

Case Study: Engineer of Record transition process at a complex site

B Tiver¹, P. Chapman² and C. Hatton³

1. Principal Tailings Engineer, WSP Australia, Adelaide SA 5000, Email: brad.tiver@wsp.com

2. Technical Director, WSP Australia, Perth WA 6000, Email: peter.chapman@wsp.com

3. Technical Director, WSP USA, Denver CO 80226. Email: Christopher.hatton@wsp.com

Keywords: Engineer of Record, transition

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a case study of the transition of the Engineer of Record (EoR) role at a complex site. The site comprises six tailings storage facilities (TSFs), two of which are receiving tailings and four are inactive and transitioning to closure. The Owner had a singular EoR at site since 2018, around the time when the role was popularly adopted at sites in Australia. In mid-2023, the EoR advised the Owner it was going to depart the role, giving approximately nine months of notice. The Owner requested bids from two different consulting firms to replace the EoR role. There were two key influences in selection of the preferred EoR; the EoR had been involved at the site in various studies since 2014, and the Independent Tailings Review Board (ITRB) at the site had three out of four members from the same consultancy as the selected EoR. The Owner undertook a risk assessment process in early 2024 for management of change, considering controls to be put in place for a successful transition. The transition process also included engaging a new ITRB to maintain the independence of that role. The new EoR undertook a Dam Safety Review (DSR) as a form of risk assessment and by April 2024 the transition had been completed. This paper highlights key items of the transition that went well as well presenting opportunities for improvement. A key challenge was recreating models, such as slope stability models, which was necessary for the EoR to take ownership of the assessments. Throughout the process it became apparent that transition of some items required more time greater effort relative to others, in part due to different approaches, and discussions with the Owner to gain agreement. Examples of aspects of the transition that worked well was undertaking a DSR and having a member of the ITRB being integrated into the EoR team and two others available for senior review.