

## **Mt Penny claims simply wrong**

I'm disappointed a regional newspaper of the *Mudgee Guardian's* standard would have failed to confirm the facts before writing a story on Cascade Coal's mining application at Mt Penny (First coal, now diamonds, sapphires and rubies - December 20, 2010).

Development applications for mines are some of the most scrutinised in the NSW Planning system.

The process involves the following:

- The proponent applies for guidelines (what's called Director General's requirements) which detail what issues it must address in its environmental assessment - this can take several weeks or more;

- On receiving those requirements, the proponent must then prepare its environmental assessment - this takes months, sometimes

years;

- The Department of Planning then decides if the environmental assessment is worthy of being placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 30 days - often with mines it's longer or extensions are granted.

- If the environmental assessment is not adequate, it must be revised before being exhibited;

- The Department then forwards all public submissions to the proponent which must address them - this also often takes several months or longer;

- If the Department deems the responses are not adequate, the proponent must address them again; and

- Only when the Department is satisfied, will it then finalise its assessment of the project, subjecting the application to rigorous analysis.

In regards to this specific application, the above process takes us well into

mid 2011 at the earliest!

This process has been in place for five years now, with the public informed at every step of the way via the Department of Planning's website. So, claims this project is being pushed through at the last minute are ridiculous and simply wrong.

So is the claim Mr Eddie Obeid's properties are also involved. I am advised the proposed area for the project does not include that land.

Finally, this environmental group, and subsequently your paper, claims I have announced I will not be standing at the next state election, as well as Mr Obeid. I can assure you I will be seeking Labor

Party endorsement to run again as a candidate in the Legislative Council. I understand Mr Obeid has not made any announcement on his position.

**Tony Kelly MLC  
Minister for Planning**