Management of blast fume and public notification
Response given to The Sydney Morning Herald

Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:

Blast fume can result from mine blasts in some circumstances as a result of moisture or rain, the blast not being adequately confined or as a result of the type of material being blasted.

The department is working with mines in the Upper Hunter Valley to investigate best practice blasting methods and improve blast fume management.

Furthermore, mine approvals given by the NSW Government contain conditions which require mines to take actions to ensure public safety during mine blasts and notify nearby residents of upcoming blasts.

In particular, Upper Hunter mines operating within 500m of a public road are required to close public roads which are within 500m of the blast, to ensure public safety. This may include proposing an alternative route. Closure of the road may require the mine to obtain a permit from the local council, or relevant authority responsible for the road.

Furthermore, mines are required to advise the public and nearby residents of upcoming planned blasts, and this must include:

- An advertisement in the relevant local newspaper detailing the time and location of the planned blast;
- A notice on the mine’s website, showing the location of the planned blast;
- A sign on the road to advise of the scheduled blast and road closure.

These measures ensure the public is aware of upcoming blasts, and that residents have an opportunity to avoid the area at the time of the blast.