

Exploration activities

How are they regulated in Vic?



How are exploration activities regulated in Victoria?

All mineral exploration activities are strictly regulated in Victoria by the Earth Resources Regulation (ERR) branch within the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions in accordance with the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 (the Act). Companies must meet strict criteria to apply for licences, which enable them to enter land and perform any regulated activities in Victoria.

The ERR branch issue Exploration Licences (ELs) which give the licence holder exclusive rights to explore for specific minerals within the licence area. ELs contain specific environmental management requirements for conducting exploration activities, these management conditions are in accordance with the Act and the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) (Mineral Industries) Regulations 2019 (the Regs).

Exploration Licences are usually granted for five years, they may be renewed once for another five years, with ministerial approval.

Australian Rare Earths (AR3) currently hold two Exploration Licences in Victoria EL007254 and EL007719.



Code of Practice?

The Code of Practice for Mineral Exploration (the Code) sets out how exploration work should be conducted in Victoria, to meet the regulatory and environmental requirements under the Act and the Regs.

More specifically, it provides guidance on how to comply with the standard conditions attached to ELs.

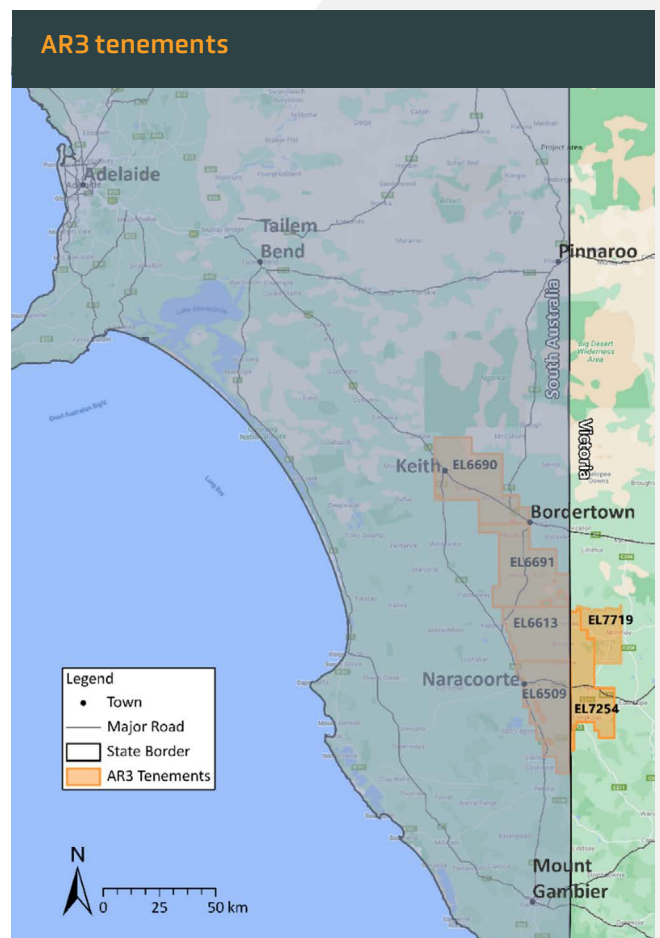
The Code covers environmental management, public safety, and landowner and community matters such as:

- Soil quality and erosion control
- Native vegetation, flora and fauna (incl. pest and weed management)
- Surface and groundwater protection
- Air quality, radiation and noise emissions
- Traffic and transport
- Public safety and secure access to the exploration activities

Australian Rare Earths is required to conduct its exploration activities in accordance with the standard conditions in the Code.

The Code is available for download on the ERR website. www.earthresources.vic.gov.au

Prior to commencing low impact exploration, AR3 is required to submit information on the management strategies for the proposed activities. These include, but are not limited to, a Risk Treatment Plan, an Environmental Management Plan and a Rehabilitation Bond.





Environmental Management Plan

Australian Rare Earths have an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) which stipulates a range of controls and management measures to minimise potential environmental impacts.

Low Impact Exploration

The Act clearly states which exploration activities are considered 'Low Impact' which means that the environmental impacts will be lower than other exploration works.

Australian Rare Earths propose to conduct low impact exploration activities, namely drilling for core samples, within EL007254 and EL007719. This means that drilling for core samples will have low social and environmental impacts, as no vegetation removal is proposed, and minimal ground disturbance will occur.

Risk Treatment Plan

The risk treatment plan identifies and assesses all risks associated with the proposed exploration works. The plan also identifies how those risks are managed.

Rehabilitation Bond

Exploration Licence holders including AR3 are required to lodge a Rehabilitation Bond to cover 100 per cent of the estimated cost to rehabilitate their site.

Once ERR are satisfied that the sites have been rehabilitated, they return the bond to AR3. If EL holders default on their rehabilitation obligations, the bond can be used by the State to make amends.

