Natural Resources,
Mines and Water

Managing Queensland's natural resources ... for today and tomorrow

Abandoned Mine Lands Program (AMLP)

MIN/2006/2439 – Version 1

Endorsed 22/02/2006
by Deputy Director General, Mining and Petroleum

Queensland Government
Natural Resources, Mines and Water

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Version history

Version	Date	Comments
1	16/02/2006	Final draft ready for endorsement.
1.1	22/02/2006	Incorporate review comments from Director, Policy and Legislation.

Executive summary

This Departmental Policy outlines how NRMW manages abandoned mines in Queensland.

Due to past mining operations and activities, mines that are abandoned may contain hazards from underground workings, shafts, adits, inclines and cavities, surface ponds, chemical residues, waste dumps, tailings and mining infrastructure. Over time, through natural land degradation and weathering, hazards may become exposed and physical or chemical stability may be compromised creating potential safety risks to the community and the environment.

Purpose | Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a foundation for the Abandoned Mine Lands Program (AMLP) to deal with abandoned mines in Queensland.

This Policy will assist AMLP decision-making in relation to abandoned mines for which the State, through the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water (NRMW), is responsible.

Rationale

The AMLP Program is a systematic integrated program, having regard to public safety and the environment, for a sustainable future through the assessment of abandoned mines and the effective management of potential risks and environmental hazards at orphaned mine sites.

Policy

NRMW has overall responsibility to make decisions on statewide funding priorities for orphaned mines, and manage risk assessment and reduction, including promulgation and application of a standard risk model.

Since 1 January 2001, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been responsible for the environmental regulation of mining in Queensland.

There is no explicit statutory basis for the AMLP.

Procedures

Decision making process

To qualify for inclusion in the AMLP, an abandoned mine must meet specific criteria set out in the Standard Operating Procedures for the AMLP. These Standard Operating Procedures are under development and may include criteria such as:

- Is the site safe and secure?
- Is there a current mining tenure on the land?
- Is the abandoned mine on land for which a landholder or Trustee other than the State is responsible?

When the AMLP is responsible for an orphaned mine, the potential risks that it poses to the community and the environment are assessed using a standard risk assessment model, and any works are then included in a prioritised works program.

Abandoned mines land register

At present there is not a statewide register of all abandoned mines, although limited site information about known abandoned mines can be obtained from NRMW.

Notification

A notification about a potential or existing abandoned mine may be made by any person at any office of NRMW. Only those orphaned mines that meet specific criteria are included in the AMLP for rehabilitation.

Emergency response to mine subsidence

The Government provides limited assistance in the event of property damage resulting from mine subsidence where there is no current mining tenement over the area and damage is caused by subsidence of previously unrecorded mine working, or where the subsidence is a public hazard.

Guidelines and Procedures

Queensland policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with Departmental policies, Guidelines and Procedures, as listed in the Reference Section.

International, National and Industry Standards and Guidelines

AMLP uses as a standard the HB:203:204 Handbook, Environmental risk management-Principles and process. This handbook is based on an Australian Standard, AS/NZS 4360:2004, Risk management, and is aligned to AS/NZS ISO 14001 Environmental management systems-Specification with guidance for use (Specifies requirements for environmental management systems. Identical with ISO 14001:2004).

Responsibilities

In November 2003 the Abandoned Mine Lands Program (AMLP) panel was established to oversee the AMLP across the state of Queensland.

The AMLP panel consists of the following members:

- General Manager, Industry Development (Chair);
- General Manager, Compliance, Operational Review and Special Projects (Executive Member);
- Regional Manager, Mines, North Region (Executive Member);
- Regional Manager, Mines, South East Region (Executive Member);
- Regional Manager, Mines, Central West Region (Executive Member);
- Manager, Finance & Administration, Policy & Resource Strategy & Industry Development (Secretary); and
- Safety in mines testing and research station (SIMTARS) representatives (non-executive technical advisors) by invitation only.

Definitions

Listing of definitions in common usage within Mining and Petroleum, AMLP and selected Whole of Government Standards.

Abandoned mine Any site, residue, result from, or incidental to past mining.

Hazard A source of potential harm, or situation with a potential to cause loss or adverse effect.

Orphaned mine An abandoned mine site that is the responsibility of AMLP.

Rehabilitation To return disturbed land to a stable and self sustaining condition, after taking into account uses of the site and surrounding land.

Risk The chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives. It is measured in terms of consequences and likelihood.

References

AMLP Guideline No.1 *Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999* and *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999*

AMLP Guideline No.2 *Mineral Resources Act 1989*

AMLP Guideline No.3 *Land Title Act 1994 and Land Act 1994*

AMLP Guideline No.4 *Environment Protection Act 1994*

AMLP Guideline No.5 Risk Assessment and Management

AMLP Guideline No.6 Metadata and Information Management

AMLP Guideline No.7 *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*

AMLP Guideline No.8 *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*

ADS/2003/1369 Risk Management Procedures

AS.16.002 Freedom of Information Requests

GLP/2004/1422 Government Land Policies Property Tenure

HB 203:2004 Handbook, Environmental Risk Management-Principles and process

HR.5.007 Field Officers (Human Resource Standard)

HR.7.002 Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S)

IMP/2001/2 Metadata (Information Management Standard)

IMP/2005/2242 Incident Reporting Protocol

MIN/2006/2424 Assistance in the event of property damage from mine subsidence (previously know as MIN 86)

MIN/2005/2277 Min 15 Procedure to be adopted in regard to correspondence which is a catalyst in the determination of a tenure.

NR&M Risk Management Manual

ORU/2005/2279 Risk Management Policy

PBO/2005/2352 Accreditation of Surveyors

PBO/2004/1626 Cadastral Survey requirements

PBO/900/105 Topographical Mapping

PD 2000-002 Issue of tenure Documents

PD 2002-001 Local Government Searches

PUX/901/654 Access Rights Over Non Freehold Land

Legislation

Legislation that may impact on the business and operational aspects of the AMLP includes:

Mining

Mineral Resources Act 1989

Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999

Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999

Other

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985

Civil Liability Act 2003

Corporations (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2001

Corporations (Queensland) Act 1990

Crime and Misconduct Act 2001

Criminal Code Act 1899

Environmental Protection Act 1994

Financial Management Standard 1997

Forestry Act 1959

Integrated Planning Act 1997

Land Act 1994

Land Title Act 1994

Local Government Act 1993

Public Service Act 1996

Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993

Nature Conservation Act 1992

Queensland Heritage Act 1992

Radiation Safety Act 1999

Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994

Water Act 2000

Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995

Corporations Act 2001 (Cwth)