Earth Resources Regulation has put temporary measures in place to help quarry operators who need to adjust their operations to continue supply of critical resources during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The regulator will work with operators to prioritise and expedite approvals needed to enable them to address impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) and respond to market demand.

What’s new?

The efficient approval of changes to work plans enables quarry operators to keep supplying resources and respond quickly to changing market conditions.

Earth Resources Regulation will work with operators to expedite approvals where changes to work are necessary to help operators to maintain their operations or retain their staff during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Earth Resources Regulation will work with operators to process changes through the administrative update pathway on a case by case basis, where operators can demonstrate that the changes do not pose unacceptable risks to any member of the public, land, property, infrastructure or the environment. In some circumstances, high risks may be acceptable. Where changes to operations are required for longer than 6 months, a work plan variation may be required.

Work plan variations will be expedited where changes support the supply of resources for major infrastructure or bushfire recovery projects.

Who is eligible for priority processing?

Earth Resources Regulation will prioritise and expedite approvals for operators with an existing work plan where a change in work is required to ensure supply of a critical material.

For instance, a quarry that is supplying a ‘big build’ project directly or infrastructure replacement following bushfires that needs to change its operations to achieve physical distancing for its workers.

The following criteria need be met:

* The change must be necessary to enable operators to address coronavirus (COVID-19) impacts
* The operation must be supplying major infrastructure projects or bushfire recovery projects
* Any risks arising from the changes must be risks that the business is already managing effectively in current operations or manageable with additional controls and must be reduced as far as reasonably practicable.
* The change must not include expansion of extraction limits[[1]](#footnote-2), moving operations closer to sensitive receptors or cause major impacts on public health, nearby infrastructure or the environment.
* The change does not require changes to the planning permit for the operation.

How do I apply?

Operators should contact Earth Resources Regulation with the following information:

* A statement that sets out why the work site change is required to ensure supply for an essential purpose, with supporting evidence.
* A description of the proposed change and a risk assessment showing how the operator will manage risks
* Written evidence of advice from council that no further planning approval is required, or the change can be approved under secondary consent.
* Written evidence from relevant co-regulators that their requirements are met.
* Evidence that the local community has been consulted if changes would impact amenity for residents.

Proponents are encouraged to contact Earth Resources Regulation before submitting a request – we can help to identify relevant co-regulators.

Sites will be inspected to ensure the necessary mitigation and monitoring is in place, subject to any prevailing public health controls applicable to inspectors.

For further information

Please contact [Workplan.Approvals@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:Workplan.Approvals@ecodev.vic.gov.au).

You can also subscribe to Earth Resources Regulation’s email newsletter by visiting earthresources.vic.gov.au/about-us/newsletters.

This document is available in an accessible format at earthresources.vic.gov.au

1. Applications to expand a quarry will continue to be assessed via the standard pathway as quickly as possible. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)