



18 November 2024

## **EPA Accepts Arrowsmith North Response to Submissions**

### **Highlights:**

- ✓ **EPA accepts VRX's Response to Submissions for its Arrowsmith North Silica Sand Project and publishes on EPA website**
- ✓ **Marks a significant milestone in the environmental approvals process for Arrowsmith North**
- ✓ **VRX invited to EPA Board meeting later this month to review proposal and draft assessment report**
- ✓ **Work ongoing in consultation with EPA to address remaining key issues for RtS**
- ✓ **Next step is for EPA to finalise its assessment report and make a recommendation to the Minister for Environment**

VRX Silica Limited (**VRX** or **Company**) is pleased to announce that the Environmental Protection Authority of Western Australia (**EPA**) has accepted the Arrowsmith North Silica Sand (**Project**) Response to Submissions (**RtS**) and published the RtS on the EPA website.

Acceptance and publication of the RtS is a significant milestone for the Project as it confirms the EPA will now formally undertake its assessment of Arrowsmith North. The stages of the approvals process that follow publication are subject to statutory timeframes, giving greater certainty of timing for determination of an approval outcome.

VRX Managing Director Bruce Maluish said:

*"The Response to Submissions is a vital component of the EPA assessment process and now, having been accepted and published, is a confirmation that the EPA will be completing its assessment of the Arrowsmith North Silica Sand Project.*

*"This work is the culmination of an extensive series of studies that have been undertaken for the Project, and these are included in the RtS and the Environmental Review Document that has previously been published on the EPA website.*

### **ASX: VRX**

#### **Capital Structure**

Shares on Issue:  
628 million

Unlisted Options:  
91 million

#### **Corporate Directory**

##### **Paul Boyatzis**

Non-Executive Chairman

##### **Bruce Maluish**

Managing Director

##### **Peter Pawlowitsch**

Non-Executive Director

##### **David Welch**

Non-Executive Director

##### **Ian Hobson**

Company Secretary

#### **Silica Sand Projects**

**Arrowsmith Silica Sand Projects**, 270km north of Perth, WA.

**Muchea Silica Sand Project**, 50km north of Perth, WA.

**Boyatup Silica Sand Project**, 100km east of Esperance, WA.

#### **Geothermal Energy**

**Dandaragan Geothermal Energy Permit**, 145km north of Perth, WA

*The Company is actively assessing other silica sand and downstream processing projects in Australia.*

“Acceptance of the RtS is a significant milestone in what has been a lengthy approvals process for Arrowsmith North. We are pleased that this process is now entering its final stages. We thank shareholders for their continued patience as we work through this.”

VRX has been invited to attend the EPA Board’s next meeting, scheduled for 21 November 2024, at which the EPA Board will consider the EPA’s draft assessment report and discuss the Project and remaining key issues raised for the RtS.

VRX has been carrying out work in consultation with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (**DWER**) to address the key issues. This consultation and acceptance by the EPA of the RtS have confirmed to VRX that these issues are not prohibitive to the EPA completing its assessment of the Project.

The next step in the process following the meeting is for the EPA to finalise its assessment report and make a recommendation to the Minister for Environment. Based on statutory timelines, the EPA has up to 12 weeks to complete its report and make the recommendation.

The EPA’s acceptance and publication of the RtS follows a site visit to the Project area in late October 2024 with representatives from the EPA Board, the EPA Services division of DWER, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction (**DBCA**) and the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (**DCCEEW**), which manages the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. The site visit was arranged by VRX to enable key regulatory stakeholders a first-hand observation and understanding of the environment relevant to the Arrowsmith North mining and processing proposal. The site visit was a pre-requisite for final assessment of the Project by the EPA.

It also follows the process for preparation and acceptance of the RtS, the final version of which was lodged by VRX in September 2024. The RtS is the Company’s response to the summary of submissions received following the four-week Public Environmental Review (**PER**) period that completed in July 2023. The summary of PER submissions was received by the Company in September 2023 and a draft RtS lodged with the EPA in October 2023. Following a review of the RtS by DWER on behalf of the EPA and DCCEEW, additional comments were received by the Company in April 2024 and a final version of the RtS lodged with the EPA in May 2024. The RtS is supported by a comprehensive, peer-reviewed Rehabilitation Management Plan, an Offset Strategy and reports from several additional studies undertaken by the Company.

The RtS was reviewed by relevant Government agencies involved in the assessment of the Project prior to being published on the EPA website. The RtS includes minor revisions to the Project to reduce impacts to flora and vegetation and also details VRX’s commitments to ensure the best rehabilitation techniques are undertaken and monitored and outcomes are reported.

After consulting further with EPA Services, the revisions included an amendment to the final Mine Development Envelope (**MDE**) to avoid significant flora species on the perimeter of the MDE. This change reduces the impact on recorded flora species and is effected by a request to amend the Project during assessment under section 43A of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. The amendment has been assessed and approved by the EPA.

As the Project has evolved since the original referral to DCCEEW under the EPBC Act, the Company has sought a variation to the Project under Section 156A of the Act. DCCEEW has confirmed that this amendment has been accepted.

The published RtS is available at:

<https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/proposals/arrowsmith-north-silica-sand-project><sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The RtS document, appendices and associated correspondence can be found under “3. Assessment > Environmental Review > Proponent response to submissions”.

This announcement has been approved for release by Bruce Maluish, Managing Director.

**Further Information:**

Bruce Maluish  
Managing Director  
[brucem@vrxsilica.com.au](mailto:brucem@vrxsilica.com.au)  
0418 940 417

Peter Klinger  
Cannings Purple  
[pklinger@canningspurple.com.au](mailto:pklinger@canningspurple.com.au)  
0411 251 540

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## About VRX Silica Limited

**VRX Silica Limited (ASX: VRX)** is the most advanced pureplay silica sand company listed on the ASX, developing its 100% owned silica sand projects at Arrowsmith (North, Brand and Central), Muchea and Boyatup in Western Australia.

Silica sand is the most used commodity on the planet after air and water. It is the main ingredient in all types of glassmaking, including specialty solar panel and high-tech glass, and foundry casting. It is a finite resource that is running out, with the Asia-Pacific region experiencing an ever-growing supply shortfall that is driving up prices.

Arrowsmith is located 270km north of Perth. Arrowsmith North boasts a minimum 25-year mine life capable of producing more than 2Mt tonnes per year of high-grade (99.7% SiO<sub>2</sub>)\* silica sand for export to the foundry, container glass and flat glass markets in Asia, with permitting well advanced, and will lead production.

Muchea, located 50km north of Perth, is an ultra-high-grade (99.9% SiO<sub>2</sub>)\* silica sand project capable of producing sand required for ultra-clear glass for solar panels and other high-tech glass applications.

Boyatup, located 100km east of Esperance, is under development and capable of producing sand for the glass market.



\*Information relating to grades are extracted from releases to ASX on 28 August 2019 and 11 November 2022 (Arrowsmith North) and 18 October 2019 (Muchea). The company is not aware of any new information or data that materially affects this information.