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**NSW Resources**

Resources Regulator



## **Compliance audit program**

**ML 1035 – Bald Hill Gold Mine**

RTI Mining Pty Ltd

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Mining lease 1035 (1973) was granted on 26 January 1983 to Mr A Blundell. The lease was in an area that was intermittently mined for gold since 1887.

The lease was transferred to RTI Mining Pty Ltd in May 2006 and had an expiry date of 26 January 2040. ML1035 occupied 76 hectares of Crown Land administered by Reflections Holiday Park Lake Burrendong, part of Mookerawa Waters Park in Stuart Town NSW. The mining area, known as Bald Hill Gold Mine, occupied about 1.92 hectares of the 76-hectare mining lease.

As part of the compliance audit program, an audit of the mining operations associated with the Bald Hill Gold Mine was undertaken on 3 December 2025 by the Resources Regulator within the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

## 1.2. Audit objectives

The objectives of the audit were to:

- undertake a compliance audit of the RTI Mining Pty Ltd mining operations against the requirements of the *Mining Act 1992*, the conditions of the mining lease and the prescribed standard conditions outlined in Schedule 8A Part 2 of the Mining Regulation 2016
- assess the operational performance of the mining operations and the ability of the licence holder and/or its operator to implement management systems and controls to provide for sustainable management of the operations.

## 1.3. Audit scope

The scope of the audit included:

- a review of documents and records pertaining to mining operations associated with the Bald Hill Gold Mine, as required by the standard conditions on mining leases and obligations under the *Mining Act 1992*
- the assessment of compliance for the period commencing 3 December 2023 and ending 3 December 2025.

## 1.4. Audit criteria

The audit criteria against which compliance was assessed included:

- *Mining Act 1992*, specifically Sections 5, 6, 163C to 163E, 163G, 378D
- Mining Regulation 2016, specifically clauses 59 to 68
- general and special conditions for mining leases as included on the mining lease documents
- standard conditions for mining leases outlined in Schedule 8A Part 2 of the Mining Regulation 2016

- Guideline: Form and way: Annual Rehabilitation Report and Forward Program for small mines
- Guideline: Form and way: Rehabilitation objectives and rehabilitation completion criteria for small mines.

## 1.5. Publishing and disclosure of information

This audit report was published on the Regulator's website consistent with:

- Section 365 of the *Mining Act 1992*
- Resources Regulator's [Public comment policy](#)
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

## 2. Audit methods

The audit process involved interviewing site personnel, reviewing documentation and samples of records provided by the licence holder and/or operator to determine the level of compliance of the operations and assess the status of the operational performance. The audit process and methodology are described in more detail in the sections below.

### 2.1. Opening meeting

An opening meeting was held onsite on 3 December 2025. The audit team was introduced, and the scope of their responsibilities was conveyed to the auditees. The objectives and scope of the audit were outlined. The methods to be used by the team to conduct the audit were explained, including the interview of personnel, review of documentation, examination of records and a site inspection to assess specific compliance requirements.

### 2.2. Site interviews and inspections

#### 2.2.1. Data collection and verification

Where possible, documents and data provided during the audit process were reviewed electronically on the day. Where documents were unable to be reviewed on the day, they were provided following the audit.

All information obtained during the audit process was verified by the audit team where possible. For example, statements made by site personnel were verified by viewing documentation and records, including site photographs, where possible. Where suitable verification could not be provided, this was identified in the audit findings as not determined.

#### 2.2.2. Site inspections

A site inspection was undertaken of the mining operations including exploration activities under ML1035.

### 2.3. Closing meeting

A closing meeting was held on site on 3 December 2025. The objectives of this meeting were to discuss any outstanding matters, present preliminary findings and outline the process for finalising the audit report.

### 2.4. Compliance assessment definitions

The reporting of results from the compliance audit was determined based on the definitions presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Compliance assessment definitions

Assessment	Criteria
<b>Compliance</b>	Sufficient and appropriate evidence is available to demonstrate the particular requirement has been complied with.
<b>Non-compliance</b>	<p>Clear evidence has been collected to demonstrate the particular requirement has not been complied with. There are 3 subcategories of non-compliance reflecting the severity and level of risk associated with the non-compliance:</p> <p>NC1 – the absence of planning or implementation of a required operational element which has the potential to result in a significant risk.</p> <p>NC2 – an isolated lapse or absence of control in the implementation of an operational element which is unlikely to result in a significant risk.</p> <p>NC3 – an administrative or reporting non-compliance which does not have a direct environmental or safety significance.</p> <p>Note: The identification of a non-compliance in this audit may or may not constitute a breach of, or offence under, the <i>Mining Act 1992</i>. Non-compliances identified in this audit report may be further investigated by the Regulator and regulatory actions may be undertaken.</p>
<b>Observation of concern</b>	<p>Where an auditee may be compliant at the time of the audit but there are issues that exist that could result in the potential for future non-compliance if not addressed.</p> <p>Observation of concern was also used where an issue may not have particular compliance requirements, but which was not conducive to good management or best practice.</p>
<b>Suggestion for improvement</b>	Where changes in processes or activities inspected or evaluated at the time of the audit could deliver improvement in relation to risk minimisation, sustainable outcomes and management practices.
<b>Not determined</b>	<p>The necessary evidence has not been collected to enable an assessment of compliance to be made within the scope of the audit.</p> <p>Reasons why the audit team could not collect the required information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>insufficient information on the file relating to the period covered by the audit or insufficient evidence collected to reach a conclusion</li> <li>the wording on the criteria (approval condition) meant that no evidence could be gathered, or it was too difficult to gather the evidence.</li> </ul> <p>A ‘not determined’ assessment was also made where the condition was outside the scope of the audit.</p>
<b>Not applicable</b>	<p>The circumstances of the authorisation or licence holder have changed and are no longer relevant ( e.g. no longer mining, mining equipment and plant has been removed).</p> <p>An invoking element in the criteria was not activated within the scope of the audit.</p>

## 2.5. Reporting

Following completion of the audit, the audit checklists were completed, and audit notes were reviewed to compile a list of outstanding matters to be noted in the audit report. This report was prepared to provide an overview of the operational performance of the site in relation to the mining operations and identify any non-compliances or observations of concern noted by the auditors during the documentation review and interviews.

The draft audit findings were forwarded to RTI Mining for comment. Consideration was given to the representations made during the finalisation of the audit report as discussed in the audit findings.

## 3. Audit findings

### 3.1. Mining lease conditions

#### 3.1.1. Security deposit

Condition 2 of ML1035 required the lease holder to provide and maintain a security deposit to secure funding for the fulfilment of obligations under the mining lease.

The security amount required for ML1035 was \$23,000, which department records confirmed was held.

Observations made on site during the site inspection confirmed the security held was adequate for the mining operations in progress.

#### 3.1.2. Co-operation agreement

Condition 3 of ML1035 required the lease holder to make reasonable attempts to enter into a co-operation agreement with the holders of any overlapping titles.

A search of the Minview database and department records confirmed there was no overlapping with ML1035. There was a title application for ELA6987 which, if granted, would overlap with ML1035. If the ELA was granted, RTI Mining Pty Ltd. would need to make reasonable attempt to negotiate an agreement with Mining and Energy Group, the titleholder for ELA6987.

#### 3.1.3. Assessable prospecting operations

Condition 4 of ML1035 required the leaseholder to have development consent or the prior written approval of the Minister before carrying out any assessable prospecting operations on the lease area.

Development consent DA32/82 was granted by Dubbo Regional Council on 1 November 1982 for the site. Bald Hill Gold Mine did not carry out any assessable prospecting operations on ML1035 during 2024 or 2025. The requirements under condition 4 were not triggered and no applications for assessable prospecting operations were required.

### 3.2. Schedule 8A requirements

The Schedule 8A requirements commenced on 2 July 2021. Clause 31A (2) of the Mining Regulation 2016 included transitional arrangements for any mining lease that was in force on the commencement day of the Schedule 8A provisions. For a large mine, the new provisions would not apply until 12 months after the commencement day. For a small mine, the new provisions would not apply until 24 months after the commencement day of the Schedule 8A requirements.

Bald Hill Gold Mine was a small underground mine, therefore the requirements of Schedule 8A applied to ML1035 from July 2023. An assessment of compliance against the Schedule 8A requirements was undertaken for ML1035, as documented in the following sections.

### 3.2.1. Multiple mining leases

Clause 3 of Schedule 8A allowed a leaseholder to make application to have multiple mining leases relating to the same mine treated as a single lease for the purposes of Part 2 of Schedule 8A. Though not required, as there was only one mining lease at Bald Hill Gold Mine at the time of the audit, RTI Mining made an application to treat ML1035 as a single lease for the purposes of Part 2 of Schedule 8A. This application was approved by the Resources Regulator on 19 January 2024.

### 3.2.2. Environmental management

Clause 4 required a lease holder to prevent, or if that was not reasonably practicable, minimise any harm to the environment arising from activities carried out under the mining leases.

Mapping, further development of the adits and improvements to the wet washing gold recovery plant were carried out under ML1035. Minimal mine processing was undertaken due to work being concentrated on repairs with the adits. The activities appeared to be managed appropriately. The following observations were made:

- The leaseholders conducted cleaning operations and removal of old equipment and rubbish left onsite by the previous owner. Cleaning was ongoing (Figure 1 and Figure 2).
- The old processing plant was to be demolished and removed offsite (Figure 3).
- There were 2 ponds that captured water runoff from the site. A safety fence was installed around the bigger pond (Figure 4 and Figure 5 ).
- Overburden materials were stockpiled for potential use as fill for future rehabilitation activities (Figure 6).
- There were 2 adits observed. The roof structures of these adits were upgraded from timber to steel to improve safety and durability (Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11).
- An old diesel generator was to be retained for future use (Figure 12).
- Stockpiled topsoil and timber in the laydown yard was to be used as rehabilitation resources (Figure 13 and Figure 14).
- There was an eroded portion of the land surrounding the tunnel used for water supply, which was caused by a previous storm (Figure 15). This was raised as an observation of concern one. RTI Mining should repair the eroded portion of land and ensure its stability.

Figure 1: Old equipment and rubbish to be removed



Figure 2: Old rubbish to be removed



Figure 3: Old processing plant



Figure 4: Safety fence on pond containing water runoff



Figure 5: Small pond



Figure 6: Second overburden area



Figure 7: Contractor's adit



Figure 8: Inside the upgraded contractor's adit



Figure 9: East portal adit



Figure 10: Inside view of the upgraded east portal adit



Figure 11: View of the original east portal tunnel



Figure 12: A diesel generator



Figure 13: Topsoil stockpile for rehabilitation



Figure 14: Timber rehabilitation resource



Figure 15: Eroded soil for stabilisation



### 3.2.3. Rehabilitation

Clause 5 required rehabilitation to occur as soon as reasonably practicable after disturbance. It was observed fallen tree limbs were cut and placed on laydown yard as firewood and for future rehabilitation resource. Weed control and rat baiting were done around existing infrastructure. Grass around the surface disturbance area was controlled by mowing and slashing. There were substantial quantities of clean fill materials and topsoil stored for future rehabilitation use.

### 3.2.4. Final land use

Clause 6 required the lease holder to ensure that rehabilitation of the mining area achieved the final land use.

As Bald Hill Gold Mine was considered a small mine, there was no requirement for lodging the final landform and rehabilitation plan (FLRP). Rehabilitation objectives and completion criteria (ROBJ0001413) was submitted and approved by the Regulator on 22 July 2024. The post mining land use objectives for ML1035 was proposed to be a safe and stable natural bushland setting with a mixture of White Box eucalypts and Kurrajong and a robust grass cover. The mine had not progressed to the stage of active rehabilitation, however, initial clean-up of the site had started. The Bald Hill Gold Mine representative said there was no risk for achieving the final landform and this was confirmed by the auditors' observations on site.

### 3.2.5. Rehabilitation risk assessment

Clause 7 required the lease holder to conduct a rehabilitation risk assessment that identified, assessed and evaluated the risks that needed to be addressed to achieve the rehabilitation objectives and completion criteria for the mine.

Section 3.1.3 and Table 5 of the November 2024 mining operation plan (MOP) outlined the environmental impacts and risks associated with mining activities, which included progressive rehabilitation and closure. Table 6 detailed the rehabilitation measures planned for mine closure. A separate rehabilitation risk assessment was not provided. This was raised as an observation of concern 2. RTI Mining should prepare a separate rehabilitation risk assessment and the risk control measures stated in Table 6 of the MOP be incorporated into that risk assessment.

### 3.2.6. Rehabilitation documents

Under clause 8 of Schedule 8A, clauses 9 to 16 applied where the security deposit required under the mining leases was more than the minimum deposit prescribed by the Act. It was noted the security required for ML1035 was \$23,000, more than the minimum security prescribed by the Act. As such, the provisions of clauses 9 to 16 of Schedule 8A apply to ML1035 and rehabilitation documents were required.

Further assessment was undertaken against clauses 9 to 16 for the mining leases.

### 3.2.7. General requirements for documents

Under clause 9 of Schedule 8A, the lease holder was required to prepare documents in a form approved by the Secretary and include any matter required to be included in the form and if required to be given to the Secretary.

The forward programs and annual rehabilitation reports for 2024 and 2025 were submitted using the approved form and way forms.

### 3.2.8. Rehabilitation management plan

Clause 10(1) required the lease holder of a large mine to prepare a RMP for the mining leases that include the following:

- a) A description of how the holder proposes to manage all aspects of the rehabilitation of the mining area.

- b) A description of the steps and actions the holder proposes to take to comply with the conditions of the mining lease that relate to rehabilitation.
- c) A summary of rehabilitation risk assessments conducted by the holder.
- d) The risk control measures identified in the rehabilitation risk assessments.
- e) The rehabilitation outcome documents for the mining lease.
- f) A statement of the performance outcomes for the matters addressed by the rehabilitation outcome documents and the ways in which those outcomes are to be measured and monitored.

Bald Hill Gold Mine was considered a small underground mine, therefore the requirement to prepare a RMP was not triggered.

### 3.2.9. Rehabilitation outcome documents

Clause 12 (1) required the lease holder to prepare the following rehabilitation outcome documents and give them to the Secretary for approval:

- a) The rehabilitation objectives statement, which sets out the rehabilitation objectives (ROBJ) required to achieve the final land use for the mining area.
- b) The rehabilitation completion criteria statement, which sets out criteria, the completion of which will demonstrate the achievement of the rehabilitation objectives.
- c) For a large mine, the final landform and rehabilitation plan, showing a spatial depiction of the final land use.

The ROBJ was lodged and approved by the Regulator on 22 July 2024. The rehabilitation completion criteria statement will be prepared when the mine approaches closure. As Bald Hill Gold Mine was considered a small underground mine, lodging the FLRP was not required.

### 3.2.10. Forward program and annual rehabilitation report

Clause 13 (1) required the lease holder to prepare a forward program that included the schedule of mining activities for the next 3 years, a summary of spatial progression of rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of disturbed areas as soon as reasonably practicable after the disturbance occurs.

RTI Mining submitted forward programs for 2024, and 2025. The activities observed onsite reflected what was in the forward programs.

Clause 13(2) required the lease holder to prepare an annual rehabilitation report (ARR) which included a description of the rehabilitation undertaken, the progress made through the phases of rehabilitation provided for in the forward program, and a report demonstrating progress made towards achievement of the following:

- a) The objectives set out in the rehabilitation objectives statement.
- b) The criteria set out in the rehabilitation completion criteria statement.
- c) For large mines- the final land use as spatially depicted in the FLRP.

RTI Mining submitted ARR for 2023 and 2024. During the reporting periods, weed control and rat baiting around building structures were conducted. Grasses around the surface disturbance area were controlled by mowing and slashing.

### 3.2.11. Times of document preparation and submission

Clause 15 required the preparation and submission of the following documents in a timely manner as prescribed by the Secretary:

- RMP
- updated rehabilitation outcome documents
- forward program
- ARR
- rehabilitation completion criteria statement.

The ARR and forward program for Bald Hill Gold Mine were due for submission annually by 27 March each year. A review of department records indicated the forward program for 2024 was submitted on time. A request for an extension of time for submission of the 2025 forward program was lodged and approved by the Regulator on 21 March 2024. The amended due date for submission of the 2025 forward program was 18 April 2025. The forward program for 2025 was submitted on 13 April 2025. The ARRs for 2023 and 2024 were submitted on time.

### 3.2.12. Documents to be publicly available

Clause 16 required the lease holder to make the RMP, forward program and ARR publicly available by publishing it on the website and/or providing a copy upon written request without charge within 14 days after the request was received.

RTI Mining does not have a website. Copies of the ARRs and forward programs were provided to the Regulator during the audit.

### 3.2.13. Records management

Sections 163D and 163E of the *Mining Act 1992* related to creating and maintaining records required under the Act, the Regulations, or a condition of title. Records must be kept in a legible form for production to any inspector and must be maintained for 4 years after the expiry or cancellation of the title. Clause 17 required the lease holder to create and maintain records to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Schedule 8A, Part 2.

RTI Mining was generally maintaining records to demonstrate compliance with relevant requirements. Records reviewed during the audit included:

- forward programs
- mining operation plan
- ARRs
- exploration reports
- workplace inspection checklists
- waste receipts
- photos of baseline conditions

- copies of rental fee/levy receipts
- site plans
- training competency register
- ROBJ.

### 3.2.14. Reporting on non-compliance

Clause 18 required the lease holder to provide the Minister with a written report detailing any non-compliance with any conditions of the mining lease, or a requirement of the Act or Regulation, relating to the mining activities.

RTI Mining conducted monthly site inspections to determine non-compliances. No non-compliances were identified during the audit reporting period.

### 3.2.15. Nominated contact person

Clause 19 required the lease holder to nominate a contact person for the mining lease and provide contact details for that person.

RTI Mining nominated a contact person for ML1035 using the forms provided in the Regulator portal and was confirmed on 8 January 2025.

### 3.2.16. Modification of development consent

Clause 20 required the lease holder to give written notice to the Secretary within 10 days after making an application for modification of a development consent except if the development was a state significant development.

No modification to development consent DA32/82 was submitted during the audit period.

## 3.3. Reporting

### 3.3.1. Annual exploration reporting

Section 163C of the *Mining Act 1992* and clause 59 of the *Mining Regulation 2016* required the preparation and submission of an annual report that provided full particulars of all exploration and other operations or activities conducted during the 12-month period.

Annual exploration reports for 2023 and 2024 were submitted for ML1035. The activities undertaken during the reporting periods included:

- further mapping of all features within the surface right area and application of topographic control
- refurbishment of the portal to the main adit
- improvements to the wet washing gold recovery plant that treats the alluvial gravels.

### 3.3.2. Annual rehabilitation reporting

Clause 13 of Schedule 8A required the lease holder to prepare and submit a rehabilitation report annually.

Annual rehabilitation reports for 2023 and 2024 were submitted for ML1035. The activities undertaken included:

- weed control
- rat baiting
- grass slashing and mowing.

## 4. Compliance management

### 4.1. Identifying compliance obligations

Identifying compliance obligations is a critical step in the development of an effective compliance management system. Compliance obligations for an exploration project can include:

- regulatory requirements (for example, the *Mining Act 1992*)
- conditions imposed on the grant, renewal, or transfer of exploration licences
- exploration activity approvals
- exploration codes of practice
- specific commitments made by the organisation (for example, commitments made in the approved exploration activity application).

Once identified, compliance obligations should be reviewed periodically to identify any changes in those obligations (for example, changes in legislation).

RTI Mining had a good understanding of the compliance requirements for ML1035. Systems and processes for managing compliance requirements were developed and implemented. It was noted records were generally being maintained to demonstrate compliance.

### 4.2. Contractor management

Contractors are often used to undertake specialist tasks, for example, exploration drilling. While the responsibility for compliance or the implementation of environmental controls is often passed to the contractor, the licence holder will retain accountability for compliance with its licence conditions and other compliance obligations. It is important that the licence holder exercises management control of its contractors by specifying contract requirements, providing oversight of contracted works, and evaluating the performance of the contractor during the contracted works.

The RTI Mining representative said contractors were used for steel fabrication, hired equipment and waste removal. These contractors were inducted via the mine's site induction process. Workplace inspection checklist, diary findings and hazard forms were sighted during the audit. Competencies and training records of staff and contractors were sighted during the audit.

### 4.3. Inspections, monitoring and evaluation

An effective inspection, monitoring and evaluation process is required to:

- monitor the implementation of the risk controls
- evaluate the effectiveness of those controls based on an assessment of inspection and monitoring data

- implement an adaptive management approach if monitoring shows that controls may be ineffective.

Copies of inspection checks and visual checks were sighted to confirm Bald Hill Gold Mine had systems in place for inspection and monitoring of key risks controls. Relevant staff were notified during toolbox meetings on issues identified during site inspections and these issues were recorded in a diary system which was updated each time activities were conducted to resolve issues.

## 5. Audit conclusions

Based on the evidence reviewed and observations made during the site inspection, it was concluded the extraction and processing operations and rehabilitation activities carried out under ML1035 were well managed. RTI Mining had systems and processes to manage their compliance obligations. No non-compliances were identified during the audit.

Two observations of concern were identified as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of observations of concern

Observation of concern number	Description of issue	Recommendation
1	There was an eroded portion of the land surrounding the tunnel used for water supply which was caused by previous storm event (Figure 15).	RTI Mining should repair the eroded portion of land and ensure its stability.
2	Section 3.1.3 and Table 5 of the November 2024 mining operation plan (MOP) outlined the environmental impacts and risks associated with mining activities, which included progressive rehabilitation and closure. Table 6 detailed the rehabilitation measures planned for mine closure. A separate rehabilitation risk assessment was not provided.	RTI Mining should prepare a separate rehabilitation risk assessment and the risk control measures stated in Table 6 of the MOP be incorporated into that risk assessment.