

Wednesday, 8 June, 2011

Wambo coal mine and moratorium on exploration licences
Response given to the *Singleton Argus*

Wambo Coal Mine's proposed modification was advertised on May 24, three days after a moratorium was placed on the granting of new coal (exploration) licences. Are the expansions included in the moratorium and can the short two-week timeframe for submissions please be explained?

Department response:

The announcement of a 60-day moratorium applies only to the granting of new coal and petroleum exploration licences, which are administered by the Minister for Energy and Resources.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure's process of assessing and determining project applications and modifications, such as the Wambo modifications, is an entirely separate process which is not affected by the moratorium.

The Department is currently assessing two modification applications for Wambo mine for an extension to the Wambo Coal Montrose East Underground Mine, and for a rail refuelling facility.

These modification applications were publicly exhibited for two weeks from May 13 to May 27, and the proponent is now preparing a response to the submissions. There is no legal requirement for modification applications to be publicly exhibited. However, the Department's practice is to typically exhibit modification applications for a minimum of 14 days to allow the public to have an opportunity to provide feedback. This is above and beyond what the Department is required to do.

The area which the proposed modification relates to is an extension of the existing Wambo underground mining operations and is covered by existing coal mining leases.