

For Public Notice via Internet

REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*

Title of Proposal: Nowa Nowa Iron Project (5 Mile Deposit)

Proponent: Gippsland Iron Pty Ltd

Description of Project:

Gippsland Iron Pty Ltd proposes to develop an iron ore mine in the Tara State Forest in east Gippsland, approximately 7 kilometres north of Nowa Nowa. Operating for about ten years, the mine would use a dry, low intensity magnetic separation (LIMS) process to produce about ten million tonnes of processed iron ore, which would be trucked to an export port near Eden in southern New South Wales. The project would require the removal of approximately 146 hectares of native vegetation, some of which would be rehabilitated after the closure of the mine, although the pit void would remain and would be allowed to flood to form a new permanent lake.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required for the proposed Nowa Nowa Iron Project, as described in the referral accepted on 18 November 2013.

Reasons for Decision:

1. The various project components would involve a substantial environmental footprint in a forested foothills area with potentially significant biodiversity values, and low in the catchment of Lake Tyers, part of the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar-listed wetland of international significance.
2. The project has the potential for significant environmental effects, both on-site and off-site, in particular on biodiversity, waterways and associated values, including on Lake Tyers.
3. An EES process will provide a robust, transparent and integrated framework through which:
 - i. the potential environmental effects can be rigorously assessed, including in the context of the comparative effects of feasible siting, design and operational alternatives for key components of the project; and
 - ii. the effectiveness of proposed measures to avoid, minimise, manage and offset environmental effects and related risks can be evaluated.
4. Under the East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement, Victoria committed to apply the EES process to mining proposals on land in the Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative Reserve system, which includes land zoned Special Protection Zone (SPZ) in the East Gippsland Forest Management Plan. Part of the proposed mine site is zoned SPZ.

Date of Decision: 19 December 2013