



The Hon Chris Hartcher

Minister for Resources and Energy

Special Minister of State

Minister for the Central Coast

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVING CERTAINTY FOR THE COMMUNITY AND INVESTORS IN MINE PROPOSALS

The NSW Government is working to improve investor confidence in the processes governing resource development through proposed changes to the regulations governing mining proposals.

Public and industry feedback is being sought on draft amendments to the assessment process of major mining projects, which seek to improve certainty for all relevant parties as to the consideration to be given to both the benefits and potential impacts of a project.

Resources Minister Chris Hartcher said the resources sector has long been the backbone of the State's economy, and the NSW Government is determined to ensure it continues to have a strong future.

"Our vision is for a vibrant and prosperous mining industry that continues to deliver jobs and investment to rural and regional NSW, whilst ensuring the protection of our valuable agricultural land and water resources," Mr Hartcher said.

"The resource sector's importance to the State's economy is well known and the Government will continue to promote NSW as an attractive investment destination by encouraging investment in the mining and mineral resources industries and reducing barriers to investment.

"While the assessment of major projects has always been about balancing their economic and employment significance against any potentially adverse impacts, there have been no clear guidelines as to how these issues should be balanced.

"The proposed amendments will provide clear direction to both the industry and the community in respect of the approvals process for mining projects including coal mining, in addition to other minerals and precious metals."

The proposed changes will:

- Ensure the significance of the resource is considered in the decision-making process as an important factor;
- Stipulate the key environmental, ecological and amenity criteria to protect water resources, habitat and amenity;
- Require that economic and environmental issues are properly balanced; and
- Elevate the importance of advice from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) on biodiversity matters during the assessment process.

The Department of Trade and Investment will provide advice on the significance of the resource by giving consideration to the potential economic and social benefits of a proposal, whilst also looking at the size, quality and availability of the resource.

The proposed changes also make clear what standards mining projects must meet to avoid refusal for local environmental or amenity impacts, including on accepted Government standards to limit noise, dust and other impacts.

“The NSW Government supports the ongoing development of the NSW mining industry to ensure the continued expansion of the State’s resources sector and associated economic growth,” Mr Hartcher said.

“The sector’s key role in the NSW economy and its broad benefits to regional NSW and the State-at-large must be given important consideration in any decision-making process.

“In NSW alone, more than 35,000 people are directly employed in the mining and minerals industries, along with 90,000 workers whose jobs are indirectly supported through mine and non-mine related services.

“The NSW Government is working to ensure the resources sector continues to expand and supports regional employment growth, recognising that mining operations require investment certainty.”

The proposed amendments to the Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries State environmental planning policy is on public exhibition for a period of two weeks until 5pm Monday August 12 and can be viewed online at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposals.