

Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project

Project Newsletter Number 5 January 2018

Dear Community Members,

We are committed to keeping you up to date as we seek approvals to continue operations at Rix's Creek Mine. We hope you find time to read over the latest developments.

Rix's Creek Mine

The Rix's Creek Mine is an open cut coal mine 5km north-west of Singleton which has been in continuous operation since 1990. It currently produces 2.8 million tonnes per year and employs 250 people, most of them locals. The mine is part of the Bloomfield Group which is a 100% Australian family-owned company based in the Hunter Valley.

Continuation of Mining Project

Bloomfield is seeking approval to continue operations for the next 21 years, which would see the mine gradually move in a westward direction away from Singleton, as always intended.

Since our last newsletter, a number of things have happened:

- Bloomfield has purchased the former Integra Open Cut mine and associated assets
- The Continuation of mining Project description has been modified as a result
- Bloomfield has engaged with relevant Government agencies regarding the assessment of the modified project
- Bloomfield and the Department of Planning and Environment have reached agreement to modify the area which needed to be assessed for Biodiversity
- Bloomfield has prepared a Revised Response To Submissions to consolidate the response to these points (The Response was lodged on 24th November 2017)

Integra – Rix's Creek North Open Cut

Bloomfield finalised the purchase of the former Integra Open Cut Mine in December 2015. Reviving the closed-down Integra mine has been a major economic and employment boost for Singleton, with an increase in opportunities amounting to approximately 130 roles. This lease joins Rix's Creek Mine on its northern boundary and has allowed Bloomfield to look for synergies and find improvements in the operation of both sites.

An immediate benefit is Bloomfield being able to satisfy future production requirements utilising both sites. This means the peak production proposed in the project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (4.5 million tonnes per year) has been reduced to 3.6 million tonnes per year.

The potential operational impact will also be reduced from the levels indicated in the EIS.

The purchase of the Integra Mine and Rail Loop also means that there is no longer a need to construct a rail loop at Rix's Creek Mine (as approved under Rix's Creek Consent Modification No. 5).

The Current Consent

During assessment of the EIS, the Department of Planning and Environment identified a potential difference between the disturbance area described in the Project EIS and the disturbance area identified in the environmental assessment that accompanied the existing mining consent.

Bloomfield has undertaken to rectify the difference through agreements with the Department of Planning and Environment

The Revised Response to Submissions document clarifies and confirms the area for environmental assessment for the Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project and provides additional assessment of the new disturbance area to ensure all proposed disturbance identified by the Project has been fully assessed.

Voluntary Planning Agreement

Bloomfield has entered into an in-principle agreement with Singleton Council regarding a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA). This is a mechanism whereby Bloomfield can commit funds for community services and infrastructure once project planning approvals are obtained.

The in-principle agreement centres on Bloomfield assisting Singleton Council with improvements to the Aloy Oval area of Singleton Heights, something that will lift the function and amenity of the oval and be welcomed by the whole community.

Other Environmental Considerations

Finalisation of the disturbance area required an update of the ecological assessment. The biodiversity offsets required by the assessment will be satisfied by a number of different methods which will be finalised in the consent process.

They include:

- Purchase of suitable Biodiversity Credits on the market and/or
- A combination of on-site and off-site biodiversity offset areas and/or
- Payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Trust

As well, finalisation of the new disturbance area required the assessment of the agricultural impact on an additional 41 ha of land.

Revised Response to Submissions

The Revised Response To Submissions Report covers the changes to the Project since the release of the original EIS and provides recent measures and modifications that reduce and mitigate the environmental impacts when compared to the original submission.

Assessments that were updated included agricultural impact, groundwater modelling, water licensing, air quality assessment, remapping of vegetation communities, re-calculation of biodiversity offset credits, potential flooding impacts, noise impacts, economic assessment and revised final landform.

In summary, we are building a comprehensive case that the continuation of mining project will be done in a manner that respects the environment and brings many economic benefits to Singleton and beyond.

What Happens Next?

Having submitted the Revised Response to Submissions Report to the Department of Planning and Environment, we must now wait for a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken. Other government agencies will also review the updated technical reports to ensure their questions regarding the project are addressed.

When The Department of Planning and Environment complete their assessment the Project will be referred to the NSW Planning Assessment Commission (PAC). The PAC will undertake an independent review and determination.

The PAC may allow further stakeholder involvement in the decision making process.

The Revised Response to Submissions can be found at the Department of Planning and Environment Website:

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6300

Want more information?

As always we are interested in hearing from anyone with questions about the project, or anyone with feedback or ideas that may assist. Please make direct contact with Chris Knight on 0403 058 777 or cknight@bloomcoll.com.au at a time that suits.

We'll follow up with more updates in due course.

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Communication and Information















We welcome your questions and comments about the Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project, as part of the ongoing stakeholder and community consultation. You can access further information via the Bloomfield Group website, or by using the details below.

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KEY

-  Project area
-  Lease extension area
-  CL352 Boundary
-  Road
-  Railway
-  Drainage line
-  5m Topographic contour
-  Rehabilitation – Trees over pasture
-  Rehabilitation – Pasture areas
-  Topsoil stockpile
-  Proposed West Pit Rehabilitation area above RL160
-  Artesian Pit Rehabilitation area above RL140
-  Final depression
-  Other water storages

