

Friday, 2 September 2011

## Feedback sought on Maules Creek coal mine in north-western NSW

The public is being invited to comment on a proposal for an open-cut coal mine, 15km north east of Boggabri in north-western NSW, which has been placed on public exhibition by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

The proponent, Aston Coal 2 Pty Limited, is seeking approval for the Maules Creek Coal Project, which would involve establishing an open-cut coal mine and associated infrastructure within, and adjoining, the Leard State Forest. The coal mine would be capable of producing up to 13 million tonnes of coal each year over the next 21 years.

The environmental assessment is on public exhibition for six weeks **until 11 October 2011**. Interested members of the public are encouraged to lodge a submission providing feedback during this time.

Submissions received during the public exhibition period, along with the proponent's response to submissions document, will be made available on the Department's website.

The Planning Assessment Commission will also be reviewing the merits of the proposal and will be conducting public hearings later in the year, after the completion of the public exhibition period. The community will have a further opportunity to provide feedback during this process.

The findings of the PAC review, all the submissions received during the public exhibition, and the proponent's response to the issues raised in submissions will be carefully considered by the Department as part of a rigorous assessment of the project.

The project will also require Commonwealth approval, as it is a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The Department required the proponent's environmental assessment to specifically address issues including biodiversity impacts, potential impacts on surface and groundwater, air quality, noise and blasting, traffic and rehabilitation of the site. The proponent was also asked to conduct a detailed assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of the proposal in conjunction with other existing, approved or proposed mining operations in the vicinity of the Leard State Forest.

The environmental assessment for the project can be viewed during business hours at:

- **Department of Planning and Infrastructure** – Information Centre, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney;
- **Gunnedah Library** – 271-275 Conadilly Street, Gunnedah;
- **Gunnedah Shire Council** – 63 Elgin St, Gunnedah;
- **Narrabri Shire Council** – 46-28 Maitland Street, Narrabri;
- **Boggabri Memorial RSL** – cnr Rees Ave and Laidlaw Street, Boggabri; and
- **Nature Conservation Council** – Level 2, 5 Wilson Street, Newtown.

All relevant project documents are also publicly available on the Department's website, and can be accessed by visiting <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au> and following the links to the 'On Exhibition' page.

Submissions can be:

- Lodged online at <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au> (then search for the project);
- Emailed to [plan\\_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au);
- Faxed to (02) 9228 6466; or
- Posted to Major Development Assessment, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, SYDNEY NSW 2001;

**Media contact: Laurel-Lee Roderick on (02) 9228 6128**

NOTE: The Department of Planning and Infrastructure is issuing this media release to encourage the community to take part in the planning process. However, it is the role of the proponent (either through its documents published on our website or otherwise) to provide further specific details about the proposal.