

What can you do to stop the proposed gold mine in the Wombat Forest ?

Help protect our waterways, bush and wildlife

Email - Victorian State Minister for Energy and Resources, Michael O'Brien MP voicing your opposition to the proposed gold mine (Mining License 5349). See below for a summary of key issues.

Email: michael.o'brien@parliament.vic.gov.au

Write - Victorian State Minister for Energy and Resources, Michael O'Brien MP voicing your opposition to the proposed gold mine (Mining License 5349). See below for a summary of key issues.

Minister for Minerals and Energy
Hon. Michael O'Brien
Parliament House
Spring Street
Melbourne 3000

Sign the online petition at - <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/m/318/203/867/stop-the-gold-mine-in-the-wombat-state-forest/>

For more information or discussion join the facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/405642886138619/>

Check out – www.wombatforestcare.org.au for maps and information sheets

Key Issues for letters to politicians, councillors and government departments

You can say something as simple as

I request that the Minister rescind the Works Plan and the Mining Lease under the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, due the destruction of native vegetation, the loss of habitat, death and injury to wildlife and potential negative impacts on waterways that will result if the proposed mine proceeds.

Or include any of the more specific comments

Lack of Community Consultation

- The proposed mine has caused widespread concern within the community. This is reflected by the 250 people who attended the meeting at Bullarto in opposition to the proposed mine and by a Stop the Goldmine in the Wombat State Forest Facebook Campaign run by concerned locals that has attracted over 1200 members.
- The Works Plan for the gold mining operation has been secretly given the go ahead without any community consultation from the mine owners, DPI or DSE. The first contact with the community occurred nearly two years after the mining company completed the Works Plan for the mine and one month after DPI approved the mine.

- If the mine goes ahead over 5,000 tonnes of extracted material will be trucked to Maldon for processing. These large trucks undertaking hundreds of trips will be travelling through Bullarto and past the local primary school, yet no Bullarto residents were consulted. The trucks will then undertake the 80km round trip damaging our local roads.

Impacts on Waterways

- As the mine is less than five hectares an Environmental Effect Statement does not have to be prepared. This is despite the possibility that the mine will be expanded by Fortitude Mining Pty Ltd based on the outcome of their 5000 tonne 'bulk sample'.
- The proposed mine is headwaters of the Heritage listed Lerderderg River. The Upper Lerderderg River is one of the least disturbed rivers in Victoria.
- The proposed mines proximity to Crowley Creek and the Lerderderg River raises serious issues about erosion, sedimentation and heavy metal contamination of these waterways. Heavy metals include mercury, cadmium and arsenic that occur in the mine tailings (soil and sub-soil excavated from mine) that will be stored on site and will leach into waterways.
- The potential heavy metal contamination and sedimentation will impact on river health, aquatic life and the supply of water for domestic and agriculture purposes.

Clearing of Native Vegetation and Habitat

- 3.8 hectares of native bushland will be removed, including 60 mature trees, two threatened plants (*Wombat Bush-pea Pultenaea reflexifolia* and *Netted Daisy-bush Olearia speciosa*, and approximately 60 other types of native plants.
- Although the site provide habitat for many native animals, surveys to determine what native fauna occur on the site have not been carried out. The site contains numerous Wombat burrows, and it is difficult to imagine what measures could be taken to save the Wombats from death in their burrows. Numerous old mine shafts on the site may also provide habitat for the critically endangered Common Bent-wing Bat. Biosis Pty Ltd recommended bat surveys to ascertain if the species occurred on the site but these have not been carried out, The threatened Powerful Owl also occurs in the area.
- The proposed revegetation of the site approved by DSE and DPI is inadequate, and will only provide very patchy results. The only requirement is to simply spread the topsoil back over the site. However, given the slopes on site it is possible that most of this topsoil will be washed away in the first heavy rains. The small bond of \$30,000 paid by the company is also totally inadequate to ensure that the mine site is rehabilitated once the gold has been extracted.

Economic Issues

- The financial viability of the gold mine is very questionable given the potentially low gold yields and the operational costs involved.
- No permanent employment will result from the mine, and even the temporary employment generated by the mine will be limited. No royalties will be paid to the State government for the gold extracted as gold is exempt from royalties.
- The area is commonly used by tourists who visit the Lerderderg River, the historic 'Balt Camp' and the forested, mountainous terrain. The proposed trucking route includes Camp Road which is designated as a 'self-guided scenic or forest drive' in the Wombat Forest. Being a dirt road, the truck traffic will result in the roadway becoming a muddy quagmire for tourists and locals, and cause sedimentation of creeks the along the road.