

Mining and Environmental Reforms Program Fact Sheet

M1: Proposed Legacy Mine Management

Mining has been an important part of the Northern Territory's history for over 150 years.

Current practices now include the mandatory requirement of miners to rehabilitate mining impacts.

However, historical mining has left us with a significant amount of legacy mine features such as shafts, degraded infrastructure, tailings dams, and waste rock dumps.

To date, over 900 legacy mine features and legacy mines have been identified across the Territory.

Legacy mines and legacy mine features have the potential to pose a risk to the environment and public safety. Hazards associated with legacy mine features may include safety risks from open workings or pits, or degraded infrastructure. Environmental impacts may include poor water quality, erosion, weed infestation and damage from acid metalliferous drainage.

While there may be a large number of potential legacy sites, a majority are associated with old workings and relatively few are large complex sites.

Remediating legacy mines is critical to protect the environment and the public from these negative impacts.

This is why the NT Government is bringing in a contemporary framework for legacy mine remediation.

The Legacy Mines Remediation Exposure Draft Bill is now out for public consultation.

The new Legacy Mines Remediation legislation will contemporise the way legacy mines and legacy mine features are managed in the Territory.

It will deliver a more innovative and flexible framework that will also provide greater opportunities for Territory businesses and community groups to become involved in remediation works.

Delivery of remediation projects in regional and remote NT provides valuable employment and economic benefits for Territorians.

Legislation governing the remediation program, collection of a remediation levy and administration of the Mining Remediation Fund (MRF) is critical to ensure transparency, accountability and integrity in the Legacy Mines Unit who deliver the program.

Key objectives

- To support a contemporary framework to enable flexible and effective options for the remediation of legacy mines and legacy mine features
- To maximise the effectiveness of the MRF through encouraging research, collaboration and expanding opportunities for remediation of legacy mines and legacy mine features across the Northern Territory.

These objectives will enhance the capability to assess, prioritise and undertake work to minimise or remediate harm caused by legacy mine sites and legacy mine features.

These reforms do not change or shift the current liability status of legacy mine features.

Proposed reform summary

The proposed reform includes key elements to facilitate an effective and flexible approach to remediating legacy mines and legacy mine features.

Key features:

- replacing ambiguous terms such as ‘unsecured mining activities’ with clear definitions of a legacy mine or a legacy mine feature
- adding an elevated classification of a ‘reserved legacy mine site’; this will increase transparency of expenditure and provide greater security and certainty to collaborate with industry and the community in the remediation of these sites
- expand the use of the MRF to include:
 - providing incentives to facilitate remediation leveraging industry experience
 - research to increase remediation knowledge applicable to the Territory
 - legal and audit services to facilitate remediation projects
- enable the Minister to authorise remediation activities on legacy mines and legacy mine features and defining what those activities are
- enable the Minister to authorise remediation activities on legacy mines or legacy mine features to occur without requiring certain statutory approvals that have been prescribed in regulation.

Benefits

These reforms will increase provisions and capacity for the oversight, management and implementation of mining remediation works for legacy mine sites and legacy mine features.

This will include:

- improved governance, collaboration and transparency to streamline remediation works
- expanded opportunities for legacy mine remediation in regional and remote locations in partnerships with community, landowners and industry
- maximising the effectiveness of the MRF by expanding the purpose of the fund and how the funds can be spent
- increased public confidence in the government to carry out legacy mine remediation.

Further information

You can read more about legacy mines and the Legacy Mines Unit in the [Legacy Mines Strategic Plan and Policy](#) or visit the [Northern Territory Government Website](#)

A number of fact sheets have also been developed addressing different aspects of the mining and environmental reforms. These are available on the [Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security website](#)