

Mid-Western Regional Council supports community calls to protect The Drip

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Mid-Western Regional Council will support a community proposal to have The Drip included in an extension of Goulburn River National Park to protect it from nearby mining.

Mid-Western Regional Council will be making a late submission to the NSW Planning Assessment Commission regarding Moolarben Coal's Stage Two development.

The late submission will support a community proposal to extend Goulburn River National Park to The Drip (Block 45) and surrounds.

At Council's ordinary meeting on Wednesday, councillor Lucy White brought forward the matter in progress that was deferred in February.

The matter was deferred on February 19, before the Commission's public hearing on Moolarben Coal's Stage Two at Mudgee Town Hall, on the understanding a report was to be received from a committee reviewing the future management and ownership of The Drip. There has been confusion about who this committee involves and when the report is due.

Mid-Western Regional Council's director of development and community services, Catherine Van Laeren, told councillors Yancoal's Frank Fulham had contacted her and she said more information was likely to be available before the next council meeting.

Councillor Max Walker moved an amendment that the matter again be deferred until next council meeting but it was voted down.

Councillor White's motion was passed and included supporting "the community proposal to protect the Drip Gorge by including the Drip block 45, land to the south of the Goulburn River outside mining licence 1605 and private land block 51 in an extension of the Goulburn River National Park."

Council also moved that it would convey its support to the planning assessment commission as a late submission that the proposed extension to Goulburn River National Park be included as a condition of approval.

Mid-Western Regional Council will also write to NSW Member for Orange, Andrew Gee, acknowledging his support to protect the Drip Gorge and informing him of Council's endorsement of the community proposal to extend Goulburn River National Park.

A decision on Moolarben Coal's Stage Two development, which includes mining a further 252 million tonnes of coal over a period of 24 years and disturbing 1534 hectares of land, is expected in the coming months.

At the Commission's public hearing in February, about 50 speakers voiced their objection or approval of the mining company's plans for two underground mines and a fourth open cut pit.

The Drip was a focal point during more than six hours of presentations from community members, teachers, builders, farmers, businessmen, Moolarben Coal employees and environmentalists.