



Residents for Responsible Mining

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Bindoon mine up for close EPA inspection

Resources: 29-March-10 by Rebecca Lawson

Bauxite Resources' North Bindoon mine will be scrutinised at one of the highest possible levels by the state environment watchdog as an action group calls for greater disclosure by the company about its future mining plans.

The Environmental Protection Authority today said it will put the stage two plans of the bauxite operation in the Darling Range up for a six week public review period.

It's understood that stage two of the operation involves mining 1.2 million tonnes of ore between July and December this year from the same property as the trial mining operation.

The proposal will help to fulfil the company's sales contracts it signed recently.

The EPA said today there was "potential cumulative impacts of environmental factors to be addressed in a public process". Specifically, the EPA would be looking at impacts to vegetation, noise and dust, catchment management and transport.

Bauxite Resources has been in a trading halt since Friday pending the release of the EPA decision that could "impact on the company's future activities", the company said last week.

Bauxite had previously advised the Australian Securities Exchange that it expects to make an announcement before the start of trade tomorrow.

The company was being sought for comment at time of publishing.

Community action group, Residents for Responsible Mining, said it welcomed EPA's decision to heavily scrutinise the operation however was disappointed that the EPA was only looking into stage two of the operation.

The group is based in the Shire of Chittering and represents about 100 households.

The group's co-convenor, Clair Medhurst, said the company had failed to communicate what its overall mining plans were for the area.

"We are however disappointed that the PER will only address BRL's proposed Stage 2 operations, which we believe encompasses only 1.2 million tonnes of BRL's stated plans to mine up to 30 million tonnes in the area," she said.

"37 Shires in the Darling Ranges are affected by BRL's blanket tenement pegging over agricultural and lifestyle areas.

"To protect Chittering and the other affected communities from the anxiety, uncertainty and huge expenditure that goes with dealing with piecemeal mining proposals on private land, we urge Government to implement a regional environmental assessment of large scale, low margin strip mining in the Darling Ranges, together with a

comprehensive land use and social impact assessment of target areas to identify where and to what extent bauxite mining is compatible with existing agricultural/horticultural and tourism investment.

"Residents deserve to know the big picture of what BRL's future plans are in the region so that the full and cumulative impacts can be assessed and clearly understood.

"It is critical that ongoing issues such as sourcing of industrial water, transport infrastructure, salinity risks and noise and dust emissions are properly analysed and that our environment, agricultural and tourism investment and amenity are protected."

The company started mining in August last year using an Extractive Industries Licence, after the Department of Mines and Petroleum approved the project management plan.

In November, the Shire of Chittering declined Bauxite Resources' planning approval for a proposed stage two extractive industries bauxite quarrying licence.

The shire president said that the company's stage two operation had progressed to a mining stage and would fall under a higher regulatory regime.

Bauxite Resources has until April 12 to appeal the EPA decision.