Have your say on the Alcoa Strategic Assessment of Current and Future Mining in Western Australia

Submissions due: Monday 21 December 2026

How to make a submission:

Online:

Via the Make your comments form. You will be required to register an account and provide your name, postcode and email address.

Via post:

Send your written submissions to:

Alcoa Strategic Assessment Public Comment
PO Box 7439
Cloisters Square PO, WA 6850

Background

On 18 February 2026, the Australian Government and Alcoa agreed to undertake a Strategic Assessment, under section 146 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (**EPBC Act**).[1]

NOTE: On 1 December 2026, changes to EPBC Act Part 10 which regulates Strategic Assessments will come into effect. The Australian Government and Alcoa have confirmed[2] that the new criteria (addressed in further detail below) will apply to this assessment.

The strategic assessment seeks upfront, landscape scale approval for existing and future mining operations at Alcoa's Huntly and Willowdale bauxite mines through to 2045.

You can read about the strategic assessment process in our earlier **Explainer**.

The current public consultation opportunity

Alcoa has released its Strategic Assessment Plan (the **Plan**) and Strategic Impact Assessment Report (the **Report**) for public comment for 28 days.

[1] Available: https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/alcoa-huntly-willowdale-mines-strategic-assessment.pdf.
[2] By way of a variation to the strategic assessment agreement, dated 16 November 2026. Available: https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/alcoa-strategic-assessment-agreement-variation_0.pdf.

Disclaimer: This guide is designed to give readers a plain English overview of the law. It does not replace the need for professional legal advice in individual cases. To request free initial legal advice on a public interest environmental or planning law issue, please visit our website. While every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate, the EDO does not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage resulting from any error in this explainer or use of this work.

The Plan sets out how Alcoa proposes to carry out its activities, including environmental outcomes and commitments. The Report assesses the potential impacts of Alcoa's proposed activities on matters of national environmental significance (**MNES**) when undertaken in accordance with the Plan.

Also released as part of the consultation materials is a Strategic Assessment Assurance Plan and Strategic Assessment Offsets Plan.

Hard copies of the consultation documents are available to view at various locations,[3] and may also be obtained at no cost by contacting Alcoa on or strategicassessment306@alcoa.com or (08) 9316 5817.

Matters that will be considered by the Minister:

After comments are provided, Alcoa is required to update its documentation to incorporate feedback and will ultimately submit this to the Federal Minister for Environment for a final decision.

In considering whether to endorse the Plan and approve Alcoa's mining operations, the Federal Environment Minister is required to consider the following:

- ***General considerations***[4], including:
    - matters relevant to the protection of MNES;
    - economic and social matters;
    - the principles of ecologically sustainable development; and
    - any bioregional plan, and any bioregional guidance plan, that the Minister considers relevant.[5]
- ***Consistency with prescribed national environmental standards,***[6] including[7]:
    - National Environmental Standard (Matters of National Environmental Significance) 2026

[3] Copies are also available for viewing from:
- Harvey War Memorial Library - 72 Young St, HARVEY
- Yarloop Library - School Rd, YARLOOP
- Murray Library - 18 Forrest St, PINJARRA
- Serpentine Jarrahdale Library - 858 South Western Hwy, BYFORD
- Boddington Community Resource Centre - 20 Bannister Marradong Rd, BODDINGTON
- Waroona Library - 4 Thatchers St, WAROONA
- Gnaala Karla Booja offices, 35-39 McCombe Rd, DAVENPORT

[4] EPBC Act, section 146F

[5] We are not aware of any bioregional guidance plan or bioregional plan in place for the area subject to this strategic assessment.

[6] EPBC Act, section 146FA

[7] According to the Environment Protection Reform Consultation: Shaping the Next Phase of Environmental Reforms, Consultation Paper 2 – Enabling Landscape Scale Pathways - September 2026, the EPBC Regulations will be amended to prescribe these four National Environmental Standards as Standards that the Minister (or CEO of the National EPA) must consider when making a decision to approve a strategic assessment.

- National Environmental Standard (Environmental Offsets) 2026
- National Environmental Standard (Community Engagement) 2026
- National Environmental Standard (Data and Information) 2026

- ***Unacceptable impacts***[8] – the Minister cannot approve activities unless the Minister is satisfied that there will not be an unacceptable impact on MNES. Unacceptable impacts are defined in section 527F of the EPBC Act. Relevant to listed threatened species and ecological communities, which is the focus of this assessment, unacceptable impacts are generally defined as an impact that seriously impairs species/community viability or causes serious damage to the habitat that the species/community depends on for viability in the wild.
- ***Net gain***[9] – the Minister can only approve activities where the Minister is satisfied that the approval the taking of action will 'pass the net gain test'[10]. The definition of 'net gain' is yet to be set out in detail, but is currently understood to require a measurable improvement against an agreed baseline.[11] Proponents may seek to meet this test through offsets or paying a charge to fund environmental restoration that is greater than the equivalent damage a project may cause.
- As relevant to the operations that are the subject of this assessment, matters specific to **listed threatened species and ecological communities**, being any relevant recovery plans, threat abatement plans or protection statements, and Australia's obligations under the Biodiversity Convention, the Apia Convention and CITES.[12]

Have your say

You can have your say about whether Alcoa has presented adequate assessment information and whether the impacts have been appropriately addressed. To make the most effective comment, it is useful to review the draft plan and draft SIAR, and compare the environmental, social and economic impacts identified by Alcoa with the legal criteria above and your own expectations for how those impacts should be managed.

You can provide personalised input (such as your local knowledge or specific expertise) to the assessment and make suggestions for how impacts could be better managed (or whether it is possible to make them acceptable at all).

Anyone who wants to make a comment can do so – there are no eligibility tests or requirements about what a comment must include, just that you need to provide your comment before 21 December 2026.

[8] EPBC Act, section 146FB
[9] EPBC Act, section 146FC
[10] EPBC Act, section 527K
[11] See: National Environmental Standard (Environmental Offsets) 2026.
[12] EPBC Act, section 146K