Mayoral Minute

SUBJECT: Dargues Gold Mine Modification Environmental Assessment

FILE NO.: LP0030 & GV0005

DIVISION: Mayor

Attachment
Nil

Synopsis
Eurobodalla Council has approached Palerang Council with a proposal to share the cost of engaging a consultant to help prepare a submission in response to the application by Unity Mining to modify their development conditions for the Dargues Gold Mine.

Recommendation
That Council approve expenditure of up to $10,000 to, in collaboration with Eurobodalla Council, engage a consultant to assist with the preparation of a submission in response to the application by Unity Mining to permit on-site ore processing at the Dargue’s Gold Mine at Majors Creek.

Report
Unity Mining has proposed a modification to the conditions that apply to the operation of the Dargues Gold Mine at Majors Creek. The modification proposes to process ore on-site. The exact details of the proposal, and the assessment of its environmental impact, will not be known until the details are released for public comment, currently though to be 13 April 2015. The mandatory exhibition period for such a modification, however, may be as little as two weeks.

The consultant to be engaged is GHD Pty Ltd. The project manager is Dr Peter Beck, a geologist and hydrogeochemist with over 25 years’ experience in the assessment, management and remediation of environmental impacts and contaminated land. He is an appointed environmental auditor in Victoria, as well as holding accreditation as a contaminated sites auditor in NSW, SA and WA. Dr Beck has previously provided advice to Eurobodalla Council on the Dargues Gold Mine project and has over 10 years’ experience advising and auditing mining, and industrial facilities and waste disposal sites.

Based on current expectations of the nature of the modification proposal, GHD has given a fee estimate of $18,750 with an upper bound of $25,550 and a lower bound of $11,150, qualified by “The proposed budget is for the review and reporting only. Any analysis or meetings required would require additional budget”.

Eurobodalla Council has approached Palerang Council with a proposal that Palerang Council contribute 50% of the cost of independent review of the Environmental Assessment, up to a maximum of $10,000.

Financial considerations
This proposal involves an unplanned expense of up to $10,000.

Policy implications
None
**Social implications**
There is significant concern within the community in the vicinity of the mine in relation to the impact of the proposed consent modification that would see ore processing and the use of sodium cyanide on site. The engagement of an appropriately qualified professional to help assess the analysis of the associated risks presented in the Environmental Assessment when it is released for public comment will demonstrate Council's commitment to community advocacy in relation to this issue.

**Environmental considerations**
The processing of ore on-site at the Dargues Gold Mine site is a significant deviation from the original consent conditions for the mine. The use of sodium cyanide, and the retention of waste products on-site has the potential to introduce environmental impacts not previously considered.