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**$80 million precious metals mine approved in western NSW**

The NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure has approved the construction of a new $80 million mine near Cobar in the state’s west.

Hera Resources Pty Limited will develop and operate the Hera Project, approximately 100km south east of Cobar and 4km south of Nymagee.

The project consists of a single underground mine and will involve the extraction and processing of up to 355,000 tonnes per annum of ore containing gold, silver, lead and zinc over eight-and-a-half years.

“The project would provide economic and social benefits to the region and NSW, with up to 100 jobs created during construction and a further 100 during operation,” the department’s Deputy Director-General Richard Pearson said.

“The key issues raised in the seven submissions received – all from public authorities – included surface and groundwater impacts, biodiversity offsets and traffic impacts.

“The department carried out a detailed assessment of the merits of the project and found that given the relatively small scale of the project, its general isolation and location well within a large, screened site, the project has limited potential for significant impacts outside of the site boundaries.

“The key issues were carefully assessed and adequate mitigation measures have been developed in consultation with the relevant agencies to ensure the project’s potential impacts are minimised.”

The department has imposed conditions that include requirements for Hera Resources to:

- Enter into a Planning Agreement with Cobar Shire Council for contributions towards a community fund, road maintenance and public infrastructure and services;
- Provide compensatory measures to off-site bore users in the event of adverse impacts on the supply of water from existing bores as a result of the project;
- Monitor and regularly report on its environmental performance; and
- Commission independent audits of its operations to ensure it is complying with its conditions of approval and implementing best practice on the site.

The project requires removal of 75.2 hectares of remnant native vegetation, which will be offset by the conservation of vegetation in perpetuity on a property approximately 15km away.

**Media contact:** Jim Hanna, (02) 9228 6275 or 0457 737 660