

22.07**MINING**14/09/2006
C13

This policy applies to all land in the Shire.

Policy Basis

Loddon Shire Council recognises the historical role of gold mining in the social and economic development of much of the south of the Shire, particularly Wedderburn, Inglewood, Kingower, Wehla, Tarnagulla, Llanelly and Rheola. It is also acknowledged that there may still be considerable mineral resources in the Shire with the mining of these posing economic opportunities.

In considering applications for mining, Council will consider environmental impacts and may consider economic impacts.

The environmental objective of the Loddon Plan and the Loddon Planning Scheme is the protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the Loddon Shire. Council recognises that the condition of the Shire's land and water resources and level of biodiversity has a direct affect on the economic prosperity of the Shire, through agriculture and through people visiting and moving to the Shire to enjoy its natural features.

The southern part of the shire, including areas of State Forest as well as cleared land, is recognised as holding significant potential for mineral exploration and mining. These areas of the shire attract significant numbers of visitors to the wineries and forest environments, especially Kooyoora State Park. The vegetation in these areas is largely from the Box Ironbark community, which is considered by some to be under protected and threatened. Its protection is important in realising the State and Federal Governments' biodiversity objectives. This vegetation also has an important role in preventing soil erosion, the contamination of waterways, and in the management of recharge to the water table thus controlling further salinity in the north of the Shire. Council also recognises that there is a variety of different mineral and mining resources throughout the shire like mineral sands in the north of the shire.

Council recognises that different methods of mining can be used and each has a different potential for impact on the site and surrounding environment. Different methods of mining include small scale prospecting with metal detectors, underground mining and open cut mining, usually by the doze and detect method.

Council acknowledges that prospecting for gold with hand held tools is of significant economic benefit within this municipality. When undertaken responsibly such prospecting has minimal negative environmental impact. Therefore this policy does not apply to prospecting using hand held tools.

Council is committed to ensuring that mining is conducted by responsible persons. A history in successful mining management and site rehabilitation will be of relevance.

Objectives

To ensure that mining makes a positive contribution to the economy of the Shire while maintaining a balance with the integrity of the natural environment on which the Shire's agricultural and tourism economies depend.

Policy

It is policy that:

- In considering an application for mining, Council will ensure that the following matters are addressed in the Department of Sustainability and Environment endorsed Work Plan, which forms part of the planning permit application. Further information may be

required if Council is not satisfied that the Work Plan provides sufficient detail. The following information may be considered:

- Flora and fauna survey to identify the environmental significance and biodiversity of the site conducted by an appropriately qualified person, in consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment;
- Plan of the site and surrounding area identifying the location of native vegetation, watercourses and proximity to roads (especially significant tourist routes);
- Means by which any water courses on or nearby the mining licence will be protected from pollution from soil or other contaminated run off from the site;
- Details about the number of people to be employed in the mining venture, expected expenditure and expected level of return of the proposed operation;
- A site rehabilitation plan prepared in consultation with the responsible authority;
- How areas of significant vegetation and habitat shall be protected from disturbance.

Note: much of the above information will help Council make an informed decision and is normally expected to be provided in the Work Plan required by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

- Council will balance the benefits of mining with the need to protect and enhance the condition of the land, groundwater and surface water resources, flora and fauna resources and level of biodiversity of the Shire. Council supports the use of mining practices that cause minimum disturbance to flora, fauna, land, water and views.
- In considering an application for mining, Council will consider the impact of the proposed works on views and vistas from major tourist routes. Council will endeavour to protect attractive visual amenity from major tourist routes, especially Inglewood – Rheola Road, Wehla–Kingower Road, Kingower- Kurting Road, Wedderburn–Dunolly Road and Wedderburn-Logan Road, Bendigo-St Arnaud Road, and this may involve the maintenance of buffers of native vegetation around mining sites.
- Mining operators are required to comply with noise regulations. Where an applicant cannot demonstrate that effective noise management arrangements are in place then restrictions on operating times may be considered.
- Council regards excellence in site rehabilitation as a critical factor in supporting an application for mining. In making a decision on an application for mining, Council will require demonstration that the rehabilitation proposals will return the site either to a state typical of the surrounding land or to some other pre-determined end use.