

DOC16/604875; EF13/2794

Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001
Attention: Jessie Evans

**HVO North Coal Mine – Modification 6 (DA 450-10-2003 Mod 6)
Carrington In-Pit Fine Reject Emplacement**

I refer to your email to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), dated 16 November 2016 seeking the EPA's comments on the proposed HVO North Coal Mine 'Carrington In-Pit Fine Reject Emplacement' proposal, application reference DA 450-10-2003 Mod 6.

Provided with the application is the supporting report '*Hunter Valley North Operations – Modification 6 – Environmental Assessment*' (EA) dated 8 November 2016 and prepared by ENM Consulting. The proposal relates to the HVO coal mine premises, licensed by the EPA under Environment Protection Licence (EPL) 640.

In summary the application seeks to change the overburden material to be emplaced in the Carrington Pit void as is currently approved, to fine reject, in order to meet a requirement for additional fine reject storage capacity.

The EPA has reviewed the application and EA and determined that should the application be approved, the EPA proposes to amend EPL 640 to require the licensee to provide the EPA with an annual groundwater monitoring report that demonstrates:

- (a) all in-pit fine reject emplacement schemes are operating in a proper and efficient manner as long-term evaporative sinks; and,
- (b) no water is discharged from the in-pit fine reject emplacements to the environment, or, if discharge does occur, that it does not constitute an offence under section 120 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*.

The specific licence conditions, including monitor locations, monitoring frequency and reporting requirements would be negotiated with the licensee separately to this submission if approval is granted. As such the EPA does not have any specific recommended conditions of approval to provide in relation to this application, as any variation to the licence would be consulted directly with the licensee if approval is granted.

The recommended reporting requirements would not be anticipated to add a significant cost to the licensee's existing operations as the licensee currently maintains a Groundwater Management Plan and operates an integrated groundwater monitoring network across the site. The EPA understands this comprises a large number of groundwater bores, vibrating wire piezometers and sensors.

Additionally, if approval is granted it is recommended that the proponent be required to develop and enact a Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP), or similar document. The TARP will set out site-specific

groundwater monitoring trigger levels (water levels, salinity, etc.) for interpreting data in relation to points (a) and (b) above, as well as the corresponding management options for operating the fine reject in-pit emplacement scheme should monitoring results fall outside of the prescribed range

If you require any further information regarding this matter please contact me on 4908 6819 or by email to hunter.region@epa.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



1-12-16

MICHAEL HOWAT
A/Head Regional Operations Unit - Hunter
Environment Protection Authority