Annual Report 2019-20

Dargues Gold Mine Community Consultative Committee

Client: Dargues Gold Mine
Date: January 2020

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1 Introduction

This annual report details the operations and outcomes of the Dargues Community Consultative Committee (CC), as required by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Community Consultative Committee Guidelines – State Significant Projects, January 2019 (CCC Guidelines). The purpose of this report is to:

» provide easily accessible information on the status of the Dargues Gold Mine (DGM);

» detail how the proponent has considered and acted on community feedback;

» inform the community of the emerging issues the committee will focus on over the coming year; and,

» provide an extra opportunity for all community members to provide suggestions to the committee.

The Dargues Gold Mine (the Project) is located approximately 60km southeast of Canberra, 13km south of Braidwood and immediately north of the village of Majors Creek, NSW. The CCC was established in 2011 as required by Project Approval 10_0054. The CCC originally operated in accordance with the original project conditions, however, it now operates consistently with the CCC Guidelines.

CCC membership comprises representatives of:

» DGM;

» Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC);

» Eurobodalla Shire Council (ESC); and,

» the local community.

Brian Elton was nominated as the Independent Chair by the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) in July 2015. Brian's appointment occurred prior to the 15th meeting of the CCC and continued throughout 2018 and 2019. The 32nd CCC meeting, the final of this reporting period, was held in June 2019.

The CCC is working well and acting as an important conduit for information to and from the CCC to the local community and as a forum for raising issues of concern. The CCC will continue this role as the mine moves into production.

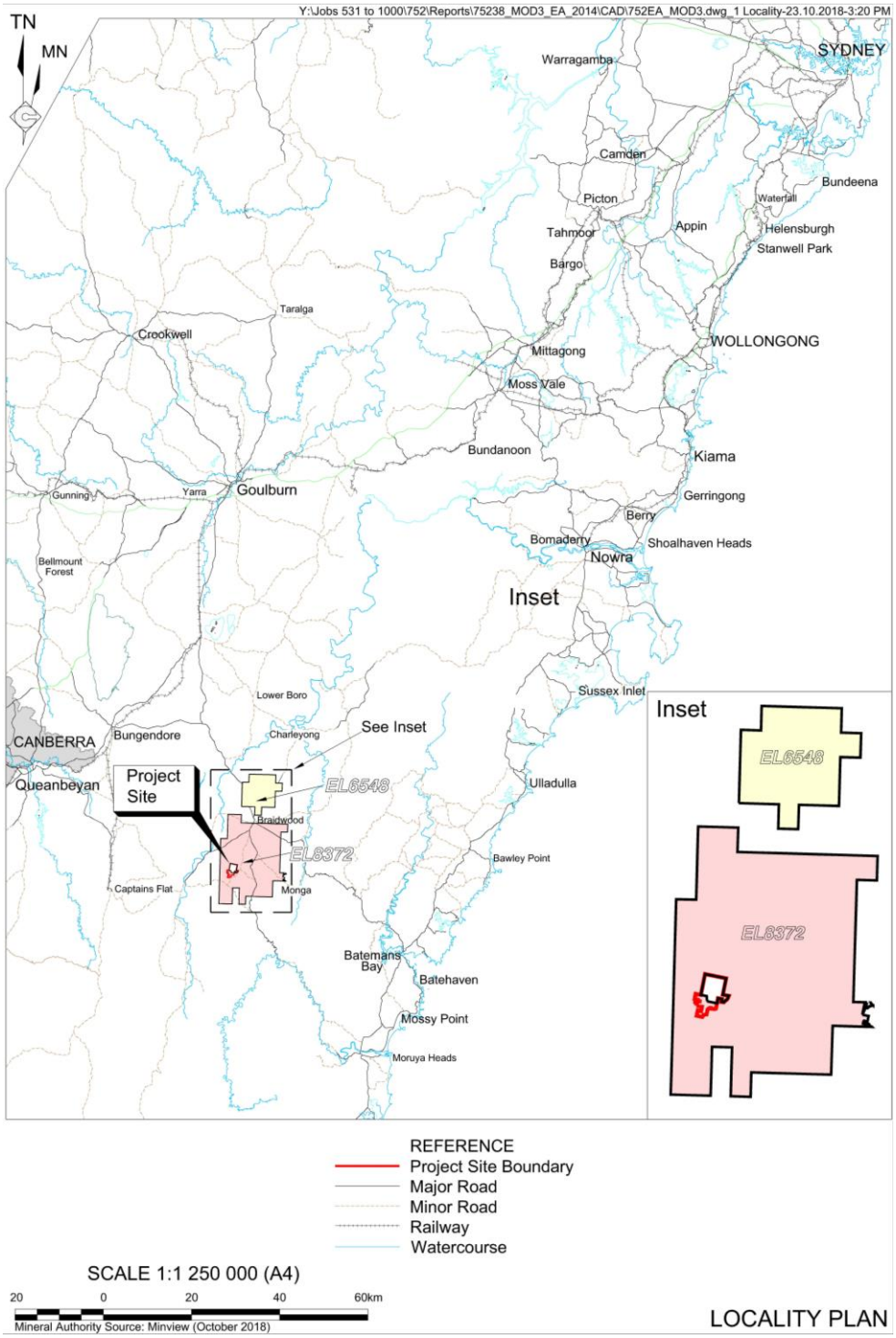
Contained in this report is an overview of the Project, details of the CCC, key issues raised throughout the reporting period, and key outcomes of the CCC.

2 Background

2.1 Dargues Gold Mine

The Dargues Gold Mine (the project) is located approximately 60km southeast of Canberra, 13km south of Braidwood and immediately north of the village of Majors Creek, NSW. The Project will comprise an underground gold mine, a run-of-mine Pad, waste rock emplacement, crushing facility, gold processing plant, tailings storage facility (TSF) and associated infrastructure.

Figure 1 Project location



Big Island Mining Pty Ltd (the licence holder), is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dargues Gold Mine Pty Ltd (the mine operator). Dargues Gold Mine Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Diversified Minerals Pty Ltd. Diversified Minerals is a family owned business and is an associated company of the PYBAR Group.

The project was proposed in December 2009, with project approval granted by the Planning Assessment Commission in September 2011, and then ratified by the NSW Land and Environment Court, subject to modifying conditions, on 8 February 2012. The project was assessed under (the now repealed) Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW). Since 2012, four project modifications have been granted:

» MOD1 was granted by the Department in July 2012;

» MOD2 was granted by the Department in October 2013;

» MOD3 was granted by Planning Assessment Commission in August 2016; and,

» MOD4 was approved by the Department in May 2019.

The project received approval under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) in September 2011 (EPBC 2010/5770) and in February 2017 (EPBC 2015/7539). The project also has an Environment Protection Licence (EPL20095).

The current project completion date is 30 June 2025 with a limit of 1.6m tonnes of ore to be processed over the life of the mine. Employment onsite is estimated to peak at 120 employees during construction, levelling to 100 employees during operation.

2.2 The Community Consultative Committee

The CCC was established in December 2011 and has met 32 times since inception.

In line with the CCC Guidelines, the CCC is made up of an Independent Chair, community representatives, an environmental group representative, alternate community representatives and representatives from ESC, QPRC and DGM. The current membership is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 CCC Composition

Stakeholder	Representative	
Independent chair	Brian Elton, Elton Consulting (since July 2015)	
Community representatives	Ms Belinda Royds Mr David Lever Mr Bill Waterhouse Dr Kathleen Waddell	Mr Matt Darwon Mr Peter Cormick Ms Rebecca Bigg
Alternate Community representatives	Dr Karis Sanderson	
Eurobodalla Shire Council (ESC)	Mr Brett Corven	
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC)	Cr Peter Harrison	
Dargues Gold Mine representatives	Mr Len Sharp, Dargues Gold Mine Mr Shannon Green, Dargues Gold Mine Mr Paul Rouse, Dargues Gold Mine	

Community representative, Tom Wells, and environment group representative, Richard Roberts, resigned from the CCC in 2019. We acknowledge and thank Tom and Richard for their contribution to the CCC.

3 Meetings

The CCC has met 32 times since inception. Meetings are an opportunity for both the company and community representatives to discuss and resolve matters as well as share information. Additionally, questions can be raised between meetings to ensure answers are able to be provided during and in between meetings.

3.1 Meeting details

Table 2 outlines the four meetings held over 2018-19 including date, location and number of attendees. Once endorsed, meeting minutes are published on the website: divminerals.com.au/dargues-gold-mine/community/community-consultative-committee.

Meetings are held on a quarterly basis at Majors Creek Hall in Majors Creek. For the reporting period, meetings were held on a Monday or Tuesday between 2.30-4.30pm or 4.30-6.30pm. Meetings regularly involve a site visit. Meeting times have been made flexible where necessary.

Table 2 Meeting details

#	Date	Location	Number of attendees
29	18 September 2018	Majors Creek Hall	13
30	17 December 2018	Majors Creek Hall	18
31	19 March 2019	Majors Creek Hall	15
32	24 June 2019	Majors Creek Hall	14

3.2 Attendance

Representation of community, councils and DGM has remained mostly consistent throughout 2018-19, ensuring continuity for the CCC. Figure 2, below, shows attendance of CCC members throughout 2018-19. Observers are able to attend meetings with the agreement of the Chair.

Figure 2 CCC member attendance 2018-19

CCC Member	Role	Meeting number 29	30	31	32
Brian Elton	Independent chair			●	
David Lever	Community member				
Belinda Royds	Community member				
Bill Waterhouse	Community member				
Peter Cormick	Community member				
Matt Darwon	Community member				
Rebecca Bigg	Community member				
Tom Wells	Community member		○		
Kathleen Waddell	Community member	*	*	*	
Richard Roberts	Environment group representative			○	
Karis Sanderson	Alternate community member				
Brett Corven	ESC representative			^	^
Peter Harrison	QPRC representative				
Paul Rouse	Dargues Gold Mine representative				
Shannon Green	Dargues Gold Mine representative				
Len Sharp	Dargues Gold Mine representative				
James Dornan	Dargues Gold Mine representative				
Mick South	Dargues Gold Mine representative				

● Brendan Blakeley acted as Chair on behalf of Brian Elton

○ CCC Members resigned (Tom Wells before Meeting 30, Richard Roberts between Meeting 30 and 31)

* Alternate member

^ Mahendram Manoharan represented ESC on behalf of Brett Corven

4 Key issues and responses

CCC meetings and correspondence is generally constructive with a wide range of issues and interests discussed. A number of matters have been raised at CCC meetings during this reporting period.

DGM endeavours to prepare responses to all queries appropriately, however there is some feedback that the timeliness of responses to queries between meetings could be improved.

Meetings incorporate presentations and updates from DGM including responses to questions raised between meetings by CCC community members. Community representatives also present on chosen topic, this has included noise issues and climate risk. Over this reporting period DGM presentation topics included:

» Meeting 29: Environmental management

» Meeting 30: Modification 4

» Meeting 31: Water licenses and climate change risk

» Meeting 32: Wombat management.

Key issues discussed at CCC meetings and proponent responses have been summarised below.

4.1 Communication and community engagement

Keeping the wider community updated on the project is very important to all CCC members. This is considered critical for the way DGM shares information with the CCC and more widely to the community.

CCC community members feel strongly that more information about the project should be disseminated in the community. The CCC regularly discusses ways in which DGM can better communicate with the wider community – it has been raised at all CCC meetings during this reporting period. Community representatives have suggested opportunities for informing the community including a regular newsletter or online social media post. Communication from DGM has been developing over this reporting period however there is still some dissatisfaction regarding the lack of proactive communication with CCC community members by DGM.

CCC members supported the company's previous community meetings and open days – these activities were well attended and well received by the community. The CCC continues to recommend the continuation of these or similar events as activity onsite increases. CCC members have raised that DGM should better leverage the CCC member networks to share information and seek feedback. There has been some criticism by some CCC community members that they are not informed of new developments onsite in a timely manner.

By way of response, DGM are committed to improving their communication with the wider community. Currently DGM uses the following communication pathways:

» Monthly newsletter that is widely distributed in hard copy in Braidwood, Majors Creek and Araluen, and on Facebook and the Company's website (commenced during the reporting period);

» Maintains a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/DivMinerals/) which is updated regularly and has over 600 followers;

» Operates a website for the Project (http://www.divminerals.com.au/dargues-gold-mine/) which contains all the monitoring data, project documentation and project approvals;

» Community meetings, with the next one scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2019; and,

» Presentations to local business development committees, planning groups and other community groups.

It has been raised by DGM representatives that much of the community engagement has been informal, given that all senior management of the Project live within the communities of Majors Creek and Braidwood. The CCC has been informed on how DGM is working to improve their communication with the community. This included DGM's first community newsletter, increased social media posts, further advertisement of the 24 hour community

information line (1800 732 002) as well as encouragement of the community to contact the company via a dedicated community email address (DGM.Community@divminerals.com.au).

4.2 Environmental management

Noise and water management are frequently discussed at CCC meetings, and were included in the presentations delivered by DGM at meetings 29 and 32.

Noise emanating from the site during construction has been a key issue for residents of Majors Creek and other nearby residents. One CCC member has worked closely with DGM and the NSW EPA to address concerns and identify solutions. DGM's response has included design changes to the processing facility and investigation of noise attenuating material.

This communication has been regularly shared with the CCC. Many are interested in how noise is monitored and mitigated from the site. CCC members are aware of how and where noise monitoring is undertaken, as well as the variables which impact monitoring. This continues to be a discussion point at CCC meetings as activity onsite increases. DGM continues to welcome feedback regarding noise and the CCC continues to hear updates from the community representative.

Water management, particularly groundwater, is of particular concern to community members. There has been consistent interest among representatives of downstream communities in the Compensatory Flow Program, in particular whether the trigger conditions for commencement now apply. There has also been strong interest in how water is managed onsite. DGM continues to share information and data about water management onsite.

4.3 Tailings Storage Facility

Approval, design and construction of the TSF has remained of significant interest to CCC members throughout this reporting period. Members continue to seek updates on the design and construction of the TSF.

Throughout meetings, members were informed about the role of the Dams Safety Committee, inputs into the design, the process for design and construction as well as remediation of the area following project completion. CCC members regularly ask questions about the TSF design, particularly to understand how it is informed by rainfall data, how any spills will be prevented and how wildlife will be managed.

In response to a community representative, DGM undertook to make TSF design details publicly available by publishing the design details and accompanying reports on their website.

4.4 Social and economic matters

Ensuring that the project offers wider social and economic benefits to neighbours has been a key consideration for CCC members. Communication with the community is also discussed in the context of local social and economic matters. This is often raised given the growing number of employees on site. CCC members are particularly interested in the employment opportunities offered to local residents.

Grants and funding of local groups is supported by the CCC and DGM is working towards a formal program of supporting individuals and groups financially. The CCC has had the opportunity to comment on DGM proposed education and community grants.

An application for worker accommodation was submitted to the QPRC during this reporting period. CCC members raised the social and economic considerations for workers and the existing community.

4.5 Climate change risk

How climate change impacts the project, particularly water management and TSF design, has been discussed at a number of CCC meetings. One CCC member raised that while the project approvals require a certain level of risk to be considered, it is important that DGM consider climate risk in the design and construction of the project.

Through the CCC meeting, DGM has shared how design of the TSF and other infrastructure has achieved compliance and, in the case of the TSF, has been designed above what is required.

4.6 Processing

As the processing facility has been in design and construction over this reporting period, material processing has been a significant discussion point for the CCC. The CCC has been informed about the progress and witnessed the construction of the facility over regular site visits.

The processing facility design was discussed with the potential for noise from the crusher – suggestions to mitigate noise from the facility have been considered and implemented by DGM. Technical details regarding the facility were also shared with the CCC at meetings.

4.7 Project modification

Modification 4 was submitted by the proponent and approved during this reporting period. The purpose of the modification was largely to alter a proposed crossing onsite. CCC members were taken on a site visit to view the proposed crossing subject to the Modification.

The modification was generally supported by CCC members, with a small number of members providing submissions to the Department during the exhibition period. Many CCC members viewed the timing and notification of the Modification's exhibition period as an opportunity for DGM to improve communication with the CCC.

Modification 4 was approved during this reporting period.

5 Focus for next 12 months

Over the next twelve months, the CCC will continue its role as a forum for discussion between the company and representatives of the community, stakeholder groups and the local councils. In line with the CCC Guidelines, the CCC will continue to:

- Establish and maintain good working relationships and promote information sharing between the proponent, local community, stakeholder groups and councils on individual State Significant projects
- Work with the proponent in keeping the community informed about the projects, seek community views on projects, and respond to matters raised by the community
- Enable community members and local councils in seeking information from the proponent and give the proponent feedback on the development and implementation of projects to assist with the delivery of balanced social, environmental and economic outcomes for the community, including:
  - the development of new projects or proposed changes to new projects;
  - the implementation of any condition of approvals and management plans;
  - the result of any monitoring, annual reviews and independent audits;
  - community concerns about the project;
  - the resolution of community complaints; and,
  - any community initiatives.

Specifically, the focus of the CCC will be on:

- ensuring meeting presentations are focused on topics which are relevant and current;
- maintaining and settling membership on the CCC to ensure continuity;
- undertaking site visits as a regular part of CCC meetings;
- encouraging open dialogue on issues particularly relating to activities as the mine moves into operation;
- discussing social, economic and environmental matters relevant to the community;
- supporting and improving communication and engagement with the community;
- reviewing updated environmental management plans following Modification 4 approval; and,
- considering environmental management and monitoring.

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