Information for the Majors Creek Community from the MCCLC

Below we have reproduced the main points sent to Cortona Resources as a result of the last community meeting.

Cortona’s previous written response of 4th April 2010 was shared with the community at the well-attended community meeting held on 19th April 2010 and is available elsewhere on this website. You may like to reread the Cortona response to place the questions below “in context”. The series of questions are placed under the relevant sections of Cortona’s letter. They are written to Cortona and reproduced here in the spirit of Cortona’s stated commitment to open and honest dialogue and its focus “on designing a mine that is not only economically viable, and meets the requirements of Government, but also has a positive impact on the Majors Creek community, the wider region and the environment.”

The committee realises that some of these questions need to be asked of government agencies and that some of the questions were explored at the Community meeting with the Environmental Defenders Office last month. As discussed with Cortona, the committee is asking that the company gives their “response” or “attitude” to the ideas of these questions even if they can’t actually answer it in detail. The Community Liaison Committee is interested in getting Cortona’s “angle” to these questions. Once the Cortona response is received we shall circulate it and call a community meeting to determine the next steps.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Waterhouse
Chair, MCLCC

CORTONA COVERING LETTER

Application to the NSW Government under Section 3A of the Planning Act

- Can the community through the MCLCC participate in any future Planning Meetings?
- Can the points raised by the community be dealt with prior to the formal submission process? Is there any point to doing this?
- Can the points raised by the community be considered by the Director General prior to the notice being issued from the Department of Planning outlining the Director General’s Requirements for the proposed development?
- To the extent that the points raised by the community are not met by the Part 3A Planning process, is Cortona prepared to enter into an agreement with the MCLCC about these matters?

PART 1: PROPOSED DARGUES REEF GOLD MINE, OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

MINING

“The Majors Creek Community, through its open meetings has made it clear that the MCCLC advise Cortona that it (the community) considers 24 hour operations of the Major’s Creek mine to be totally unacceptable. The foremost concern of the community is that the noise, dust and light pollution effects of a 24 hour operations would adversely impact the community and that Cortona should review their planned operation with a view to reducing the hours to 12 or 14 per day.”

- What will Cortona do about acknowledging these very real concerns and restrict the hours of its operation to a more acceptable and reasonable period particularly in relation to surface operations?
• Is Cortona aware of a company called “Gekko” (or Gecko) that deals in underground mining design and equipment that is designed to reduce environmental impact?
• What is the amount of bond that Cortona will be required to pay to rectify any environmental damage? Is a fund established at the start of the project to “close” the mine when the project is complete?

PROCESSING
• How much noise will be made by the grinding mill and the processes associated with it?
• Will it be above ground? Will it be housed? Will it operate 24/7?

TAILINGS MANAGEMENT
• What is the chemical and physical composition of tailings resulting from the proposed milling process at Major’s Creek?
• From the chemical constituents within tailings, which are compounds of concern? Who decides this and what environmental legislation and environmental guidelines are used to determine thresholds of environmental concern?
• What is the soil leach factor of the TSF over a long period of time? (i.e. once mine is closed)
• Will the TSF contain any substances which, if leached into the soil, could cause environmental damage? If so, who would be responsible for rectifying this damage once the mine is closed?
• Can Cortona please indicate what they see as the life expectancy of the disused tailing dam and how the environmental chemistry relating to this dam will be monitored throughout the life of the mine as well as after it closes?

CONCENTRATE SHIPMENT
• When will the details about the concentrate shipment be known? (numbers of movements, size of vehicles, hours of transport, destination, noise of loading mechanism etc)

PART 2: CORTONA’S RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Q: Water Supply/Usage/Water Table:
• How much total water is required?
• How much “new water” per annum will the mine need?
• Given the current climate change conditions how relevant is the modeling of the past 100 years of rainfall?
• Can Cortona please outline what they define as 1st and 2nd order streams in the recently completed Review of Environmental Factors?
• Does Cortona’s harvestable water right include an obligation to assess how the catchment of that water will affect the local environment? (i.e. what will be the affect on community properties both upstream and downstream, our waterways, flora and fauna?)
• How often will the water be tested? i.e. Will Cortona on a weekly or monthly basis monitor all water use, its origin and tests the quality?
• Will Cortona make available to the MCCLC, and through them the Major’s Creek Community, results from any and all water testing already undertaken and in the future at, and near, the Major’s Creek proposed mine site and the full analytical methods (including the limits of detection and quantification) for each set of test results?
• Will Cortona involve the local Landcare/ environmental groups in the water testing/ monitoring process?
• Is Cortona prepared to indemnify the community in case of water or air pollution over and above an agreed limit? Is Cortona obliged to do this under legislation?
• Will Cortona make public the results of its assessment of the impact of using water from existing
Q: Noise Management
- How are noise levels measured?
- What ongoing measuring will take place?
- What is defined as an “acceptable” noise level?
- Which agency is responsible for setting these limits and measuring/enforcing them?
- As mentioned above, will Cortona reconsider a 24 hours per day operation or at the very least consider restricting the hours of operation of equipment above ground?
- Will the results of the independent noise expert be made public?
- Will Cortona use the brands and types of equipment that produces the least amount of noise when compared to other brands of the same types of equipment?

Q: Road Infrastructure and Traffic
- Will Cortona agree to support the involvement of an MCLCC representative in any discussions with the Palerang Council about the changes to the road infrastructure?
- What is the time frame for the road upgrade?
- How will the upgrade impact our travel times during the upgrade?
- When is the expected completion date of the road upgrade?
- Who will do the actual work for the road upgrade? (ie Council workers?, private contractors?)
- Will Cortona negotiate with the MCLCC to not have any heavy vehicle movement during certain agreed hours of the day?
- Will Cortona agree to fund now, as an interim measure, the full “White lining” of Majors Creek Road?
- Will local residents be charged higher rates as a result of the road upgrade, either now or in the future?

Q: Dust Control
- Will the condition of approval include a requirement to weekly monitor dust and to monthly test it for heavy metals? Will these results be made public?
- If individual residents are medically affected by increased dust levels what would be done to assist them?

Q: Ground Contamination by Chemicals
- No further questions at this time but we would like to reserve the option to gain responses in the future.

Q: Tailings Dam
- As above

Q: Effective Rehabilitation of Site
- How is the amount of the rehabilitation bond determined?

Q: Impact on Wildlife
- On what basis is it claimed that there has been little impact on local wildlife during the current drilling stage of operation?

Q: Impact of High Use of Electricity
- Will Cortona make public the outcomes of any discussions with Country Energy?
- Will these outcomes cause any increase in charges to local residents, either now or in the future?
Q: Positioning of Infrastructure
• Exactly what infrastructure- plant, stockpiles, roads lighting towers and the like will be visible from the village?

Q: Mine Portal Entrance
• Where will it be placed? Will it be seen from the village?

Q: Trust Fund
• Will Cortona provide some examples of independently managed trust funds which it considers to be reasonable to the MCLCC for us to consider?
• Would Cortona support a community based art event to officially open the mine?
• How does Cortona propose to administer its “corporate” support of community developments and support?
• Will Cortona become engaged in rehabilitation works beyond the lands it already owns?

Q: Further Expansion to Involve Detailed and Timely Consultation with Community
• Will Cortona proactively support MCCLC involvement in all decision making processes between stakeholders?

Q: Preference Given to Local Employment, Including Provision for Training
• When will Cortona be able to advise the community what local jobs/ training opportunities will be available and how will this be done?
• What opportunities will be available for young people within the Cortona facility?

Q: Decrease in Property Values to be Met by Company
• No further questions at this time

Q: Damage to Property from Mining Activities to be Fully Repaired by Company
• Is Cortona assessing the implications of the Majors Creek fault line for their mining operation? If so, will this assessment be made public?
• Is Cortona aware that there have been two local earth movements in the past 30 years? What will be done to ensure that the mining operation does not cause additional earth movements?
• Has Cortona determined if their insurance covers any damage to property as a result of mining and/or blasting?

Q: Independent Environmental Impact Assessment for Community to be paid for by Company
• Will Cortona fund the MCCLC to hire an independent qualified person/company to assess the mine proposals and any draft EIA so that the community can make an informed submission to the NSW Dept of Planning?

Q: Full Disclosure of any Arrangements Entered into Between Cortona and Palarang Council
• As above:
• Will Cortona agree to involve an MCLCC representative in any discussions with the Palerang Council about the changes to the road infrastructure?
• Can the community through the MCLCC participate in any future “Stakeholder” Meetings?

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