



# **The Hon Chris Hartcher**

## **Minister for Resources and Energy**

### **Special Minister of State**

### **Minister for the Central Coast**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **BENEFITS OF MINING AN IMPORTANT PART OF PLANNING ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The potential investment and employment benefits for regional communities are now an important consideration when deciding on major mining projects in New South Wales.

The new requirement is included in changes to the State's planning policy governing major mining projects (the Mining SEPP), which will be gazetted this week following public exhibition.

The changes outline key factors that decision makers must consider when establishing the significance of the mineral resource – namely the benefits that will flow to the economy via local job creation, regional expenditure and State royalties.

The significance of the resource – as established by the Government, not the applicant – must then be carefully weighed against any potential environmental, social and amenity impacts.

Resources Minister Chris Hartcher said the new requirements would deliver greater certainty and confidence for investors and communities and would ensure a balanced assessment of all mining projects.

“The assessment of major mining projects has always been about balance and these amendments give extra clarity and guidance for decision makers,” Mr Hartcher said.

“Potential environmental and other impacts will continue to be key factors in the assessment of mining projects, with a number of strict criteria imposed for issues like air quality, water impacts and noise.

“These criteria will act as non-discretionary standards that companies are expected to meet in order to avoid refusal due to local environmental or amenity impacts.

“But the significance of the resource itself must also be carefully considered and, following public consultation, the Government has now provided detail on how this is to be measured.”

Mr Hartcher said a number of other important changes had been made following consultation, including:

- That if the standard criteria adopted by relevant Government agencies relating to environmental and amenity issues such as air quality, noise and water impacts are revised, the Mining SEPP **must** be reviewed by the Minister in light of the new standards;
- That the SEPP must also be reviewed after two years to ensure the new provisions are operating as intended and in a coherent manner with other currently proposed amendments to the SEPP; and
- Clarification that the amendments relating to resource significance will apply to modifications to existing mines as well as new projects.

“Mining is a \$23 billion industry in New South Wales directly employing more than 35,000 and supporting a further 90,000,” Mr Hartcher said.

“It’s important that these benefits are recognised as part of a balanced and rigorous assessment process to ensure 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.”