

Small parcel of mining lease withdrawn

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BY CONNIE STEVENS

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A small 22 hectare triangle of land near what is known as the 'Corner Gorge' has been withdrawn from a mining lease application by Moolarben Coal Operations.

A spokesman for Felix Resources said the company had never intended to mine on that parcel of land although it is within the stage 1 project boundary approved by the Department of Planning.

He said the withdrawal was merely a boundary adjustment and that there had been no change to the proposed underground mine plan in the vicinity of 'The Drip' Gorge.

"We have agreed the long wall panels will be offset 450 metres from 'The Drip' and the Goulburn River and that has already been approved by the NSW Department of Planning as part of the stage 1 project approval.

The stage 2 project boundary does not include 'The Drip' and the Goulburn River and any impacts on these areas were dealt with in the stage 1 approval process," the spokesman said.

Chair of the Mudgee District Environment Group, Bev Smiles said it was important that the 'Corner Gorge' triangle had been excluded from mining activity.

"We are currently liaising with the Premier's office, the office of the Minister for Mineral Resources and the office of the Minister for Climate Change to have 'The Drip Gorge' and the 'Corner Gorge' included in the Goulburn River National Park.

"Once a mining lease has been granted over an area, it cannot be gazetted as a national park.

Felix Resources said it wished to correct some misconceptions about areas where Moolarben proposes to mine.

"Moolarben intends to mine in accordance with their approval and in particular will maintain the approved mining distances from the Goulburn River and 'The Drip' as determined by the Independent Hearing and Assessment panel (IHAP)," the company said.

Stage 1 of Moolarben was approved by the Department of Planning in September 2007 and construction began in February this year.