



# AVONBANK PROJECT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5 – DECEMBER 2020

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS AND PROJECT UPDATE

Christmas greetings to all, WIM Resource (WIM) is pleased to provide a project update to the community for the Avonbank Mineral Sand Project.

The past twelve months have seen WIM complete a wide range of activities, related to the project feasibility and also environmental studies, to enable the progression of the EES.

The completion of Pilot Plant bulk processing marked a major milestone for the company, confirming that the minerals contained in the Avonbank ore body can be easily separated.

The facilitation from local service providers, Horsham Rural City Council, and the local employees of the Avonbank Pilot Plant, provided a taste of what benefits the proposed Avonbank mine will bring to the region. WIM was pleased to experience the local expertise across service providers and this certainly provides confidence that the region is well placed to support the proposed Avonbank mine.

Several other feasibility studies continue for the project, to ensure that operating and capital costs estimates are accurate and relevant stakeholders continue to be engaged. WIM continues to make progress with the EES, which will underpin the approvals for Avonbank Project, with the release of Scoping Requirements and completion of many base line studies, including: noise, air quality, soils, flora and fauna, transport.

Moving forward, the outlook for Avonbank Project over the next twelve months will include further progression of the environmental studies to inform the EES, rehabilitation of the test pit and an array of feasibility studies.

On behalf of the team at WIM Resource, we wish you and your families a safe and Merry Christmas, and a prosperous New Year!



Michael Winternitz  
Project Director

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## EES SUMMARY

### Requirements for the Avonbank Project EES

An Environmental Effects Statement (EES) provides an analysis of the significance of the potential effects of the project, with consideration of:

- ◆ the potential effects on individual environmental and social assets – magnitude, extent and duration of change in the values of each asset;
- ◆ the likelihood of adverse effects, including those caused indirectly as a result of proposed activities, and associated uncertainty of predictions or estimates;
- ◆ proposed avoidance or mitigation measures to reduce predicted effects;
- ◆ likely residual effects and their significance, including significant residual impacts on MNES, assuming the proposed measures to avoid and mitigate environmental effects are implemented; and
- ◆ the proposed approach to managing and monitoring environmental performance and contingency planning.

In 2019 the Victorian Minister for Planning decided that an EES was required to assess the Avonbank Project, and identified the following key environmental effects to be addressed:

- ◆ effects on the land uses of the site and surrounding areas, including the implications for agricultural productivity;
- ◆ effects on land stability, erosion and soil productivity associated with the construction and operation of the project, including progressive rehabilitation works;
- ◆ effects of project construction and operation on air quality, noise and visual amenity of nearby sensitive receptors (particularly residences);
- ◆ effects on surface water environments, including local waterways and the broader catchment, as well as groundwater (hydrology, quality, uses and dependent ecosystems);
- ◆ solid and liquid waste that might be generated by the project during construction and operation;
- ◆ both positive and adverse socio-economic effects, at local and regional scales, potentially generated by the project, including increased traffic movement and indirect effects of the project construction workforce on the capacity of local community infrastructure;
- ◆ effects on biodiversity and ecological values within and in the vicinity of the site, and associated with adjacent road reserves and crown land, including native vegetation, listed threatened ecological communities and species of flora and fauna, and other habitats values; and
- ◆ effects on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

The project was also assessed as requiring approval under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. Issues to be addressed under this Act were incorporated into the EES requirements (the 'Scoping Requirements'), allowing a single assessment document – the EES – to be developed by WIM, overseen by a Technical Review Group (TRG) of relevant regulatory agencies and coordinated by the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

The full Avonbank Scoping Requirements document can be found at [www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/referrals-and-decisions](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/referrals-and-decisions).

Figure 1: Air Quality Baseline Station



Figure 2: Bagged soil sample for testing



### The Avonbank EES program

To address the Scoping Requirements, WIM developed a formal Study Program in 2019 to investigate potential environmental effects of the Avonbank Project, and to identify measures to mitigate these effects if required. The EES, once complete, will go to public exhibition to allow all stakeholders to review and comment on the findings of these investigations.

Concurrently, WIM implemented a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and program, to inform stakeholders of the project, and to seek input on project design issues and other areas of concern.

### Work completed

In anticipation of some of the requirements for an EES work commenced in 2018 to identify potential environmental and social impacts associated with the construction and operation of the project. This initially required identification of existing conditions (or ‘baseline’ conditions) on all relevant issues, some of which required data collection for a year or more. That work has now been largely completed, and with baselines established for:

- ◆ Ground and surface water conditions at the project site
- ◆ Air quality, and radiation and noise levels at the site
- ◆ Biodiversity
- ◆ Soils and landforms
- ◆ Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage
- ◆ Economic and social conditions in the region
- ◆ Transport routes servicing the site
- ◆ Land use
- ◆ Planning requirements

Summaries of the results from the background studies are being prepared for stakeholder information, and the impact assessment summaries will be also be prepared as those studies are finalised.

Once the project design was progressed, work commenced in mid-2020 on identifying potential effects the project may have on the environment (such as vegetation, and water) and on social assets (such as roads). Impacts on the economy are also being assessed to quantify the economic benefits of the project on local and regional jobs and businesses.

### Schedule for 2021

WIM expects to complete the EES process by the end of 2021. Major stages in the lead up to this include:

- ◆ The preparation of an EES document for public exhibition – it is expected that stakeholders will have 30-40 business days to review the EES and make their submissions;
- ◆ Panel Inquiry – following review of public submissions a panel inquiry will be held to allow interested parties to present their submissions in person; and
- ◆ Panel Report – after the panel inquiry the Planning Minister will receive the panel report, and make a decision on whether the project is environmentally acceptable and can proceed to formal licencing.

The EES process and the stage to which the Avonbank Project EES has progressed is shown diagrammatically in Figure 3 right.

Figure 3: Avonbank Project EES process progress



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

WIM continues to ensure the local community and all other stakeholders are updated, despite limitations related to COVID-19, to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views on the project and suggest ways in which aspects of the project might be modified to give better outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement strategies and actions were discussed with the State Government's Technical Reference Group (TRG) to discuss the impact COVID-19 has had on WIM's stakeholder engagement plans. With the easing of restrictions, WIM is planning to hold pop-in sessions in Q1 2021 and start making presentations Q2 on the various impact assessment studies (once complete) for the project.

Stakeholder engagement activities for 2021 include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Hold Pop-In information sessions in Horsham, Dooen, Murtoa and Jung as detailed above.
- ◆ Continue the CRG meetings
- ◆ Presentations on the Project to community groups as requested during 2021 once COVID-19 restrictions permit reasonable size crowds at indoor venues
- ◆ Project briefing to schools during 2021
- ◆ Attend local show days if scheduled and prepare for the 2022 Wimmera Field Day
- ◆ Develop a 'community support programme' for 2021
- ◆ It is planned to open the office one day per week from January 2021 and progressing to two or more days per week as demand dictates
  - The office will offer hard copies of newsletter, fact sheets and FAQs, and display maps and processes.
  - It will also be a venue to allow the community to ask questions, register interest in the project, or lodge a grievance
- ◆ WIM is upgrading its website to facilitate easy access to information and will be available from Q1 2021.
- ◆ WIM is also preparing Fact Sheets and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet and these will be loaded onto the website in Q1 2021.

WIM invites you to contact us with any questions or comments on any aspect of our project as we continue to progress through the approvals and development phases of the project.

WIM can be contacted through [www.wimresource.com.au](http://www.wimresource.com.au) or by email to [admin@wimresource.com.au](mailto:admin@wimresource.com.au) or the free call number 1800 959 298.

## MEET THE AVONBANK TEAM

Michael Davies is WIM's Community and Land Liaison Officer. Michael is a long way from home, having been raised in London before emigrating to Australia in 1964. He has an accounting / commercial background.

Michael's introduction to the Australian outback was a transfer to Woomera in South Australia while working in a bank. His introduction to mining was in 1971 in Tennant Creek working at Peko Mines. Since then he has worked for mining and resource related companies in every state in Australia plus a stint in South East Asia.

Michael settled in Victoria when he moved to Hamilton in 2003 and married his second wife Faye soon after. He now lives in Ocean Grove and enjoys golf, fishing, and volunteering. He has a son in London and a daughter in Adelaide.

