



# Coastwatchers

*Eurobodalla's environment group*

Newsletter 27 July 2015

## Dargues Reef Gold Mine Countdown for Public Submissions

### 2 Weeks Down, 4 Weeks to Go

Members are reminded that nearly two weeks have elapsed since the Dargues Reef Modification was placed on public exhibition by the NSW Department of Planning, leaving just 4 weeks to make comment. Submissions must be made by Wednesday 26 August 2015.

Details regarding the modification and the lodgment of submissions can be found at the Department's website:

[http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=search&status\\_id=6](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=search&status_id=6).

The **Coastwatchers Association Inc.** together with the **Majors Creek Catchment Guardians Inc.** and the **Araluen Valley Agricultural Producers and Protectors of the Ecosystem Coalition**, have engaged the NSW Environmental Defenders Office to assist in reviewing Unity's modification application. A number of experts have been engaged by the EDO and they are currently working on the matter. Costs will be shared equally between the three groups. These reports will be finalized shortly, and the Coastwatchers can then address them in its submission.

Members are asked to raise issues in their submissions, which they believe are relevant. They might be technical, social or economic, or whatever they feel is applicable to their circumstance. They don't have to raise issues countering the expert advice Unity has placed in the modification. Leave that to the experts.

The Coastwatchers will be targeting the impacts and risks arising from this development should cyanide and heavy metals leak or escape from the mine site. The impacts could effect

1. The aquatic environment downstream from Majors Creek to Moruya.
2. Rural and domestic users of water from the Deua River and its tributaries.
3. The Eurobodalla Shire's water supply, particularly in the event of a catastrophic failure at the mine site.

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## Local Government Joint Press Release on Dargues Mine

Eurobodalla and Palerang Shire Councils have joined forces to review Unity Mining's proposed changes to its Dargues Gold Mine at Majors Creek. They have engaged an expert to assist. Their Joint Press Release states:

"The mine is in the upper catchment of the Moruya River and both Councils

have “major concerns” about potential impacts on their communities if the proposal to process gold with cyanide is approved.

The Councils have jointly engaged a specialist to review Unity Mining’s proposal and will use the report’s findings to respond.

Proposed modifications include introducing gold processing using cyanide and expanding the onsite tailings dam.

Eurobodalla Mayor Lindsay Brown said more than 100,000 residents and visitors in the community relied on the Moruya River for their water supply and his Council would respond in detail to the NSW Government.

“Any form of contamination at the source could represent many decades of effect,” Cr Brown said.

“This is because the water we pump from the river to Deep Creek Dam, which services our water supply, consists of surface and aquifer flows.”

“If contaminated, the aquifer flows could take years and years to clear through the sandy substrates.

“The river also flows directly into the Batemans Marine Park.”

Palerang Mayor Peter Harrison said Majors Creek and Braidwood residents had every right to be worried about the proposed changes.

“This is the third modification to the original approval and people are concerned about where these modifications might eventually take us,” he said.

“Apart from the obvious risk of environmental contamination, there are concerns that approval of a processing plant will see ore being shipped in from

other areas.

“This is a drastic shift from the original proposal that would have seen all operations cease and the site fully rehabilitated just three years from now in 2018.”

Councillors Harrison and Brown are encouraging local residents to make submissions on the proposal, which is on public exhibition until Wednesday, 26 August 2015.”

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## **Petitions Opposing the Dargues Reef Modification**

The Coastwatchers Association considered launching an online petition for members and the friends to sign, opposing the processing of gold ore at the Dargues Reef Mine.

However, after consideration, it was decided not to follow this direction. There are currently two petitions in circulation, and we urge members to sign either one or both. Then pass the link to your friends as significant numbers are needed on both.

The Majors Creek Catchment Guardians Inc. has a petition, which will be forwarded to the Minister for Planning The Hon. Rob Stokes MP. It can be found at:

<https://www.communityrun.org/petitions/no-onsite-processing-of-gold-ore-in-majors-creek-majors-creek-community-action-group-1>

The other petition is being organized by the NSW Greens in Moruya, and it will be presented to the NSW Parliament by Tamara Smith MP, Greens Member for Ballina. It can be found at:

<https://savemoruyariver.wordpress.com/>

## **Deua River Resident Speaks Out on Dargues Mine**

(Reproduced from the Bay Post)

"Deua Valley resident Alison Walsh believes Unity Mining's Environmental Assessment of proposed changes to its Dargues Gold Mine does not fully address community concerns.

While opponents largely believe no risk is worth taking to the region's water supply, Ms Walsh said aspects of the report were also "underdone".

She said navigating the 160-page document, with 30 additional attachments, was "hard work", particularly online.

She said this might prove a barrier to people having their say before submissions closed on August 26.

Ms Walsh said the 16ha tailings dam was the equivalent of most blocks in the lower Deua and feared the bunded area, designed to contain possible spillages from the processing plant, might be inadequate.

"The bunded area can contain 110 per cent of the largest tank capacity, not the total storage capacity (of eight tanks), so I still think there are issues around stormwater and rainfall," Ms Walsh said

"In regards to acid generation from the tailings dam in the long term, there is not a lot of priority about prevention measures and ongoing risk and I feel their lining is inadequate.

"When you have acid water supply, you're leaking heavy metals and that has got really long-term serious health effects and is difficult to mitigate."

Ms Walsh said Unity had flagged exploring further deposits in the region,

which could indicate further modifications or expansions.

She also said the EA did not consider any social or economic impacts.

"There's no discussion on the impact of gold price changes (or on) the implications of not raising enough capital to complete all the works," she said.

"In mining, there is generally a big issue of abandoned, discontinued projects, where commitments turn out to be unenforceable as a company has wound up or moved on."

Ms Walsh said most people, up and down the river, opposed the changes, a few were "sitting on the fence", and she knew of no-one "pushing for" the changes.

"I've had discussions with three landholders who have said, 'I'm not sure, but the risks are there', but the majority of feedback I'm getting is that people are pretty concerned," she said.

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### **New Email Address for Coastwatchers**

The Coastwatchers Association has a new email address. Members are asked to change their contact list to:

[coastwatchers.committee@gmail.com](mailto:coastwatchers.committee@gmail.com)

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The Secretary,  
The Coastwatchers Association Inc,  
PO Box 521  
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<http://www.coastwatchers.org.au/>