



16 July 2009

Ref: 05148/3181

Mr Alan Wells

Wells Environmental Services

PO Box 205

East Maitland NSW 2323

**PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO ASHTON COAL MINE - ADDITIONAL
LONGWALL AREA (REF: DA 309-11-2001 MOD4)**

Dear Sir,

Thank you for forwarding information and Director General's Requirements for the above proposal for acoustic review. The modification seeks to extend the life of the underground mine by mining an additional longwall panel (Longwall 9) and increasing approved mine capacity from 5.2 to 5.45 Mtpa ROM Coal. The increase in ROM coal production would be from the underground operation. The key noise issue is set out in the Director General's Requirements as follows:

- ***Air Quality and Noise:*** demonstrate that the mine as modified would comply with the air quality and noise limits in the existing development consent.

A review of the Ashton Mine EIS has found that both the Air Quality Assessment by Holmes Air Sciences and Acoustic Assessment by HLA-Envirosciences were based on a ROM production rate of 5.45Mtpa. In particular, the acoustic assessment considered two trains per day on average, which was rounded up from 1.7 trains per day, to account for a theoretical maximum of 6Mtpa ROM coal (ie, 3.94Mtpa product coal) and found train noise levels to comply with what are still the DECC requirements for train noise levels.

As there are no foreseeable noise issues relating to the proposed modifications apart from a small percentage increase in train numbers, while remaining within the train numbers assessed in the EIS, we conclude that the project as proposed to be modified would remain within the approved noise limits.

Please call our office on 4954 2276 if you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

SPECTRUM ACOUSTICS PTY LIMITED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Pennington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Neil Pennington
Principal/Director