RESPONSE TO THE NEWCASTLE HERALD RE SUBSIDENCE IMPACTS IN THE SUGARLOAF STATE CONSERVATION AREA

The NSW Government is already taking action on this important issue and representatives from a number of agencies including Planning and Infrastructure, the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Division of Resources and Energy visited the site today to investigate further.

The mine’s planning approval outlines a range of strict performance measures and there are a number of compliance actions available to the Government if conditions are breached.

The Government has made it clear that the company will be held fully responsible for its actions and appropriate action will be taken following the current investigations.

However, it must be reiterated that the assessment of this mine did acknowledge that there would be general subsidence impacts in the area as well as the risk of some rare unexpected events such as this, the precise impact of which it is not possible to fully predict.

Importantly, the approval puts in place measures to deal with these impacts as they arise – whether expected or unexpected – including the need to report on, remediate and/or offset affected areas.

It is these measures that the Government is now enforcing.

It is also important to reiterate that the department consulted very closely with DRE and other relevant agencies throughout the assessment process and a number of changes were made to the mine plan as a result.

The performance measures put in place in the approval conditions were also, in many cases, in response to issues raised by DRE.

Finally, the concerns raised by DRE predominantly related to the area’s cliff lines, which have not been affected in the subsidence observed within the SCA to date.