

STATEMENT OF DECISION ON PROJECT

Decision under section 8B(3) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

Fosterville Gold Mine Sustained Operations Project (Sustained Operations Project) (Referral Number 2021-R03)

Assessment through an environment effects statement (EES) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* is required for the reasons set out in the attached Notice of Reasons for Decision.

Procedures and requirements under section 8B(5) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

The procedures and requirements applying to the EES, in accordance with both section 8B(5) of the Act and the *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines), are as follows.

- (i) The EES is to investigate and document the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including for any relevant alternatives, as well as associated avoidance, mitigation and management measures. In particular, the EES needs to address:
 - a. effects on biodiversity and ecological values within and near the site including native vegetation, threatened communities and species (flora and fauna) listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*;
 - b. effects on water resources and their environmental values, including as a result of possible changes to groundwater, stream flows, discharge of sediment and contamination from mine tailings;
 - c. effects on existing land uses, local amenity, considering potential changes in air quality, noise and vibration for nearby sensitive receptors, as well as visual amenity and landscape values of the area;
 - d. effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values;
 - e. effects from a cumulative perspective, including the above-mentioned values, considering the proposed works, existing mining activities and approved works yet to be undertaken at the mine.
- (ii) The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES will be set out more fully in scoping requirements prepared by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Draft scoping requirements will be exhibited for 15 business days for public comment, before being finalised and then issued by the Minister for Planning.
- (iii) The proponent is to prepare and submit to DELWP a draft EES study program to inform the preparation of scoping requirements.
- (iv) The level of detail of investigation for the EES studies should be consistent with the scoping requirements issued for this proposal and be adequate to inform an assessment of the significance and acceptability of the potential environmental effects of the proposal and any relevant alternatives, in the context of the Ministerial Guidelines.
- (v) DELWP will convene an inter-agency technical reference group (TRG) to advise DELWP and the proponent, as appropriate, on the scoping requirements, the design and adequacy of the

EES studies during the preparation of the EES, as well as coordination with statutory approval processes.

- (vi) The proponent is also to prepare and submit to DELWP its proposed EES consultation plan for engaging with the public and stakeholders during the preparation of the EES. Once completed to the satisfaction of DELWP, the EES consultation plan is to be implemented by the proponent, having regard to advice from DELWP and the TRG.
- (vii) The proponent is also to prepare and submit to DELWP its proposed schedule for the completion of studies, preparation and exhibition of the EES, following confirmation of the scoping requirements. This schedule is intended to facilitate the alignment of the proponent's and DELWP's timeframes, including for TRG review of technical studies.
- (viii) The proponent is to apply appropriate peer review and quality management procedures to enable the completion of EES studies and documentation to a satisfactory standard.
- (ix) The EES is to be exhibited for a period of 30 business days for public comment, unless the exhibition period spans the Christmas-New Year period, in which case 40 business days will apply.
- (x) An inquiry will be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to consider and report on the environmental effects of the proposal.

Notification

The following parties (proponent and relevant decision-makers) are to be notified of this decision in accordance with sections 8A and 8B(4) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, as appropriate:

- Fosterville Gold Mine Pty Ltd (FGM) (proponent);
- Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning;
- Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change;
- City of Greater Bendigo;
- Parks Victoria;
- North Central Catchment Management Authority;
- Goulburn-Murray Water;
- Environment Protection Authority;
- First Peoples - State Relations, Department of Premier and Cabinet;
- Heritage Victoria;
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation; and
- Commonwealth Minister for the Environment.



HON RICHARD WYNNE MP
Minister for Planning

Date:

10/06/21