

23 November 2022

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Mr. Phil Joyce
Director
Development Assessment Division – Planning Group
Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
PO Box 15009
City East QLD 4002

Dear Mr. Joyce,

Re: Your ref: D22/172947, Requirement Notice - RPI22/006 Westside – Moura seismic acquisition program

This letter is in response to the Requirement Notice from the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (**DSDILP**) dated 15 September 2022 in relation to the application made by Westside Corporation Pty Ltd (**Westside**) on 1 September 2022 for a regional interests development approval (**RIDA**) under section 29 of the Regional Planning Interests Act 2014 (**RPI Act**) seeking approval to conduct petroleum and gas resource activities, namely a seismic exploration program within the Moura priority living area (**PLA**).

The Requirement Notice noted two issues and one advice which are specified below with responses addressing each of these matters.

Issue 1:

The application does not provide any information indicating the approximate location of the seismic lines, to assist in the assessment of any potential areas of concern, for example, in relation to potential erosion and disturbance of vegetation.

DSDILP has requested an amendment to Figure 5 in the Assessment Report by including the approximate location of the proposed 170km of seismic lines within the PLA. For clarity, the Requirement Notice refers to '170 seismic lines'. We confirm that there will not be 170 seismic lines, rather 170km of seismic is proposed to be acquired.

Westside has a high-level plan of where we wish to locate the seismic lines within the PLA, taking into consideration previously acquired seismic within the PLA by other operators as well as planned seismic by Westside within areas outside of the PLA. However, due to the constraints contained in the RPI Act and other legislation, Westside cannot currently confirm the location of the seismic lines until ecological and cultural heritage assessments are completed and landholder negotiations are finalised.



Environment

There are stringent obligations at law that Westside must comply with when undertaking its activities. From an environmental perspective, this includes meeting the general environmental duty to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise environmental harm. Westside takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and works to minimise any negative impacts across our operations.

For seismic acquisition, an ecological survey is undertaken to confirm whether the proposed seismic lines are suitably located and comply with the conditions of the relevant Environmental Authority (EA).

In relation to the department's concern regarding potential erosion and vegetation disturbance, the RIDA application has been submitted on the basis that there will be zero disturbance. Seismic acquisition is a low impact petroleum activity, which is defined in our EA as follows:

Low impact petroleum activities: means petroleum activities which do not result in the clearing of native vegetation, cause disruption to soil profiles through earthworks or excavation or result in significant disturbance to land which cannot be rehabilitated immediately using hand tools after the activity is completed. Examples of such activities include but are not necessarily limited to soil surveys (excluding test pits), topographic surveys, cadastral surveys and ecological surveys, may include installation of monitoring equipment provided that it is within the meaning of low impact and traversing land by car or foot via existing access tracks or routes or in such a way that does not result in permanent damage to vegetation.

This supports Westside's experience in operating the Meridian field for over ten years, during which no rehabilitation has been required following seismic programs. Although there may be some minor slashing for ground visibility, this does not result in the clearing of vegetation or involve any ripping or reseeding. This view is supported by the Department of Environment and Science (DES), who have confirmed that our seismic methodology meets the definition of low impact petroleum activities.

Accordingly, issues such as erosion and vegetation impacts are not relevant to the proposed exploration activities.

Cultural Heritage

Additionally, in accordance with Westside's cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) with the cultural heritage party, the Gaangalu Nation People, a cultural heritage survey is also undertaken prior to work commencing in order to determine whether any Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is located within the proposed area. If this is the case, a management strategy is implemented, aimed at avoiding or relocating the proposed activities in accordance with the procedures of the CHMP.

Land Access

Without firstly undertaking the above activities, it is not possible to negotiate the location of the seismic lines with landholders, which is required under the Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act (MERC Act). Under the MERC Act, Westside must negotiate conduct and compensation agreements with landholders before it can conduct particular resource activities, including seismic activities. As part of these negotiations, Westside works with

landholders to ensure that its activities are conducted in a way that minimises disturbance to the landholder, livestock and property. Again, this may involve shifting the proposed line locations.

Therefore, it is not possible to confirm the location of the seismic lines at this stage, as final locations cannot be determined until ecological and cultural heritage assessments are completed and landholder negotiations are finalised.

Indicative Map

Westside can provide a high-level and unconfirmed set of seismic lines to DSDILP. However, if DSDILP were to condition Westside based on that data, this will prove problematic once scouting, environmental and cultural heritage assessments are conducted and land access agreements are finalised, which, as noted above, may lead to lines being moved to more suitable locations to avoid any areas of concern.

In addition, we trust that DSDILP appreciates the difficulty associated with proposing activities over private properties before discussing those activities in detail with the relevant landholders. Maintaining positive relationships with landholders is an integral part of our operations, and we seek to ensure that we are the source of information to landholders regarding our own activities. For example, where Westside is required to publicly notify an application, landholders are notified via phone and letter before the notice is publicly advertised. We believe that this is the correct way to engage with stakeholders who have a vested interest in our activities.

Should the department request a map showing indicative locations of the seismic lines, it is our strong preference that the map be kept confidential and not made publicly available for the reasons outlined above.

Issue 2:

RPI Act Statutory Guideline 04/14 Carrying out activities in a Priority Living Area states that 'it is expected that the applicant would liaise with the relevant local government to understand how best to minimise the community impacts and maximise benefits at a local level'. The application does not provide any information to address this expectation.

DSDILP has requested information relating to the outcomes of consultation with the Banana Shire Council (BSC).

Westside began liaising with the BSC about a RIDA in 2020. There were a number of teleconferences, face to face meetings, phone calls and email exchanges. Below is a summary of some key engagement milestones with BSC and Westside's observations from those meetings.

Date	Consultation and Outcomes
12/02/2020	<i>BSC – Westside Workshop</i> We informed BSC delegates that Westside wishes to conduct activities within the PLA and aims to submit a RIDA to enable this.
04/03/2020	<i>Face to face meeting with BSC Councillor</i>

Date	Consultation and Outcomes
	<p>The Councillor seemed interested in the proposed activities and appreciative of the engagement. The Councillor was new to the RIDA process so Westside followed up with fact sheets and background information.</p> <p>Westside provided information on its current local spend and community investment. The Councillor seemed happy to learn about the extent of Westside's contribution in the local community.</p> <p>We discussed the possibility of Westside contributing more to the annual Coal & Country Festival in terms of funding and volunteering. As a result of these discussions, in 2022 Westside significantly increased its funding and volunteering support, and was one of the two main sponsors for the event (link).</p>
17/03/2020	<p><i>Teleconference with several BSC Corporate delegates</i></p> <p>We gave a briefing of our intention to apply for a RIDA to conduct resource activities in the PLA. The BSC delegates were supportive of the application and appreciative of the engagement.</p> <p>A BSC Corporate delegate was nominated as the key contact regarding the RIDA application and a BSC Councillor was nominated as the key community related contact.</p>
03/08/2020	<p><i>Moura field visit with BSC Mayor, Deputy Mayor, BSC Corporate delegate and BSC Councillor</i></p> <p>Westside gave a presentation to the delegates in relation to the proposed RIDA application.</p> <p>We discussed future community/social performance plans such as willingness to engage with schools/STEM programs, further participation in local events and communication information sessions (discussed further below).</p> <p>As noted above, Westside increased its contributions to the Moura Coal and Country festival as a result of these consultations with the BSC. Further, as development activities progress, Westside is interested in running various school and educational tours/excursions.</p>
17/11/2020	<p><i>BSC - Westside Workshop</i></p> <p>We discussed the buffered approach that Westside will take in the RIDA application to avoid the Moura Town Zone and limit activities to the Rural Zone. A map was provided to BSC showing these areas.</p> <p>BSC requested that Westside modify some of the proposed buffers. Following the meeting, BSC shared the draft planning scheme zone maps to incorporate into the buffered approach in the RIDA application.</p>

Date	Consultation and Outcomes
	<p>BSC subsequently shared the results of their latest round of community engagement to provide an understanding of the topics that concern Moura residents. The key focus areas were full time employment, training and upskilling for locals and finding opportunities for local youth.</p> <p>Westside employs locals and works closely with the community and local suppliers. As noted in the RIDA application, Westside employs several staff who permanently reside in the Moura area and within the Banana Shire. Additionally, Westside employs approximately 30 staff and contractors who live in Moura during their shifts. This represents 75% of Westside’s total field-based workforce, and as Westside continues to develop its permits within the area, these figures are naturally expected to increase.</p>
27/01/2021	<p><i>Correspondence with BSC Corporate delegate and BSC Councillor</i></p> <p>BSC delegates provided an update on the RIDA application status and engagement with the Planning Department.</p> <p>An updated map was provided showing the amendments made by Westside to the proposed buffers in accordance with the request from BSC noted above.</p>
02/09/2022	<p><i>Correspondence with BSC Corporate delegate and BSC Councillor</i></p> <p>We informed BSC of the RIDA application lodgment and provided a copy of the application.</p>
09/09/2022	<p><i>Correspondence with BSC Corporate delegate and BSC Councillor</i></p> <p>We informed the BSC delegates of Westside’s Community Drop-In Session (held on 15 September 2022) and provided a copy of the flyer.</p>

Advice:

The Supporting report states at page 30 that ‘Stick raking of the proposed survey line is undertaken followed by slashing of native (and pasture) grasses to provide access for cultural heritage surveys where required’. This process may cause disturbance to any potential cultural heritage items that may exist on either side of the line.

As previously noted, all proposed seismic lines are assessed for cultural heritage values prior to any seismic data being acquired.

One of the requirements of field surveys is good ground visibility so any cultural heritage can be more easily identified. For this purpose, Westside may be required to slash some of the grass along the proposed seismic lines to provide better ground visibility for cultural heritage survey purposes. This is the method that has been agreed with the GNP and is documented in our cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) which have been approved by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (now the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships).



Following cultural heritage surveys, the outcomes are provided by GNP's archeologist in a report along with GIS data delineating where we are "cleared" to undertake seismic activities. We use this data to navigate line surveying and the seismic acquisition equipment along the seismic lines. This method has proven successful for over a decade of conducting similar seismic programs in the Meridian field.

In relation to the department's concern regarding potential cultural heritage items that may exist on either side of the seismic lines, Westside applies a buffer of at least 5m on either side of the lines to seek to ensure that this does not occur.

We trust the above response satisfies the requested information under the Requirement Notice. We thank you for your time in assessing our application and look forward to receiving your response.

If you require any additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Nimandra Gunasekera, Access and Approvals Manager on 07 3020 0919.

Kind regards



Matthew Wallach
Chief Executive Officer
Westside Corporation Pty Ltd

