



# *Coastwatchers*

*Eurobodalla's environment group*

Newsletter 3 July 2016

## Dargues Reef Gold Mine Next Stage

### NSW Planning Report Referred to the NSW Planning Assessment Commission

#### **Background Recap**

In July 2015 the Department of Planning and Environment (Planning) exhibited for 6 weeks Unity Mining's application for Modification 3 and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Dargues Reef Gold Mine at Majors Creek. This resulted in 417 submissions, 395 from the public, 14 from special interest groups (such as Coastwatchers) and 8 from government.

Of the 395 public submissions 330 objected to the modification. Unity Mining then responded to those submissions. That response included further modifications to its application including the removal of on site cyanide processing.

Planning then re-exhibited the amended application with the amendments, in December 2015. 17 submissions were received 16 of which objected.

Planning considered these submissions, and on 22 June 2016 released its "Environmental Assessment Report".

#### **Planning's Conclusion**

"The Department has assessed the modification application in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act.

The assessment found that the modification would result in some additional water, heritage and biodiversity impacts. However, the Department considers that these additional impacts could be appropriately managed through implementation of the recommended conditions.

The recommended conditions require Unity Mining to comply with a range of strict environmental management, monitoring and reporting conditions, including the preparation of a detailed Water Management Plan in consultation with the EPA, and designing the tailings storage facility in accordance with the DSC (ed. Dam Safety Committee) requirements for a 'prescribed dam' under the Dams Safety Act 1978.

The conditions also include obligations for public reporting of environmental monitoring results, regular independent environmental audits, and responding to any complaints from the local community.

As is the case for all mining projects in NSW, the Department and EPA would continue to have a compliance role in monitoring the ongoing environmental performance of the mine and enforcing the conditions of approval.

Should the modification be approved, it would allow Unity Mining to proceed with the next phase of development and realize the economic benefits of the project. These benefits include the creation of up to 100 jobs during construction and 80 jobs during operations, and more than \$40 million in capital investment."

## Planning's Recommendations

Planning has referred this matter to the NSW PAC, the Planning Assessment Commission. The PAC has the power of the Minister to approve or otherwise, this modification application.

The actual recommendation states

"It is RECOMMENDED that the Planning Assessment Commission, as delegate of the Minister:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determines** the application under Section 75W; and
- **signs** the attached Notice of Modification to the project approval (see **Appendix A**), if the Commission determines to approve the modification."

## Planning Assessment Commission

The three Commissioners who will handle this matter at the PAC are:

Joe Woodward PSM  
Professor Zada Lipman  
Alan Coutts

It is understood that the PAC will determine the management of this matter. It is expected that submissions will be called for and/or a public hearing will be held in the near future. Members will be kept informed of developments. Coastwatchers have tried to contact the PAC, and they have not yet returned our calls.

## Planning's Comments

The Department commented on page 22 of their Report on its proposed conditions which were new or amended, "...requiring Unity to:

- ensure the tailings storage facility

design conforms to the applicable contemporary guidelines and users the latest rainfall data from the Majors Creek and Braidwood weather stations as required to meet the requirements of the DSC;

- update the site water balance using the latest rainfall data and to include details of the applicable design criteria for all water storage infrastructure to meet the requirements of the EPA;

- establish additional ground water monitoring bores down-gradient of the tailings storage facility to monitor seepage;

- update the Water Management Plan (including Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, site water balance and groundwater model) to reflect the changes in the site water management rules and include Spring Creek heavy vehicle crossing design, to meet EDP and DPI requirements; and

- substantially increase the frequency in independent audits to ensure ongoing compliance with the project approval."

Details can be found at

<http://www.pac.nsw.gov.au/Projects/tabid/77/ctl/viewreview/mid/462/pac/549/view/readonly/myctl/rev/Default.aspx>.

## The Coastwatchers Association will keep members aware of new developments

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