

THE NT MINERAL EXPLORER NEWS

JUNE 2025

GEOLOGICAL, EXPLORATION AND MINING SERVICES ASSOCIATION NT INC.

Supporting Mineral Explorers in Australia's Northern Territory



Next Virtual Committee Meeting: Thursday, 19th June 2025, 5.00pm

Committee Report:

The management committee has been very active since the start of 2025. We met with AMEC in late February where we highlighted some issues that, if addressed, would improve the position of members or indirectly enhance/increase mineral exploration in the NT. Issues included:

- delays to the grant of exploration licences due to expedited procedure objections,
- the exclusion of uranium exploration from standard environmental (mining) licence applications,
- mineral title rent paid where access is yet to be gained;
- the need for consistent messaging as to what exploration entails and that it is not "mining"; and
- the significant downstream effect on services and suppliers when exploration programs are delayed or cancelled.

The majority of the management committee attended AGES in April. The GEMSA NT booth was bustling with activity with current members dropping by and a pleasing number of new enquiries were also received. While interest for the most part was about the status of drilling approvals, the conversations were nonetheless useful and reinforced the need to engage directly with government about the problems and the consequences for the local economy. We believe that in response to the collaborative effort of industry, the Mining Division of the Department of Lands Planning and Environment confirms that the Minister is proposing to undertake a review of the risk criteria and standard conditions for environmental (mining) licences as declared on

31 July 2024 for exploration and extractive operations. Consultation is anticipated to commence within the next 2-4 weeks. This is good news for the mineral exploration sector in the NT.

GEMSA NT was also represented at the Mineral Resources Industry Breakfast Forum run by the Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, also held in Alice Springs just before the commencement of AGES. The Forum hosted participants from local and wider NT supply chain providers, mining proponents, industry stakeholders, and senior departmental representatives (from Infrastructure NT, Transport Planning, Mining Investment and Promotion, and Supply Chain Specialisation). The forum provided an opportunity to discuss critical issues impacting the mineral resources sector in the southern region with key themes emerging including:

- capital raising and investment attraction,
- environmental regulatory reform,
- infrastructure,
- workforce, and
- supply chain.

GEMSA NT appreciates the opportunity to contribute to discussions and looks forward to future collaborative events.

GEMSA NT also met with the Territory Coordinator and Minister Maley's office to present concerns about the effect the decrease in mineral exploration activity is having on local businesses.

The current trend is illustrated in the recently released ABS figures shown in our Mineral

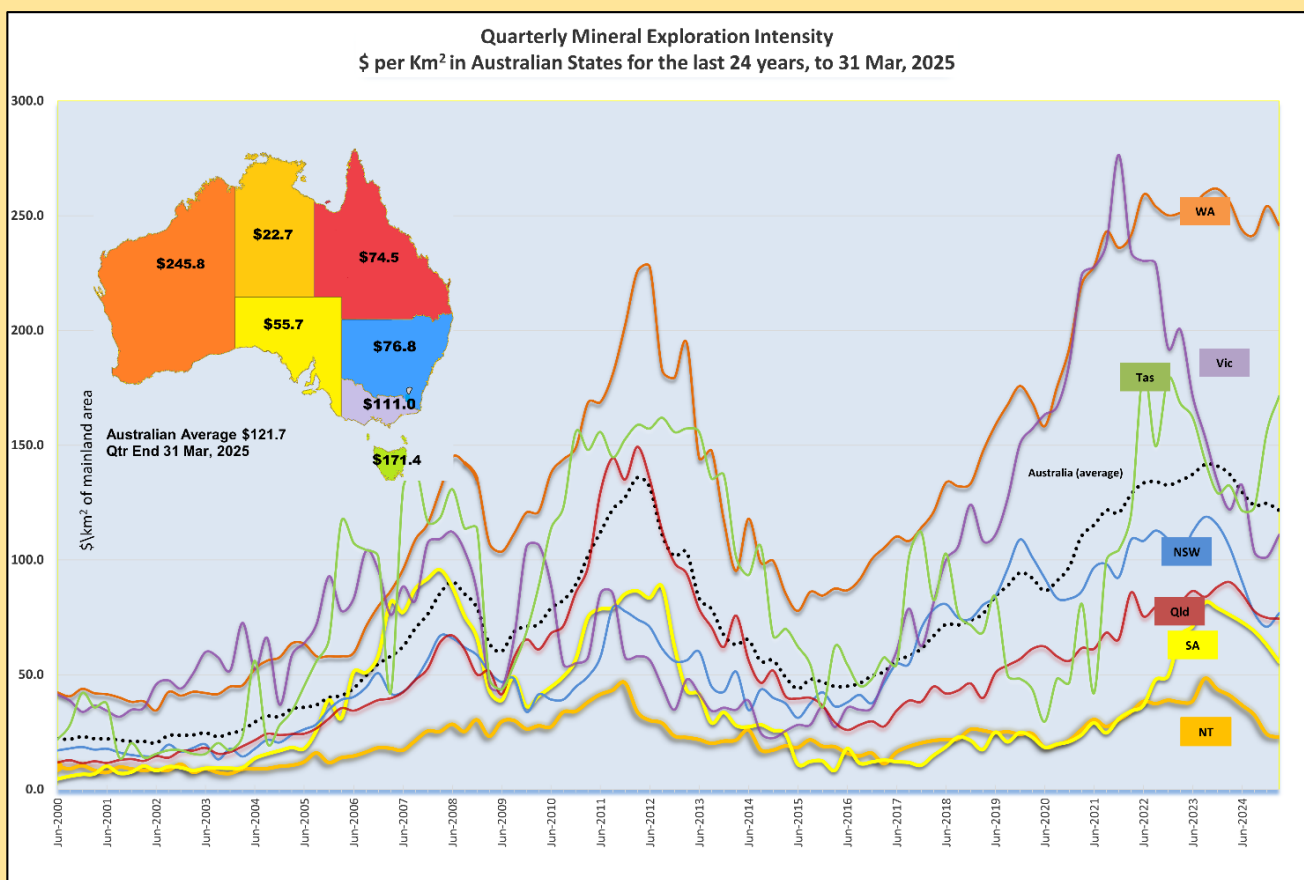
Exploration Intensity Graph to 31 March 2025. We believe that the government has now accepted the reality that the NT is not performing well against other jurisdictions and is seeking ways that will correct this trend as soon as possible. GEMSA NT looks forward to contributing practical ideas to this.

We also held our first members' get together for the year in February at The Precinct at Darwin Waterfront. It was a good turnout with a dozen or more members calling in to connect and hear from each other, the proposed outlook for the coming mineral exploration field season. It was an enjoyable afternoon, and we are looking forward to the next gathering. □

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Geoff Eupene
DEPUTY CHAIR: Lance Martin
SECRETARY: Peter Harris
TREASURER: Tanya Cole
GENERAL COMMITTEE:
 Ray Wooldridge
 Nick Johansen
 Jerry Amato

FOUNDING MEMBERS: Geoff Eupene, Lance Martin, Gary Price, Geoff Farnell, Ray Wooldridge



GEMSA NT's Mineral Exploration Intensity Graph for Australia and its Jurisdictions for the 21st Century.

AMEC Membership

In addition to the catch up with AMEC in February, the GEMSA NT management committee was invited to attend a meeting of AMEC members with Minister Maley at AGES to contribute to positive discussion about the mineral exploration approvals process and potential solutions to

approval timeframes. Minister Maley encouraged AMEC to make a submission to government outlining solutions to the issues raised. AMEC, together with other industry bodies, has since met with the Mining Division of Department of Lands Planning and Environment to workshop those

solutions, to ensure that the NT remains a favourable region for mineral exploration, and without compromising environment protection.

The AMEC NT Liaison Committee meets online approximately every two months and with representatives on this committee, GEMSA NT has had the opportunity to contribute to some of the AMEC submissions made to government since the

beginning of 2025. Copies of these submissions are available for GEMSA NT members who are interested to receive a copy.

Submissions include:

- No access no rent options paper,
- Uranium in environmental mining licence,
- Fit and proper person test,
- Sacred sites legislation.

Committee Member Profile

We are taking the opportunity to introduce the management committee over the next few editions of the newsletter. For members that would like to join the management committee, we would greatly appreciate the additional support. The committee aims to meet once every couple of months, or more often as new developments in the industry bring us together to discuss how GEMSA NT may be able to make a difference.

In this edition, we would like to honour one of our founding committee members, Ray Woolridge. Ray's wealth of knowledge and expertise and significant contribution to the NT minerals industry is very much worthy of recognition.



Ray Wooldridge is a founding committee member of GEMSA NT. Ray holds a diploma in Applied Chemistry and a Diploma in Assaying. Ray is a Chartered Chemist, a Member of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and a Fellow of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. Ray is also the last formally qualified Precious Metal Assayer still practicing in Australia. Ray has some 55 years extensive experience in mineral chemistry, both in Australia and overseas and now has 40 years in the NT Mining industry, particularly with the Tennant Creek IOCG type mineralisation and the arsenopyrite of the Pine Creek Geosyncline. Ray developed the multiple pouring system used in most fire assay laboratories in Australia and internationally and formulated the

104 flux (or derivative of) which is the mainstay flux of the international gold mining industry. Ray has particular expertise in sample preparation of coarse gold ores and fire assay for gold, particularly in difficult ores. Ray's experience also includes the analysis of iron, manganese, base metal, uranium, rare earths and lithium ores and multi element assay services for mineral exploration.

Ray is also the founder of North Australian Laboratories in Pine Creek, a large practically full-service lab that has serviced the NT since 1985. Ray recently handed over the keys of the lab to new owners, and unfortunately, the new owners have decided to shut down the Pine Creek Lab. While it might appear a short-sighted move to those of us who weather the slowdown of NT wet seasons every year, unmistakably, the human talent sourced by Ray to man the lab, from around the globe, is now lost from the NT. We can contemplate the difficulties this will bring with no such facility now servicing the NT, for the first time we can recall. We trust that this gap does not remain for too long but is a stark example of what can happen when local enterprises are not supported. The consequence for the NT is much extended turnarounds of exploration results, which in turn means less sampling and drilling will follow. □



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sales@tignt.com.au



Important Updates and Reminders

Department of Mining and Energy

Joint fit and proper form and guidelines

- The Department of Mining and Energy and the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment now have a joint fit and proper form and guidelines.
- Fit and proper forms that have been lodged with Mineral Titles will be deemed valid for a year from the date that the form was signed.
- Updated forms are located on the departments website at [Supporting materials for mineral title applications | NT.GOV.AU](#) and [Renew a mineral title | NT.GOV.AU](#).
- Contact Mineral Titles of the Department of Mining and Energy on titles.info@nt.gov.au or 08 8999 5322 to discuss your particular circumstances.

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Act 2025

For over 45 years, under the NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act, the [Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority](#) has consulted with Aboriginal custodians to ensure they are fully informed about development, and provided land users with [Authority Certificates](#), setting out clear conditions regarding proposed work in the vicinity of sacred sites.

On the 15th May 2025, [the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Act 2025](#) passed the NT Parliament, and the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Act 2025 commenced 30th May 2025.

The three key amendments in the Act are:

- **Transfer:** Allowing Authority Certificates to be transferred to a new land user. The transferred Authority Certificate will cover the same land, project and work use and will have the same conditions.
- **Recorded Party:** Allowing the holder of an existing Authority Certificate to apply to have additional people or groups added as recorded parties.
- **Enforceable Undertaking:** Establishes a legally binding alternative to court proceedings with individuals alleged to have contravened the Act. This provides an additional tool for the Authority to address damage to sacred sites.

Contact the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority for further advice.

Department of Lands Planning and Environment

Environmental (mining) licences – Things you should know

- All deemed environmental (mining) licences will cease to have effect from 30th June 2028 unless cancelled, revoked or superseded by a replacement/new environmental mining licence sooner.
- Operators should apply for a replacement or new licence in advance of the deadline. A replacement licence is “like for like” and would include previously approved activities/disturbance only. There are no statutory assessment timeframes or public exhibition requirements under the EP Act for replacement licences.
- A new licence is required for new proposed activities/disturbance. A new licence can incorporate your existing activities.
- Standard, modified and tailored condition licences are available. To be eligible for a standard or modified condition licence, the mining operator must be able to meet the declared risk criteria, and operate within (with or without modification) the standard conditions.
- Modified and tailored condition licences are publicly exhibited, and the public has the opportunity to provide comments. *(The Mining Division advises that no public comments have been received on any exhibited licence application to date.)*
- If an operator cannot meet the declared risk criteria, an application for tailored condition licence will be required.
- Information regarding the licence application process is available at: [Apply for an environmental \(mining\) licence | NT.GOV.AU](#) and pre-lodgement meetings is strongly advised.
- Contact the Mining Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment on mineralinfo.dlpe@nt.gov.au or 08 8999 6528 to discuss your particular circumstances.

New exemption from water licensing for dewatering activities

- Approval to undertake dewatering activities can now be licensed under an environmental (mining) licence. Once included in the environmental licence, a water extraction licence under the *Water Act 1992* will not be required.
- Surface or groundwater extraction for other purposes, e.g. camps, will still require a licence under the *Water Act 1992*, unless another exemption applies. The exemption from the need to obtain a water licence remains current for the use of groundwater not exceeding 5ML/year from a bore on a mineral title under the *Mineral Titles Act 2010*. This exemption does not apply to the former Darwin River Water Control District.
- All water bore drilling must be completed by a licensed driller.

Changes to exploration risk criteria and standard conditions

- The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment anticipates commencing public consultation on changes to the risk criteria and standard conditions for exploration activities in the next few weeks. It will advise GEMSA when the consultation period has opened.
- Mining operators that hold a standard or modified condition licence will receive correspondence from the Department. Contact the Department to discuss what the changes mean to you.

MEMBER REFERRALS

Member referrals are very important to the growth of GEMSA NT. If you know of services or suppliers that would benefit from membership with GEMSA NT, we would greatly appreciate the referral.

Upcoming Catch Up



GEMSA NT
Member Get Together
The Precinct, Darwin Waterfront
Saturday (TBC) 2025
12pm to 2pm



A couple of photos from the GEMSA NT get together at the Precinct in February 2025.



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MEMBER NOTICES

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Drilling, based in Ballarat, serves the resource sector in Australia and abroad. Ph: 03 5338 3800, www.titelinedrilling.com.

McLeod Drilling hope to be drilling in the Northern Territory by July 2025. Contact Jim McLeod on 0408 365 005 or email jim@mcleoddrilling.com.au.

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Comments from the Chair

I have been planning since the last newsletter to write an article on the early history of the Tanami mines during the 1980s, with which I am reasonably familiar. In doing my research for that, I have realised that the relationship between miners and the Warlpiri People has extended over a much longer period than my brief involvement and has been largely positive over many decades. However, with the recent tragic events affecting the Warlpiri People, I decided not to raise the specifics of this topic for now. I intend to do further research on this matter and hope to document it more fully in the future.

A brief comparison of granted exploration tenure on Aboriginal Freehold land in the NT for different regions shows considerable variation. In the Tanami district there are many active ELs, while in some other districts there are none. This probably relates to the perceptions by local decision makers of the desirability of exploration and mining activity on their land. From my own research, I know that there are still some areas of Aboriginal Freehold land that have never had a granted EL over them.

The process of “selling” exploration of Aboriginal land to those Traditional Owners with no experience of exploration or mining is challenging, and some exploration companies have concluded that the process is too difficult, expensive, risky, and time consuming to even consider exploring on Aboriginal Freehold land. But the experience of established explorers in the Tanami seems to be overall far more positive than some other areas. There are also several long-term exploration efforts in Western Arnhem Land that suggest that Traditional Owners in that district are also more welcoming of mineral explorers.

I note that in both cases Traditional Owners have had direct experience of mining on their lands and have experience of negotiating their own agreements with explorers, in some cases with multiple generations of explorers. We might conclude that more familiarity with mining and exploration on their lands, when it is done from a

position of control of that activity, leads to more exploration. Presumably this is because the Traditional Owners of these areas recognise the benefits that mining can bring to their people.

It is not just Aboriginal Freehold land where exploration and mining would be more welcome if the other parties affected by resource exploration and development could see some benefit from this activity in their locality. The same sentiments are often felt by pastoralists and other landholders when explorers come calling to work on their lands. A sure way to stimulate goodwill, is for explorers to try to find ways to support local economic activity rather than import goods and services that might be readily available locally, if local suppliers were given the chance to participate in projects.

This becomes even more important in times of low economic activity in local communities. Most of the NT is hurting economically at present, and we are seeing an abnormal number of closures of local businesses. Including local services supporting our sector, and others reporting much lower turnovers recently. GEMSA NT was set up to foster the strengthening of locally available services and suppliers, as we know that ultimately it is these local businesses that are a large part of improving both the level of exploration, local economic activity, and the perception of the industry.

Mineral exploration and mining are obvious major contributors to regional economic prosperity in the NT, and visiting explorers and service providers could help cement their local welcome by maximising their use of available local suppliers, while doing their best to employ locals where they can.

We have an article about Ray Wooldridge in this issue. Ray is the founder of North Australian Laboratories in Pine Creek, which after changing hands to new owners last year, closed its doors last month. A stark example of the effect a slowdown in the use of mineral exploration services for just a short term can have on important local services and suppliers. □

MEMBER STORIES OF INTEREST

Please send us your news items or newsworthy recounts of historical events or experiences to share in future editions of the newsletter.

Serious business...

TOPCUT: What happens to the senior management every time your mine gets bought out.

LAG: The time taken between giving your results to the consultant and getting a completed model.

INVERSE DISTANCE SQUARED: A mathematical function that defines the amount you suffer when the pit under performs compared to your model. The greater the distance you are away when it happens, the less the effect it has on you.

KRIGING: An educated guess.

INDICATOR KRIGING: A guess.

CONDITIONAL SIMULATION: A wild guess.

CUTOFF GRADE: The waste dump will be between 0.2 to 0.5 g/t higher than this figure when mining is completed.

LOW GRADE: Not enough gold for the mill, but we're too scared that we got it wrong to send this to the waste dump.

MINERALISED WASTE: Any material that hosts mineralisation that does not fit within the preconceived ore **WIREFRAME**

WIREFRAME: A computer-generated expression of the resource modelers imagination

GEOLOGY: A once essential tool that is becoming increasingly unpopular in resource modelling.

HIGH GRADE INTERP: Join the dots.

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE: Is defined as a one-to-one ratio of the level of bs in the person who creates the resource.

NUGGET EFFECT: A very good excuse to mitigate the effects of conditional Simulation.

SAMPLE SUPPORT: The more samples taken from a given area, the more assay lab employees can feed their children.

HEAD GRADE: A number set by senior management that must be below the **MILLED GRADE** otherwise you'll get kicked in the head.

MILLED GRADE: The number supplied to you by the Metallurgists who are habitual liars and gold thieves, they generally ensure it's less than the **HEAD GRADE**

JORC CODE: A set of guidelines and requirements put in place by the JORC committee that senior management encourages you to ignore

COMPETENT PERSON: Someone who fulfills the JORC CODE requirements for signing off on a **RESOURCE**. This position of responsibility can often be obtained in a company by irresponsibly ignoring the JORC CODE.

RECONCILIATION: Talking your way out of a whole heap of trouble, should be used with **NUGGET EFFECT** to explain the **MILLED GRADE** after **INVERSE DISTANCE SQUARED**, **KRIGING**, **INDICATOR KRIGING** or **CONDITIONAL SIMULATION** has let you down. □

Feedback We are interested to receive member feedback. We want to ensure your membership provides value to your business. Please feel free to email us at gemsa.nt2020@gmail.com.