

## Frequently asked questions

### Annual report release, redaction, and exploration reporting

[Summary of key changes and frequently asked questions about the Annual Report Release Policy and the redaction of personal, commercially sensitive, or proprietary information, and changes to exploration reporting.](#)

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February 2024	2.0	Updated to reflect Annual Report Release Policy V2.0 and Exploration Reporting Guideline V5.0

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# Contents

Frequently asked questions ..... 3

Annual report release policy and redaction guide ..... 3

Tables ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Bullets and Numbers ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

## Frequently asked questions

### Annual report release policy and redaction guide

#### What is the Annual Report Release Policy?

All annual reports for authorities may be released after five years have passed since lodgement (section 365 of the *Mining Act 1992*, clause 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016).

The Annual Report Release Policy (ARRP) manages the process for the public release of annual reports with associated data lodged five or more years prior to 1 June 2021 for exploration licences and assessment leases.

#### What is the Redaction Guide?

The Annual Report Redaction Guide (Redaction Guide) provides guidance for redaction of personal, commercially sensitive, or proprietary information from reports that are eligible for release under the Annual Report Release Policy.

#### What are the key changes between the Annual Report Release Policy and Redaction Guide (V1.0 published October 2021) and the revised Annual Report Release Policy and Redaction Guide?

Table 1 outlines the key changes to the types of reports released under the Annual Report Release Policy.

Table 2 outlines the key changes to the Annual Report Release Policy document. Table 3 outlines the key changes to the Annual Report Redaction Guide.

The previous guideline Annual Report Release Redaction Information ('How To' Guide) will not be republished. The information contained in this former guide has been incorporated into the revised Annual Report Redaction Guide.

Table 1 Comparison of report eligibility for release under Annual Report Release Policy versions V1.0 (2021) and V2.0 (2024)

Mineral group	Version 1.0 (published October 2021)	Version 2.0 (to be published February 2024)	
	Annual reports submitted on or prior to <b>31 December 2021</b>	Annual reports submitted on or prior to <b>31 December 2021</b>	Annual reports submitted on or after <b>1 January 2022</b>
Group 1-6 and Group 10	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>(Excluding authorities with 'flow-on' mining leases)</p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release annual report (original report or redacted report where submitted), and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not included for release in V1.0</p>	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>(Including authorities with 'flow-on' mining leases)</p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release annual report (original report or redacted report where submitted) and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>(Including authorities with 'flow-on' mining leases)</p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release Part A of annual report, and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>

Mineral group	Version 1.0 (published October 2021)	Version 2.0 (to be published February 2024)	
	Annual reports submitted on or prior to <b>31 December 2021</b>	Annual reports submitted on or prior to <b>31 December 2021</b>	Annual reports submitted on or after <b>1 January 2022</b>
Group 7	Not included for release in V1.0	<p>Opal prospecting licences and mineral claims (ie small scale titles) reports are not available for release whilst authority remains in force.</p> <p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases that include Group 7</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release annual report (original report or redacted report where submitted) and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>	<p>Opal prospecting licences and mineral claims (ie small scale titles) reports are not available for release whilst authority remains in force.</p> <p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases that include Group 7</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release Part A of annual report, and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>
Group 8	Not included for release in V1.0	<p><b>Exploration Licences</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release annual report (original report or redacted report where submitted) and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Assessment and Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not applicable – No reports available</p>	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release Part A of annual report, and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>
Group 9 (Includes 9A)	Not included for release in V1.0	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release baseline geological data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release baseline geological data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>
Group 11 and 12	Not included for release in V1.0	Not applicable – No reports available	<p><b>Exploration Licences and Assessment Leases</b></p> <p>5 years after lodgement of the report:</p> <p>Release Part A of annual report, and data that is eligible to be released.</p> <p><b>Mining Leases</b></p> <p>Not available for release whilst authority remains in force</p>

Table 2 Summary of key changes to Annual Report Release Policy

Section heading	Changes
Document	Administrative updates – updated format, website links and contact details
Background	Updated for currency.
Purpose	Updated for currency. Removed reference to exploration licences and assessment leases, and licence conditions providing for the confidentiality of annual reports
Benefits	Minor update to text
Release stages and timing	Updated for currency. Inclusion of second release timing (2024). Addition of Figure 1. Removed reference to future consultation on mining leases, group 9 reports, and ‘flow-on’ authorities.
Second release	New section
Report release and reaction process	Updated for currency. Inclusion of timing for second stage release (2024).
Digital data to be submitted with redacted reports	New section added for clarity – no change to requirement to resubmit data in a digital format, but an option has been included for an authority holder to supply digital data in their own format subject to approval.
Glossary	Inclusion of new definitions, including ‘Baseline geological data’ for Group 9 and Group 9A

Table 3 Summary of key changes to Annual Report Redaction Guide

Section heading	Changes
Document	Administrative updates – updated format, website links and contact details
Authority Holder - Steps to Redaction	Updated Figure 1 ‘Decision Tree’. Updated for currency.
Frequently asked questions	Removed from Annual Report Redaction Guide. Now included in the Frequently Asked Questions document.
Appendix 1	Details included under the subheading ‘Digital data submitted before the introduction of exploration reporting templates’ has been relocated into the Annual Report Release Policy document for clarity. There is no change to requirement to resubmit data in a digital format, but an option has been included for an authority holder to supply digital data in their own format subject to approval.
Appendix 2	Clarification provided that data may be disclosed once 5 years have passed since the lodgement of the report <b>or</b> once the authority to which the report relates ceases to be in force. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drilling data category:</li> <li>• Sample details – Now excludes Group 9 and Group 9A</li> <li>• Sample geochemistry - Now excludes Group 9 and Group 9A</li> <li>• Coal quality analytical data – New category included for Group 9 and Group 9A (confidential for life of authority)</li> </ul>
Glossary	Inclusion of new definitions, including ‘Baseline geological data’ for Group 9 and Group 9A

## Why is the Annual Report Release Policy being updated?

The Annual Report Release Policy was published in October 2021. The Policy committed to the release of further reports in the future, following further consultation. The report types initially excluded from the Annual Report Release Policy included coal (Group 9), mining lease, and ‘flow-on’ authorities. Other mineral groups (Group 7, 8, 11 and 12) were also excluded from the policy.

The Annual Report Release Policy has now been updated to include these additional report types that were initially excluded from release, with the exception of mining leases.

## Are all annual reports subject to public release under the Annual Report Release Policy?

All annual reports for authorities may be released after five years have passed since lodgement (section 365 of the Mining Act 1992, clause 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016).

MEG has adopted a staged approach to public release.

Initially (Stage 1), the Annual Report Release Policy in 2021 was applied only to exploration licences and assessment leases for mineral groups 1–6, and 10:

- Group 1 – metallic minerals
- Group 2 – non-metallic minerals
- Group 3 – semi-precious stones
- Group 4 – marine aggregate
- Group 5 – clay minerals
- Group 6 – corundum, diamond, ruby and sapphire
- Group 10 – mineral sands

Annual reports for remaining authority types will be released from 2024 (Stage 2), subject to limited exceptions:

- Annual reports for mining leases will not be released under the Annual Report Release Policy.
- Annual reports for mineral groups 1-6 and 10 that were subject to a ‘flow-on’ condition will now be released under the revised Annual Report Release Policy. The reference to ‘flow-on’ authority has now been removed from all remaining mining lease conditions.
- Annual reports for mineral group 1-6 and 10 exploration licences and assessment leases that were historically group reported under an approved reporting group with a mining lease, where that mining lease remains in force, will not be released. This is to be consistent with not releasing mining lease reports.
- Annual reports for mineral group 1-6 and 10 exploration licences and assessment leases that overlie a subsurface mining lease or are stratified between subsurface mining leases, where that mining lease remains in force, will not be released for any reports submitted after the grant of the associated mining lease.
- Annual reports for Group 7 small scale titles (opal prospecting licences and mineral claims) will not be released under the Annual Report Release Policy. Annual reports for exploration licences and assessment leases that include Group 7 minerals, not within an opal prospecting area will be released.
- Annual reports for Group 9/9A will not be released however, baseline geological data (see glossary) submitted with Group 9/9A reports will be released.
- Annual reports for Group 8, Group 11 and Group 12 are included for release of any future reports submitted.

Annual reports for other authorities (including coal (Group 9) and mining leases) may be released in the future following further consultation.

### **Do I have to redact annual reports that I have previously lodged?**

No. It is your choice whether to redact parts of an annual report that you have previously lodged.

### **What if I decide not to redact?**

If you decide not to redact, then you do not need to do anything. Your original report will be opened to the public six months after the list of eligible reports is published.

### **How do I inform MEG that I want to redact a report?**

You can find details of how to inform MEG that you want to redact in the Redaction Guide.

### **How long do I have to inform MEG that I want to redact information from my annual report?**

Authority holders have 6 months, from the time the list of eligible reports is published, to inform MEG that they want to redact information from an annual report.

MEG will publish the eligible report lists on 1 February each year. Authority holders will then have until 1 August to notify MEG that they want to redact their report.

This information, and the listing of eligible reports, is available on the [MEG webpage](#).

### **How do I request a copy of historical reports?**

You can find details of how to request a copy of historical reports in the Redaction Guide.

Authority holders, and agents who are authorised to act for the authority holder are able to request copies of historical reports. The report will only be supplied to the email address that is specified as the authorised person in the Titles Administration System (TAS).

All authority holders should ensure that their contact details are correct in the Titles Administration System (TAS) before requesting any reports. For any changes to contact details contact [titles@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:titles@regional.nsw.gov.au).

### **What format do I need to submit the redacted reports in?**

Your redacted report will simply be a copy of your original report in PDF format with the redaction applied. You can request an example of how to apply redaction to a PDF from [redaction@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:redaction@regional.nsw.gov.au).

If your report had attached data, which was not originally provided in tabular format, this data set must be provided in a tabular format with the redacted report. The data must be supplied:

- a. in the current data templates found on the MEG webpage (preferred) or
- b. in your own tabular digital data format, subject to approval from MEG.

Further queries related to digital data submission, and requests for approval to provide data in your own tabular format (rather than use of MEG data template), should be directed to [redaction@regional.nsw.gov.au](mailto:redaction@regional.nsw.gov.au).

### **Can information that was attached to an annual report be redacted?**

Yes, in some instances. The standard process used for redaction applies and is outlined in the Redaction Guide.

### **How do I submit redacted reports?**

Redacted reports are submitted via Titles Management System (TMS).

A guide for submitting redacted reports via TMS is available on the [MEG webpage](#).

You can find further details of how to submit redacted reports and data in the Redaction Guide.

### **What if I have submitted a redaction but MEG does not agree?**

You will have the option to request a review of MEG's decision. This review will be performed by the Redaction Review Group. The decision of the group will be final.

### **How do I request a review of a redaction assessment?**

You can find further details of how to request a review of a redaction assessment in the Redaction Guide.

### **What will occur if I have requested redaction and have not supplied my redacted report within 12 months of publication of the eligible report list?**

If no redacted report has been provided to MEG within 12 months of the publication of the reports eligible for release list, the annual report (as is, without redaction) will be released. Where a proposed redaction request is rejected and a revised redacted report is not submitted in the required timeframe, the original report will be released.

### **What will occur if I have not notified MEG that I want to redact information from a report within 6 months of publication of the reports eligible for release list?**

Where no notification of intention to redact is received by MEG within six months of the publication of the reports eligible for release list, the original report will be released.

### **Can I have an extension to redact my reports?**

No, the timeframes outline in the Annual Report release Policy are final.

### **Are partial relinquishment and final reports included in the Annual Report Release Policy?**

Partial relinquishment reports and final reports are available for release once the authority no longer remains in force, under clause 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016, and are therefore not covered by this policy.

### **Will community consultation reports, environmental management and rehabilitation reports, work programs, and activity/expenditure data be released under the Annual Report Release Policy?**

Only annual exploration reports and the associated geoscientific data will be released under the Annual Report Release Policy.

Annual Community Consultation Reports and Environmental Management and Rehabilitation Reports are not governed by clause 59 and 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016 and are therefore not covered by this policy. Those that have been submitted under previous annual activity reporting guidelines will not be released under the Annual Report Release Policy.

Work programs are no longer required to be submitted annually. Those that have been submitted under previous annual activity reporting guidelines will not be released under the Annual Report Release Policy.

Where activity and expenditure data are submitted with an annual report under the new Exploration Reporting Guideline through TMS, these data will **not** be released after a 5-year confidentiality period has lapsed and will remain confidential for the life of the authority. Those that have been submitted under previous annual activity reporting guidelines will not be released under the Annual Report Release Policy.

### **What is a Mineral Group?**

Prospecting and mining authorities granted under the *Mining Act 1992* are typically granted for a groups of minerals. These are defined in Schedule 2 of the Mining Regulation 2016 and will be specified in the authority conditions.

### **I have Group 7 (opal) in my authority. Does this policy apply to me?**

Annual reports for opal prospecting licences and mineral claims within an opal prospecting area will not be released under the Annual report release policy.

Annual reports for exploration licences and assessment leases that include Group 7 minerals but are located outside of an opal prospecting area will be released. For example, if an exploration licence or assessment lease is held in respect to multiple mineral groups and one of those groups is Group 7, the inclusion of Group 7 within that authority will not prevent the release of annual reports related to that authority.



### **Is data redactable?**

Geoscientific data (such as surface or drillhole geochemistry or geophysical data) is not redactable.

Appendix 2 of the Annual Report Redaction Guide lists the types of exploration data and categorises those data types as observed/raw or interpreted and sets out the associated confidentiality period for each. These confidentiality periods were developed in consultation with industry representatives and are not negotiable.

### **Will reports from authorities that have approved group reporting require redaction?**

Currently authorities with approved group reporting are generally associated with mining leases which have not been included in the revised Annual Report Release Policy.

Annual reports for exploration licences and assessment leases that were historically group reported under an approved reporting group with a mining lease, where that mining lease remains in force, will not be released. This is to be consistent with not releasing mining lease reports.

### **I have a surface EL overlying a sub-surface ML, or a subsurface EL that is stratified within MLs. Will these be released?**

Annual reports for exploration licences and assessment leases that overlie a subsurface mining lease or are stratified between subsurface mining leases, where that mining lease remains in force, will not be released for any reports submitted after the grant of the associated mining lease.

### **What if I have a confidentiality condition on my mining lease or formerly had this condition?**

The reference to confidentiality of reports and ‘flow-on’ authorities has now been removed from all mining lease conditions.

Reports for any Group 1-6 & 10 exploration licences and assessment leases that were formerly excluded from release under the initial (2021) Annual Report Release Policy due to this former licence condition on some mining leases are now being released.

### **Why are ‘flow-on’ authorities now being released?**

The reference to confidentiality of reports and ‘flow-on’ authorities has now been removed from all mining lease conditions. As such, all exploration licences and assessment leases reports will now be treated the same for the purposes of the Annual Report Release Policy.

### **Why is MEG not releasing reports for Mining Leases?**

Mining lease reports mostly contain resource definition drilling data. The focus of the NSW minerals strategy is making exploration data available to explorers. Exploration licence and assessment lease reports contain the historical exploration data from discovery through to defining a resource. It is this data that is most valuable to explorers.

Annual reports for other authorities (including mining leases) may be released in the future following further consultation.

### **Why is MEG taking a different approach to different report types and mineral groups?**

The NSW Government has committed to making historical exploration data available as part of the NSW Minerals Strategy. MEG has determined the report types and data that will be of greatest benefit to explorers in New South Wales to make it the premier destination for mining investment in Australia, and to support growing global demand for minerals.

Annual reports for other authorities may be released in the future following further consultation.

### **What Group 9 (coal) data is considered baseline geological data, and coal quality analytical data?**

Refer to the Redaction Guide and Annual Report Release Policy.

Baseline geological data will be released once 5 years have passed since the lodgement of the report or once the authority to which the report relates ceases to be in force.

Coal quality analytical data will remain confidential for the life of the authority.

## Exploration reporting guideline

### What is the Exploration Reporting Guideline?

The Exploration reporting guideline titled *Exploration reporting: a guide for reporting on exploration and prospecting in NSW* (the Guideline) sets out the structure, content and data format requirements for annual, partial relinquishment and final reports submitted for authorities under the *Mining Act 1992*. This Guideline ensures that authority holders provide high quality reports on exploration activities completed in NSW, ensuring there is future access to high quality geoscientific reports and data.

### What are the key changes between the Exploration Reporting Guide (V4.0 published February 2022) and the revised Exploration Reporting Guide?

Table 4 outlines the key changes to the Exploration Reporting Guide.

Table 4 Summary of key changes to the Exploration Reporting Guide

Section	Subheading	Changes
Document		Administrative updates – updated format, website links and contact details
Application		Updated advice regarding the provision of reports for mining leases in respect of an ancillary mining activity or activities only (no longer required)
1. Reporting requirements for authorities	General	Information only. No changes to reporting requirements. Extensions and exemptions – new section provides guidance for seeking an extension or exemption and legislative reference Confidentiality – new section refers to Annual Report Release Policy and legislative reference
	How to prepare and submit reports	<b>New section</b> Includes details on new report templates and online report building functions available. The use of these is optional. Activity and expenditure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details for compiling activity and expenditure data have been moved from Appendix 3 to this section</li> <li>Expenditure can be reported as GST inclusive or exclusive</li> <li>Activity and expenditure data is no longer required for partial relinquishment or final reports. TMS will be updated to reflect this</li> <li>Where a combined Annual and Final report is being lodged, activity and expenditure data is required for the final year only (not the life of authority)</li> </ul>
	How reports are assessed	<b>New section</b> Information only. No changes to reporting requirements.
	How reports are used by MEG	<b>New section</b> Information only. No changes to reporting requirements.
2. Report structure	Annual reports	New information added about Part A and Part B. Clarification provided for mandatory components. No changes to reporting requirements.
	Partial relinquishment reports	Clarification that data related to the relinquished area must be resubmitted to enable effective release. No changes to reporting requirements.
	Final reports	Inclusion of instructions for submitting a combined Annual and final report – additional report section ‘Exploration completed during reporting period (for combined annual and final reports only)’
3. Data requirements	Mineral groups 1-6, 10 and 11	Removed mineral group 8 from this section. Updated to reflect availability of new mineral template (Only versions 4.5 and 4.6 will be accepted for data submission).

Section	Subheading	Changes
		Updated guidance for submission of sampling and drilling data, including submission of laboratory certificates and core/chip photographs.
	Mineral groups 9 / 9A	Inclusion of Group 9A No changes to reporting requirements.
	Mineral group 8	<b>New section</b> Provides details on how to submit sampling and drilling data for Group 8.
	Mineral group 12	<b>New section</b> Provides details on how to submit sampling and drilling data for Group 12.
4. Submitting reports and digital data	Method of lodgement	Includes details of new online report building function available.
	File size limits / submitting large files	Updated guidance for file size limits and submission of large files, including the option for authority holders to use their own secure large file transfer application for provision of data to MEG.
	Core and chip photos	Guidance has been moved into Section 3. Mineral groups 1-6, 10 & 11 – Core and chip photos are not mandatory however should be provided for significant intercepts or intervals showing key lithological features that would be of interest to future explorers. Mineral groups 8, 9/9A & 12 - Core and chip photos are required.
Appendix 2		Updated to reflect Appendix 2 of the revised Annual Report Redaction Guide. Clarification provided that data may be disclosed once 5 years have passed since the lodgement of the report <b>or</b> once the authority to which the report relates ceases to be in force. Drilling data category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample details – Now excludes Group 9 and Group 9A</li> <li>• Sample geochemistry - Now excludes Group 9 and Group 9A</li> <li>• Coal quality analytical data – New category included for Group 9 and Group 9A (confidential for life of authority)</li> </ul>

### Why is the Exploration Reporting Guideline being updated?

The Exploration Reporting Guideline was last updated in February 2021 (V4.0). The revised Exploration Reporting Guideline has been updated to reflect:

- the revised Annual Report Release Policy
- the availability of a new mineral exploration data template and provide further clarification for submission of geochemistry data
- the availability of an online report building tool in Titles Management System (TMS)
- the availability of new report templates
- changes to GST status for expenditure data (GST inclusive or exclusive are allowed)
- the removal of the requirement to submit activity and expenditure data for partial relinquishment or final reports
- updated advice regarding submission of large files (>250 MB)
- general administrative updates.

### How does the Guideline align with the release of reports and data under Clause 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016?

The Guideline sets out the requirements to submit the annual exploration reports and associated data in two parts. Part A will include data and information that will be publicly released 5 years after submission and Part B will include commercially sensitive information that will remain confidential

for the life of the authority. This will reduce administration for authority holders by eliminating the need to redact future reports and data released under Clause 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016.

**My licence condition does not require exploration/activity reporting. Do I need to submit annual / partial relinquishment / final reports?**

If there is an inconsistency between a condition of an authorisation and a reporting requirement imposed under the *Mining Act 1992*, the condition prevails to the extent of the inconsistency (s.163C(4)).

**I have an ancillary mining lease / mining purposes lease. Do I need to submit annual / partial relinquishment / final reports?**

No – an exemption from the reporting requirements under section 163C of the *Mining Act 1992* for ancillary mining activity(s) was given on 18 November 2021.

**How does the Guideline align with *Exploration Guideline: Annual activity reporting for prospecting titles*?**

The current *Exploration Guideline: Annual activity reporting for prospecting titles* (version 4.0 published October 2022) requires submission of:

- Annual exploration report (including, if applicable, geoscientific data)
- Annual environment management and rehabilitation compliance report

The annual exploration report must be lodged via Titles Management System (TMS).

The annual environmental and rehabilitation compliance report must be lodged via the NSW Resources Regulator Portal <https://nswresourcesregulator.service-now.com/regulator>

**Do I still need to resubmit a community consultation report annually?**

The annual community consultation report is no longer required.

**Do I still need to resubmit activity and expenditure and work program completion spreadsheets annually?**

Submission of activity and expenditure data will no longer be in a spreadsheet, but directly captured in TMS. Submission of these data via TMS satisfies licence conditions related to reporting annual activity and expenditure on authorities.

**Do I still need to resubmit a work program annually?**

Annual resubmission of the work program as part of annual activity reports is no longer required as of 1 January 2021. Work programs are now only required to be submitted with an application for a new authority, at renewal of an authority, or where a significant variation is proposed to the work program in accordance with Part E of the *Exploration Guideline: Work Programs for Prospecting Titles*.

**How do I submit a report in Titles Management System (TMS)?**

A TMS report submission guide is available on the MEG webpage <https://meg.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au/mining-and-exploration/compliance-and-reporting/exploration-reporting>.

**Can I still submit a report in EROL?**

No, EROL has been decommissioned and all reports must be submitted via the Titles Management System (TMS).

**How do I submit large data files?**

Guidance for uploading large data files is provided in the Exploration Reporting Guideline.

Large files can be uploaded via TMS (for all files less than 1 GB). Files that exceed 1GB can be submitted via LaFix, the authority holder's preferred secure file transfer application, or via a digital device (USB/Hard drive etc).

LaFix can be accessed via:

<https://www.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au/meg.site/geoscience/products-and-data/company-exploration-reports/online-services/large-file>

### How do I report on an opal prospecting licence?

Opal prospecting licences or mineral claims granted under Part 9 or Part 10 of the *Mining Act 1992*, within Opal Prospecting Area do not have any requirements to submit annual reports.

Note that for authorities granted under Part 3 of the *Mining Act 1992*, as a standard exploration licence, that includes Group 7, then the reporting requirements are as set out under S163c.

### What if I do not use CoalLog (coal authorities)?

CoalLog has been a requirement for reporting of coal exploration (drillhole) data since the 2016. If CoalLog is not the companies data format, it is possible to configure data exports into CoalLog format for exploration reporting purposes.

### What are some of the most frequent mistakes made in exploration reporting, leading to reports being returned to the authority holder?

Frequently made mistakes for annual reporting include:

- The submission is missing one or more components required under the licence condition (non-IMER titles) or the *Exploration Guideline: Annual activity reporting for prospecting titles* (IMER titles) e.g. Community Consultation Report.
- The report is not in the prescribed format (e.g. missing components, illegible figures, does not address key information required).
- Geoscientific data:
  - Data files are missing
  - Data supplied doesn't match sampling / drilling metrics mentioned in the report body.
  - Failing to provide data in the current templates and with accompanying dictionaries and data definition.
  - Mixing of assay data from different laboratories or where multiple assay methods have been used.
  - Not using correct formats for geophysical data and/or not providing an acquisition report.

### Why are mining studies, financial modelling, product optimisation etc required in the 'Exploration' report?

The Exploration Reporting Guideline includes both exploration and assessment/mining lease reporting requirements. Summaries of mining studies, financial modelling, product optimisation etc are only required for assessment leases and mining leases. This requirement was also in the previous (2016) version of the Exploration Reporting Guideline.

Under clauses 59 to 61 of the Mining Regulation 2016, which set out the requirements of annual, partial relinquishment and final reports, reports must summaries all 'surveys and other operations' – i.e. reporting is not strictly limited to on ground exploration.

### How will the Department guarantee confidentiality of Part B?

The Department has governance arrangements in place to manage confidential information. Currently all exploration reports, including confidential reports, are stored within DIGS, and this will continue.

Access to Part B of Annual Reports is afforded to MEG staff who receive and assess geological reports and data, MEG staff (including the Resources Regulator) who use the information contained within the reports, and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) staff with a regulatory reason to access any reports. Staff in government sign a confidentiality agreement on commencement of employment.

### **Are the categories listed in the Activity and Expenditure table (Appendix 3 of the Exploration Reporting Guideline) the only ones available?**

Yes, the categories listed in Appendix 3 of the Exploration Reporting Guideline are the only categories available and are also the only categories represented in TMS. Further instruction for compiling activity and expenditure information has been included in the Exploration Reporting Guideline and TMS.

It is noted that the new activity and expenditure categories vary slightly from the previous requirements and in particular the removal of the 'geochemistry' categories. It is intended in the revised guideline that the expenditure associated with geochemistry is included within the expenditure for acquisition of that sample (for example, drill core analysis costs are to be included within the 'drilling' costs).

Expenditure for acquisition exploration categories is now inclusive of all costs incurred in obtaining, preparing, analysing and interpreting samples and data.

### **Is there an Expenditure and Activity table available to assist with compiling this data prior to entry into TMS?**

Appendix 3 of the Exploration Reporting Guideline provides a template for capturing activity and expenditure data prior to entry of this data into TMS.

### **Do you need to submit Part B even though there may not be any commercially sensitive information?**

Yes. Both Part A and Part B are compulsory components of annual reports as of 1st January 2022 and must be submitted (as separate documents).

### **How long in advance can a report be initiated in TMS as a draft?**

TMS drafts do not expire, therefore a report may be initiated and prepared in advance of the reporting due date and returned to as many times as required before the submission is complete. However, the report must be submitted by the reporting due date of the authority.

### **Why then do we have to describe the recommendations for further work in Part A, when Part B requires a description of proposed exploration activities for the next 12 month reporting period?**

Part A includes a summary of recommendations for further work, it may be general in nature and not nominate specific activities or expenditure. Part B is intended for more specific activities and expenditure proposed to demonstrate progression through exploration stages as per the nominated work program for that authority.

### **What is the difference between 'conclusions and recommendations' and 'interpretation and discussion' in the Exploration Reporting Guideline?**

- Conclusions from all reportable exploration activities and recommendations for future work are a summary and do not include detail of activities.
- Interpretation and discussion details interpretations made and targets/prospects/areas of interest identified, based on exploration conducted and their significance. This section should also include details of the key attributes that may affect progression of the exploration target, or for more advanced projects, the ability to mine or market the resource where relevant.

### **How do I apply for an extension or exemption from reporting?**

An application for an extension or exemption must be lodged via Titles Management System (TMS). Guidance is provided in the [Exploration Reporting Guideline](#).

An application for an extension of time to lodge a report or an exemption from reporting must be done in accordance with the Mining Regulation 2016 (clauses 67 and 68).

- Extension requests must be lodged not less than 15 days before the date the report is required to be lodged
- Exemption requests must be lodged not less than 30 days before the date the report is required to be lodged and will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

## How do I apply for group reporting?

Guidance is provided in the Exploration Reporting Guideline.

Group reporting is only available for contiguous mining leases that are operated as a single project. Group reporting for exploration licences and assessment leases is not accepted.

## Why can't I group report exploration licences and assessment leases?

Reporting individually for exploration licences and assessment leases facilitates the release of reports, provides greater clarity on what type of exploration activities occur on specific licences, and streamlines administration for MEG and for industry.

Individual reporting on exploration licences and assessment leases was adopted in 2015 following careful consideration of the associated risks and benefits of revoking the ability to group report these licences. The decision was made for numerous reasons, including to provide greater transparency and accountability. The change was also implemented for all exploration licences and assessment leases, regardless of mineral group, size or term of tenure.

## Do I have to use the new online report building tool?

No, use of this function is optional. Authority holders may elect to continue use of their own reporting templates and lodge reports via upload of report documents and data to TMS.

This benefits of this new TMS function, if utilised, include:

- The reporting requirements are met by ensuring that all mandatory sections are populated, reducing submission errors.
- Maps required for location and access, geology and current exploration activities are still mandatory and must be uploaded to accompany the text, ensuring that reports remain a valuable resource for future explorers
- Information provided in previous years can be used to pre-populate report sections in subsequent years, including authority information and previous exploration, location and access, geology, and exploration rationale. This streamlines report submission in subsequent years.
- A PDF report will be generated for the authority holder to keep as a record, and for storage and delivery via DIGS.

## My report due date falls on a weekend or public holiday. Can I submit it on the following business day?

Annual reports are due 1 calendar month after the grant anniversary date. Where the report due date falls on a weekend/public holiday, there is provision in the Interpretations Act 1987 (section 36) that allows the submission on the first following business day.

TMS operates at all times, and report submission can be completed any time in the calendar month before the due date – therefore the report can be submitted on a weekend or public holiday, or earlier than the due date if it falls on a weekend or public holiday.

## Is the report structure set out in the Exploration Reporting Guideline mandatory?

Yes. The standard format of reports outlined in the Exploration Reporting Guideline (*Exploration Reporting - A Guide on exploration and prospecting in NSW*) reflect the requirements for reports (clause 62 of the Mining Regulation). These were gazetted in October 2021 with the release of version 3.0 of the Reporting Guideline.

## Why do I have to submit my annual report in two parts?

Under changes introduced in the to the Mining Regulation 2016 (clause 64), all annual reports and associated data can be publicly released 5 years after submission.

Following industry consultation on the Annual Report Release Policy via the Annual Report Release Consultation Working Group, an allowance was made for proprietary and commercially sensitive information to remain confidential for life of the authority. This information can now be supplied in

Part B, which will remain confidential while an authority remains in force. The working group also defined what proprietary/commercially sensitive information and data is.

Part A / Part B:

- Ensures confidentiality of proprietary and commercially sensitive information and data whilst an authority remains in force.
- Will reduce administration for authority holders by eliminating the need to redact future reports and data released under Clause 64 of the Mining Regulation 2016.
- Simple format that is easy to produce and replicate yearly if there is no proprietary or commercially sensitive information to include.

Whilst not everyone will have proprietary or commercially sensitive information to report on an annual basis, the Guideline takes a consistent approach for all authorities held in NSW. As progression is made through stages of exploration/assessment to mining over the life of a project, it is more likely that information that is proprietary or commercially sensitive will be obtained. The division of annual reports into Part A and Part B facilitates confidentiality for all authority holders, and benefits those who hold proprietary or commercially sensitive information.

#### **What expenditure data do I submit with a final or partial relinquishment report?**

- Partial relinquishment report – There is no requirement to compile activity and expenditure data. The Activity and Expenditure table in TMS can be left blank.
- Final report – There is no requirement to compile activity and expenditure data. The Activity and Expenditure table in TMS can be left blank.
- Annual and final report – Provide Activity and Expenditure data for the final reporting period (12 months) only.

#### **Why can't I upload an activity and expenditure spreadsheet?**

The direct entry of activity and expenditure data into Titles Management System (TMS), as opposed to using a spreadsheet, has the following advantages to industry and the Department.

- Less mandatory components for reports submitted under the *Exploration Guideline: Annual Activity Reporting for Prospecting Titles*.
- Spreadsheets have no validation and were often being submitted with variations which diluted the data or made it difficult to use. A fixed validated format allows for efficient internal processing and makes the data comparable and useful for analytics.
- The design of the activity and expenditure data capture in TMS drives validations to ensure that the correct data is provided for acquisition activities. This in turn reduces reports being returned.

Titles Management System (TMS) is undergoing continuous improvement. The importing of activity and expenditure data from a plain text file (e.g. CSV file) will be considered for a future release.

#### **How is activity and expenditure data used?**

Activity and expenditure information, as captured in TMS, is used by the Department to;

- assess exploration progress against the work program
- for validating exploration data and information submitted
- assigning appropriate confidentiality to data
- monitor industry wide trends in exploration, environmental management and community consultation.

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