 'flora and fauna') is regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (see details in next section), the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act), the *Forest Products Act 2000*, and the *BC Act*.

Taking flora and fauna (including flowers, seeds, whole plants, timber and firewood) from Crown land is not permitted unless done under a lawful authority. This includes collection of flora and fauna samples during surveys for identification at the Herbarium.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) regulates the harvesting and supply of other flora and fauna from Crown land.

## Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 (WA)

Clearing of Native Vegetation is regulated by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER); however, DEMIRS have delegated authority to assess applications relating to mining tenements. Where exploration requires clearing of vegetation to access work areas, including regrowth, a clearing permit from DWER may be required unless an exemption applies. No exemptions apply in Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Clearing should therefore be assessed on a case-by-case basis using the Permit to Disturb process.

### 2.1 Guidelines

#### 2.1.1 Aboriginal Heritage Due Diligence Guidelines (2013)

These guidelines issued by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) provide general assistance only. When using the Guidelines the 'precautionary principle' should be applied to any circumstance where doubt exists, particularly about the potential impact to Aboriginal heritage and/or the nature and level of potential impact of the proposed activity(s).

### 2.2 Commercial Agreements

There are many commercial agreements which variously apply to the tenements. Most require WesCEF to maintain the applicable tenements in good standing and in some cases, obtain renewals. This is a consideration in the planning process.

Obligations under commercial agreements are covered in more detail in the guide manual 'Tenement Management' (WCEF-RM-ADM-0001).

### 2.3 Related Internal Procedures/Forms

The application of this procedure requires reference to and the use of the following other WesCEF Exploration procedures.

- Tenement Management (WCEF-RM-ADM-0001)
- Permit to Disturb Form (WCEF-FORM-HSE-0009)
- Technical Reporting on Mineral Titles (WCEF-PD-ADM-0001)
- Monthly Expenditure Reporting (WCEF-PD-FIN-0006)
- Form 5 Reporting (WCEF-PD-FIN-0007)

## 3 Procedure

### 3.1 Budgeting For Exploration Activities

The overarching objectives of the exploration budget are:

- Meet minimum expenditure for each tenement annually, and;
- Ensure enough work is done during tenure period to obtain renewals if desired.

The Exploration Manager is accountable for planning, executing, and reporting on the work program for each tenement within a tenement year.

Each Financial year, the Exploration Manager:

- a) Assesses the key business objectives outlined by the CEO and COO of WesCEF

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- b) With the strategic goals understood, engages the Exploration Group to develop a programme and schedule of activities that achieves those goals, including identifying and planning the work required and quantifying the resources needed (i.e., personnel, equipment, and logistics).
- c) Provides the plan to the Principal Land Access and Tenure, who then assesses the approvals required to execute this plan, and then obtain those approvals in the necessary timeframe. Approvals may include:
  - Programme of Work
  - Clearing Permits
  - Heritage clearance
  - Conservation Management Plans
- d) Activities required to obtain the approvals are incorporated in the budget and returned to the Exploration Manager. There may be long lead times for regulatory approvals which must be considered in the planning process.
- e) Seeks input from Exploration Team on other items required in budget, which is then assessed against the tenement expenditure commitments to ensure compliance is met on individual tenements and then in the broader reporting groups, should an exemption be required as an insurance provision.
- f) Where applicable, discusses this programme with stakeholders to ensure it meets with technical requirements of joint venture partners.
- g) Once technical requirements are approved by relevant Stakeholders, seeks approval for budget from WesCEF Senior Management.
- h) Once budget has been approved by WesCEF, seeks budget approval from other stakeholders in accordance with relevant commercial agreements.
- i) Once the financial approvals have been obtained, exploration activities can begin (which includes doing the pre-work necessary to obtain approvals for drilling). These activities might be seasonally or otherwise constrained, so alternative work may be necessary.
- j) If it is determined that an exemption will be sought for any tenement this must be approved in writing by the Exploration Manager prior to submission.

For each project:

The Senior Geologist (assigned to that project)

- k) Submits Exploration Operation Notification to DEMIRS for activities planned for the year (both ground disturbing and non-ground disturbing). Consult with Exploration Manager to ensure the correct Exploration Activity Manager is nominated. Consult with the Principal Land Access and Tenure and Heritage and Environment Advisor to ensure all on-ground environmental and heritage work is also included.

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**Note:** This notification, a requirement of the *Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022*, is captured in the Cintellate Legal Register.

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## 3.2 Rationale for Exploration Activities

The Senior Geologists:

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## 3.2.1 High Resolution Aerial Imagery

- a) Organise for high resolution aerial imagery to be collected annually (unless otherwise agreed in writing by Exploration Manager) to ensure most up to date data is available for remote planning of exploration programmes.

## 3.2.2 Surface Sampling

- a) Review data to determine prospective ground, gaps in geochemical data or anomalous areas requiring infill. Data to review includes geological maps, previous soil sampling results, and geophysical data.
- b) Plan soil samples on grid ensuring consistent with deposit type targeted and in line with existing sampling grid (if applicable).
- c) Assess access to soil sampling area noting that only existing clear tracks may be used for vehicular access.

## 3.2.3 Drilling

- a) Review all necessary data to determine planned drilling programme. Data to review includes, but is not limited to, geochemical data, geophysical data, existing drilling records, environmental and heritage data, and other historic exploration data.
- b) Drill spacing is determined by deposit target sought and any previous drilling optimization studies.
- c) All drill programs should be planned along historical disturbance lines. If this is not possible, a justification to be presented to the Exploration Manager as substantial cost will be associated.

## 3.3 Execution of Exploration Activities

By 30 June each year, and / or as required:

The Geologists:

Where drill holes have been planned, conduct site assessment to determine:

- Best access tracks to planned holes
- Alternative access to planned holes
- Alternative hole locations (20 per cent extra) where conservation significant flora and fauna or heritage values are found in planned drill locations.

The aim is to minimise disturbance footprint thus reducing overall programme costs (i.e. survey costs, rehabilitation liability etc.).



**On ground work requires an Exploration Operation Notification Form be submitted to DEMIRS under the Work Health and Safety Act2020.**

**The Heritage Protection Agreement for some tenements requires the proponent to provide a written notice of low impact activity (accessing the tenement) a designated number of days prior to the date of intended access.**

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The Heritage and Environment Advisor:

- a) Plans flora and fauna surveys of the drill program based on the Exploration plan which includes preferred access tracks, alternative access track and primary and back-up holes locations.
- b) Engages botanists/ecologists to complete survey.

**Note:** \*Include weeds in baseline flora and fauna surveys

\*\*Botanists/Ecologists require permits to collect specimens pursuant to the *Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018*. For all areas botanists/ecologists must hold a Regulation 27 "Fauna Taking (Biological Assessment) Licence". If completing surveys on DBCA managed lands (national parks, nature reserves), the botanists/ecologists must also have a current Regulation 4 Authority "Taking flora and fauna in CALM Act lands/waters that would, but for such notice, be unlawful under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*".

- c) Request botanists/ecologists find alternative route to drill holes in primary and alternative locations if access unsuitable due to survey findings.

Obtains and reviews flora and fauna survey reports. Once finalised, saves:

**Flora and Fauna Survey reports:** WesCEF Exploration - General\02. Projects\PROJECT\05 Environment\1 Flora and Fauna\Reports\YYYY

**Flora and fauna associated GIS data:** WesCEF Exploration - General\02. Projects\PROJECT\12. GIS\01Environmental

- d) Annually consolidate GIS flora and fauna data into one combined shapefile respectively incorporating all previous survey GIS data.
- e) Upload survey data to Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessments (IBSA) where required.



**Before submitting any data to a third party, consider data ownership and refer to any applicable confidentiality clauses in commercial agreements**

- f) Save IBSA submission receipt in WesCEF Exploration - General\02. Projects\PROJECT\01 Administration\01 External Correspondence The tenement number to which the submission relates must be referenced in the file name. This reference number will be required for any clearing permit applications

The Heritage and Environment Advisor and Senior Geologist:

- g) Review GIS data together and make any required changes to access or drill hole locations to minimise impact on flora and fauna.
- h) Plan Program of Work (POW) and Aboriginal heritage surveys. Do not lodge POW until heritage survey has been completed unless approval from Exploration Manager has been obtained.

The Heritage and Environment Advisor:

- i) Determines whether Conservation Management Plan and/or Clearing Permit are required. If so, prepare and lodge using available data. Ensure sufficient flexibility is included within these plans due to long approval timeframes (potentially in the order of 90 days).
- j) File Clearing Permits and Conservation Management Plans as follows:
  - Clearing permits – Docova (full approved permit) and Cintellate Legal Register (specific requirements).

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- Conservation Management Plans – Docova (full approved plan) and Cintellate Legal Register (specific requirements).
  - Working documents are saved in: WesCEF Exploration - General\02. Projects\PROJECT\05 Environment\2 Legal
- k) Prepares Heritage Notice/Activity Notice required by relevant Heritage Protection Agreement.
- l) Submits Heritage/Activity Notice to relevant contact (refer to applicable agreement).
- m) Organises and supervises heritage survey.
- n) Obtains and reviews report.
- o) Files report in WesCEF Exploration - General\02. Projects\PROJECT\04 Heritage\Traditional Owner Group\Heritage Surveys
- p) Sends a copy final survey report to relevant Aboriginal corporation/native title group.

**Note:** As per the frequency specified in each Heritage Protection Agreement or where not specified, at least annually, each Traditional Owner Group via the contacts listed in the Heritage Protection Agreement should be provided with an outline of planned activities (which are likely to be the subject of future Activity/Heritage Notices). This requirement is captured in the Cintellate Legal Register.

- q) Obtains any other environment or heritage approvals or consultation required to complete drilling programme. For example, use of a public road and saves in the relevant POW folder: WesCEF Exploration - General\02. Projects\PROJECT\03 Tenements\POWS

The Tenement Specialist:

- r) Reviews Tenement Schedule Master for the relevant project to determine any pastoral lease overlap or third party commercial agreements.
- s) Reviews conditions of relevant tenements for any access notification requirements of DEMIRS.
- t) Where necessary, coordinates notification to relevant stakeholders and confirmation of access approvals.

The Geologist

- u) Completes field check prior to planned drilling to confirm no changes to access. Document evidence of inspection.

At least 60 days prior to commencing ground disturbing work the Land Access Team and Geologist:

- v) Complete work as per 'Drill Pad Preparation – Surface Drilling' procedure (WCEF-PD-HSE-0010). This procedure includes the Permit to Disturb process, demarcation of sensitive flora and fauna and POW submission.

The Geologists:

- w) Analyse and interpret all results (raw data produced or geological models created)
- x) Prepare internal and/or external reports

Within twelve months or as otherwise specified (whichever is earlier) from date of clearing:

- y) Complete work as per 'Drill Pad Rehabilitation' procedure (WCEF-PD-HSE-0011).

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### 3.4 Management Review

Tenure held by WesCEF is constantly being reviewed to ensure continued alignment with the business objectives outlined in Section 1.1.

The default position for all tenements is to maintain in good standing and obtain renewals when required unless the review above finds a tenement should be surrendered. Surrender processes can take many months due to obligations under commercial agreements.

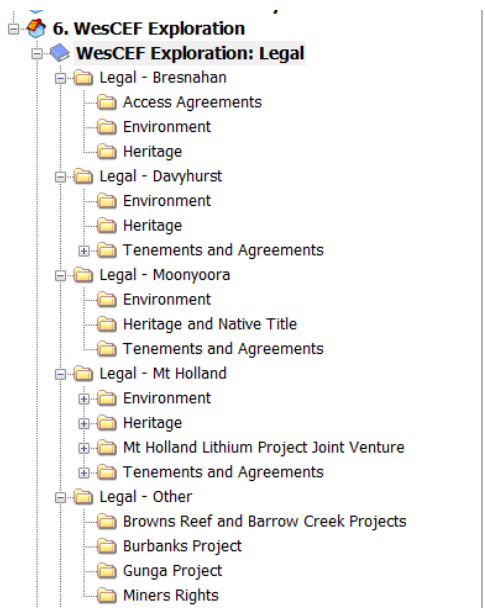
Exploration of tenements (excluding Gs and Ls) should commence as soon as possible after grant to ensure sufficient work can be progressed during a tenure period should renewal be required. The speed at which exploration is carried out is influenced by whether the ground is considered strategic for reasons other than prospectivity. Non-strategic tenure should typically be progressed more rapidly than strategic tenure.

The Exploration Manager:

- a) Reviews all tenements regularly, to review progress against exploration plan and whether to hold or relinquish ground.
- b) Cost reports are regularly interrogated to ensure accurate costings and at the end of the tenement year at least 30 days prior to the anniversary, the preparation of a draft Form 5 is started for internal review and approval.
- c) Where review of a tenement determines it should be relinquished, the Principal Land Access and Tenure and the Tenements Specialist should be notified.

The Tenements Specialist will:

- d) Review the Tenement Schedule to determine which commercial agreements apply to the tenement which may impact the surrender process.
- e) Identify requirements for surrender, relinquishment, non-renewal in applicable agreements. Agreements are stored in Docova under WesCEF Exploration: Legal. The applicability of these agreements is summarised in the relevant Tenement Schedule for each project.



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- f) Seek legal advice from Wesfarmers Corporate Solicitors Office (CSO) if requirements are unclear or conflicting.
- g) Obtain approval from Company Directors for proposed surrender/relinquishment.
- h) Commence surrender process in liaison with CSO, Principal Land Access and Tenure and Exploration Manager. The surrender process may involve transfer of the tenement to another party.
- i) When surrender or transfer process is complete, update Tenement Safety Net report, Cintellate and Tenement Schedule.