



Our Reference: V13/301
OUT13/31748

Mr Howard Reed
Manager Mining Projects
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Ms Sophie Butcher
Email: Sophie.Butcher@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Reed

**Springvale Colliery Modification 4
Review of Environmental Assessment**

I refer to your recent request for Trade & Investment, Division of Resources and Energy (DRE) to review and provide comments on the Springvale Mine Section 75W Modification 4 Environmental Assessment (EA).

The modification will involve:

- An increase in maximum annual production levels from 3.4Mtpa to 4.5Mtpa to take into account the installation and operation of new longwall equipment and changed operational practices.
- A new sewer line will be connected to the Council sewer system, removing the need for on site effluent treatment and disposal. Pumps at the pumping station will also be replaced.

Comments

The proposal would appear to result in no significant environmental impacts except for those related to the higher rate of recovery and the new effluent treatment and disposal system. Issues with the potential for environmental impacts include:

- Subsidence - (subsidence in some areas would occur earlier in the mine operations process, potentially reducing the level of baseline data available prior to mining, but would not result in any additional actual impact);
- Traffic movements - (up to 7 additional vehicle movements per hour in the hour prior to each shift and in the hour following completion of each shift). Coal transport issues will be taken into account in the separate DA for the Western Coal Services site, currently under consideration by the Department of Planning & Infrastructure;

- Coal Washing and Reject Emplacement – the amount of coal requiring treatment and associated reject disposal will increase proportionally to the production increase. This would be taken into account in the separate DA for the Western Coal Services site, currently under consideration by the Department of Planning & Infrastructure, and;
- Effluent treatment - This will potentially have an improved environmental outcome by reducing the risk of on site pollution although there may be some minor disturbance during the construction of the new pipeline (this will be minimal if it is attached to the existing conveyor, identified as the likely installation method).

The proposed modification will require an additional 30 personnel to be employed at the mine. This would have a beneficial employment and economic impact for the region and State, although the higher production rate will reduce overall mine life by some amount. This would be taken into account in the development application for the proposed Springvale Colliery Expansion Project, due to be submitted in 2014.

An item not identified in the EA is proposed action with regard to the existing effluent treatment and disposal system. There may be a potential for associated equipment and areas to be decommissioned and rehabilitated at an earlier phase of mine operations. DRE will consider this issue in the next update of the Mining Operations Plan and also when providing comments on the next proposed Springvale Colliery Expansion Project to be lodged during 2014.

Recommendation

DRE considers It unlikely that the proposed modification will result in significant changes in environmental impacts, compared to the existing approval.

DRE has no objections to the proposed modification.

Should you have any enquires regarding this matter please contact Vince Fallico, Project Officer, Industry Coordination on (02) 8281 7340.

Yours sincerely


ADRIAN DELANY
ACTING DIRECTOR
INDUSTRY COORDINATION

29.10.13