

Much-needed step forward: Rio Tinto

Nov. 18, 2014, 4 a.m.

RIO Tinto Coal Australia managing director Chris Salisbury believes today's NSW Department of Planning ruling is a much-needed step towards securing a long-term future.

The department recommended that applications to continue mining at Mount Thorley Warkworth should be approved, subject to a range of stringent conditions which provide for an addition to the Goulburn National Park.

"After significant delays, this is good news for Mount Thorley Warkworth Mine and its workforce of 1300 people," Mr Salisbury said.

"But, we now need urgent action from Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) to determine our application.

"This mine has been a major part of the Hunter community for more than 30 years and we are seeking approval to continue operating on land it owns and within the footprint of existing mining leases.

"A strong future for Mount Thorley Warkworth will also mean a strong future for everyone who benefits from the mine, from our employees and contractors to the hundreds of other businesses that supply it and the many local community groups we partner with.

"The Department of Planning has considered all of the issues raised by community members, technical experts and other government agencies during the public exhibition period, and determined that the benefits of allowing this mine to continue operating outweigh the impacts."

Mr Salisbury said Rio Tinto was continuing to work with the NSW Government towards including an important addition to Goulburn National Park with more than 1800ha of land owned by Rio Tinto, as part of a larger package of significant biodiversity offsets.

"This will be a real asset for the people of NSW, with environmental and recreational benefits for the community," he said.

Some 1900 submissions in support of Mount Thorley Warkworth mine were received by the Department of Planning and Environment, with about 300 objections.

The PAC will hold a public hearing as the next step towards making a determination on the applications.



POSITIVE NEWS: The NSW Department of Planning has recommended applications to continue mining at Mount Thorley Warkworth should be approved.