

For Public Notice via Internet

**REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*
(REFERRAL NUMBER 2021-R03)**

Project name: Fosterville Gold Mine Sustained Operations Project

Proponent: Fosterville Gold Mine Pty Ltd

Description of Project:

Fosterville Gold Mine Pty Ltd (FGM) proposes to develop the Fosterville Gold Mine Sustained Operations Project (Sustained Operations Project) at the current Fosterville Gold Mine located about 20km northeast of the city of Bendigo in Victoria, between the rural towns of Goornong and Axedale. The project aims to enable the continuation of existing gold mining operations at Fosterville Gold Mine, for approximately the next 10 years. It entails:

- an extension of current underground mining operations and existing open pits,
- construction and operation of new tailings storage and management facilities,
- a new brine evaporation pond,
- a new waste rock dump, and
- a managed aquifer recharge program to inject treated mine water to the fractured rock aquifer.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) **is required** for the Fosterville Gold Mine Sustained Operations Project, as described in the referral accepted on 10 September 2021.

Reasons for Decision:

- The project has the potential for a range of significant environmental effects, including on:
 - i. native vegetation and associated biodiversity values, including listed threatened species and communities;
 - ii. environmental values of surface waters and groundwater (i.e., hydrology and quality);
 - iii. amenity (i.e., air quality, noise, vibration and visual), as well as the landscape values of the surrounding area; and,
 - iv. Aboriginal cultural heritage values.
- The proposal has the potential for cumulative adverse effects on the above-mentioned values, from the proposed works, the existing mining activities and other approved works yet to be undertaken.
- An integrated assessment is necessary to ensure the range of likely adverse effects and related uncertainties are sufficiently investigated. This includes examining the scope for further avoidance and minimisation of effects via feasible siting, design and operational alternatives for key and ancillary components of the proposal, as well as evaluating their effectiveness and acceptability.
- There are other potential adverse effects from the proposal that are less significant but also need to be considered through impact assessment, including greenhouse gas emissions; impacts on historic cultural heritage and current land use of the area; and

changes to local amenity associated with traffic and transport from construction and operational phases of the project.

- An EES would enable a transparent and rigorous process for consideration of potentially adverse effects of the project, which would inform relevant statutory decision-making.

Date of Decision:

10/11/21