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MEDIA RELEASE

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FAST-TRACKED APPLICATION PROCESS FOR EXPLORATION LICENCES

Communities and the mining industry will have greater certainty about future land use with the NSW Government creating a faster application process for coal Exploration Licences.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said the new Competitive Allocation process will be used when an existing licence is relinquished or cancelled, or when multiple parties want to explore an area adjacent to an exploration or mine site.

Currently, applications to explore areas where there is no mining activity are considered by the Strategic Release Framework, while applications from titleholders to explore areas adjacent to a site are considered by the Operational Allocation process.

“The Strategic Release Framework is a rigorous process that requires an extensive review and assessment to consider whether an area is suitable to release for exploration, with recommendations then considered by Cabinet,” Mr Barilaro said.

“But applications for sites where exploration has occurred in the past, or when multiple parties are interested in areas adjacent to existing exploration and mining activity, do not need the same multi-layered investigation of issues, and these changes address that.

“The new Competitive Allocation process will enable a faster assessment of applications in these two specific circumstances, while maintaining competition and transparency.”

Mr Barilaro said the streamlined Competitive Allocation process will not only give the community and mining industry greater certainty about future land use, but will also help ensure NSW produces enough coal to meet export demand.

“It is important to note that Exploration Licence holders will still need the consent of land owners to explore for coal and the requirements for coal mining proposals to undergo a rigorous, merits-based assessment under the planning framework also remains unchanged,” Mr Barilaro said.

Detailed information about the changes will be made available soon.