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NEWS RELEASE

ATTENTION: NEWS EDITORS
FROM: RODNEY HUGHES **DATE:** SUNDAY, JULY 10, 1994
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The Environmental Protection Authority has broadened its proposed environmental assessment of planned industrial land development in the Pilbara.

The EPA advertised two weeks ago that the draft land use and management plan for the Burrup peninsula would undergo a public environmental review.

However, EPA chairman Ray Steedman said today that the EPA would not formally assess the plan which had been released by the Department of Resources Development.

Dr Steedman said that while legal impediments meant the formal assessment would not go ahead the EPA would provide a detailed response to the draft plan through DRD's public comment period.

At the same time the EPA had negotiated with DRD to allow for a consolidated environmental assessment of three other industrial planning proposals in the Burrup Peninsula's hinterland.

The EPA is currently assessing applications by DRD to reserve West Intercourse Island and vacant crown land on the adjoining mainland for future industry. Plans are also being developed for an industrial site near the Maitland River.

Dr Steedman said DRD had agreed to withdraw the applications currently before the EPA and would re-submit a wider plan to cover all three development proposals.

"This approach provides us the optimum solution to rationalise the environmental assessment of industrial proposals in this area of the Pilbara," Dr Steedman said.

"In particular, by assessing these proposals together we will also be able to give close consideration to the environmental issues associated with the, corridors that run between the areas proposed for future development."

Dr Steedman said he anticipated that the consolidated DRD proposal would undergo a public environmental review, the EPA's second highest level of environmental assessment.

DRD acting chief executive officer Jim Limerick said he was pleased that agreement had been reached.

"The Department of Resources Development believed there were legal difficulties with the EPA's proposal to formally assess the draft plan for the Burrup Peninsula," Dr Limerick said.

He welcomed the EPA's willingness to integrate its comments into the planning process for the Burrup.

"This will lead to a more efficient approach to developing the final plan which can then be put to Cabinet for consideration," he said.

"The agreement reached will not mean that consideration of environmental issues on the Burrup is in any way diminished."

"But it will allow for a more coordinated approach to be taken to the other development proposals from both industrial planning and environmental protection perspectives."

Dr Limerick said he expected that the consolidated proposal from DRD would be referred to the EPA by the end of the month.

Meanwhile, public comment was being accepted on the Burrup Peninsula land use and management plan until July 29.

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