

News BusinessSearch...
Mudgee Guardian (/)
AND GOULBURN ADVERTISER

Yancoal denies stalling negotiations on The Drip

By DARREN SNYDER

Oct. 27, 2014, 4 a.m.

Yancoal has slammed Mudgee District Environment Group over accusations the mining company is holding up negotiations to protect The Drip.

On Thursday the Environment Group came out swinging, asking what Yancoal had to hide by blocking a release of state government papers – each regarding the sale of land containing The Drip.

The Environment Group, known as MDEG, recently applied through NSW freedom of information laws to gain access to the decision that allowed a Crown Land block containing The Drip to be sold as free hold land in 2010.

The state government decided it was in the public interest to release 14 documents relating to the sale of The Drip – a “visually dramatic” sandstone cliff and gorge that drips clear spring water from a perched aquifer through a porous rock wall, and is located about 40 minutes north of Mudgee.

Yancoal has requested a review of the government’s decision.

***'POSITIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE
RELEVANT REGULATORS AND STATE
GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ARE
CONTINUING...'***

Mudgee District Environment Group chair, Bev Smiles, questioned why the Chinese-owned coal company “is holding up information which is in the public interest and why they are holding up the negotiations to protect The Drip within the Goulburn River National Park.”

“MDEG maintain that the protection of The Drip would have been very easy if the land had remained in public hands.”

A Yancoal spokesman said on Friday that accusations of “holding up negotiations to protect the Drip” were “baseless and misinformed”.

“As has been publicly stated on numerous occasions and reiterated to members of the MDEG, Yancoal has no intention to mine The Drip,” he said.

“The Drip and Drip block are included as part of the Moolarben Stage One biodiversity offsets and have been since the then Minister for Planning granted approval for Stage 1 on September 6, 2007.

“As the MDEG is aware, it was a Yancoal initiative to establish the working group to facilitate dialogue between all relevant regulators to develop potential options for the Drip’s long term protection.

“Positive discussions with the relevant regulators and state government authorities are continuing, with senior government executives and Yancoal aligned in working to achieve a viable and long term solution for the area.”

The spokesman confirmed Yancoal was “taking the appropriate time required to review the documents requested under the freedom of information laws regarding various land purchases related to the Moolarben Coal operation.”

He said as standard procedure, Yancoal was not made aware of the identity of the requesting party.

The Environment Group accepts the state government has been in negotiation with Yancoal since the approval of Moolarben Stage 1 modification 9 in June this year.

A Planning Assessment Commission determination report on the modification states “There is a strong argument to incorporate The Drip and its surrounds into the Goulburn River National Park and the Commission agrees with this view.”

“MDEG calls on Yancoal to come clean with the information and demonstrate corporate responsibility by agreeing to protect The Drip and its associated groundwater systems immediately,” Ms Smiles said.