

Delay in Cemex quarry plans

BY BRAD WORRALL

THE multinational cement company planning a new quarry at Chiltern admits it won't meet its November deadline.

But Cemex Australia says the delays won't threaten the project.

The Mexican-headquartered company is still to provide the additional information to questions raised by the federal Environment Minister and Victorian Planning Minister in May.

Project director Michael Heath said the long-term project was not in jeopardy.

"We had hoped for a smooth transition from one quarry to the other but clearly we are not going to meet that date," he said.

"We have been preparing the answers and information required by the Federal Government and the Minister for Planning in Victoria and hope to submit that information in the coming weeks.

"So there will be a gap between closing the existing quarry down and starting again.

"It's not ideal but that does not change our plans—financially this is a strong project that stacks up quite well.

"On projects like this it always takes longer than expected."

Cemex, which operates an existing quarry in the Chiltern-Mount Pilot National Park, is seeking approval to move its operations 500m south-west onto private property between Forrest Lane and Black Dog Creek Road.

The national park lease on the existing mine expires in November.

The federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is also investigating how the proposed rock quarry would affect two endangered bird species and rare woodland.

The project requires assessment and approval by the federal Environment Minister before it can proceed.

A spokeswoman for the federal Environment Minister said the information requested from Cemex would be published for public comment once it is received.

"The proponent must then address any issues raised in public submissions," she said.

"Once the proponent submits their final documentation, the Minister has 40 business days to decide whether to approve the proposal."