

Wombat Forestcare Inc
715 Little Hampton Road, Glenlyon, Vic, 3461

Hon Richard Wynne
Minister for Planning
1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

17 June 2015

Dear Minister Wynne

Re: MIN5572 – Sandy Mining Pty Ltd

Wombat Forestcare is a community based environment group established for the protection of the Wombat State Forest.

A mining licence, MIN5572, was recently granted to Sandy Mining Pty Ltd for a 53.8 hectare area in the Wombat State Forest near Shepherds Flat.

The mining licence is for the recovery of gold and the mining application included 'bulk sampling' in the proposed program of works. The licence area covers a number of waterways, which form part of the headwaters of Jim Crow Creek in the Loddon River Catchment. Goulburn-Murray Water is the managing authority. The area has previously been mined with much of the mining taking place in the waterways. It would be of great environmental concern if the intention were to take 'bulk samples' from or near any of these waterways due to the impacts on the waterways and the potential to disturb legacy mining products such as mercury.

Wombat Forestcare is concerned that a number of threatened species are known to occur in this habitat and that detailed biodiversity assessments have not been carried out on the site. Hence, any protections for threatened species would be solely reliant on insufficient Victorian Biodiversity Atlas records from the surrounding areas.

We request that you require the licensee, Sandy Mining Pty Ltd to complete an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) as there are potentially significant environmental effects from mining this site.

Wombat Forestcare is aware that there are a number of agencies involved in the work plan approval process however past experience has shown that approved work plans without an EES can circumvent environment protections.

A work plan was approved for a 'bulk sample' in the headwaters of the Lerderberg River and Wombat Forestcare brought this to attention of Melbourne Water, who had not been consulted, resulting in the requirement for the licensee to apply for a works on waterway permit.

Wombat Forestcare considers that the Hepburn Shire is inadequately resourced and does not have staff with the skills and qualifications to deal with the complexities of issuing a planning permit for a bulk ore sampling mining operation that has the potential to impact biodiversity and ground and surface water.

Large trucks carrying ore would impact local road infrastructure and tourism, on which the shire is heavily dependent, should a 'bulk sample' be approved.

We look forward to your response to this issue.

Yours faithfully

Gayle Osborne

Secretary
Wombat Forestcare Inc

c.c. The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio
Minister for Energy and Resources