



Secretariat
Independent Expert Scientific Committee
on CSG and Large Coal Mining Development
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir / Madam

**Glendell Continued Operations Project (SSD 9349; EPBC 2019/8409)
Request for Advice**

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (NSW Department) and the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy (Commonwealth Department) are jointly referring the development application for the Glendell Continued Operations Project to the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC) for its consideration and advice.

On 3 December 2019, Glendell Tenements Pty Ltd (the Applicant), submitted a State significant development application for the Glendell Continued Operations Project (the Project), supported by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An electronic copy of the EIS is available at <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/10086>.

The Glendell Mine is located 20 km northwest of Singleton and 24 km southeast of Muswellbrook, NSW. The Glendell Mine forms part of the Mount Owen Complex, which also includes the Mount Owen and Ravensworth East Mines. The Project involves:

- extending the life of open cut coal mining operations at Glendell Mine by 20 years to 2044;
- extending the Glendell Pit to the north to extract an additional 135 million tonnes of run-of-mine (ROM) coal over the life of the mine; and
- extracting and transporting up to 10 million tonne per annum of ROM coal to the Mount Owen Complex coal handling and processing plant for coal beneficiation and dispatch.

The catchment areas affected by the Project have been significantly modified by historic mining activity and associated creek diversions. The NSW Department also notes that Permian groundwater systems in the vicinity of the Project area have been extensively depressurised due to the cumulative impact of mining operations. These groundwater resources are typically saline and low-yielding.

The NSW Department has consulted with the Commonwealth Department to jointly develop specific questions for consideration and advice by the IESC. In developing these questions, the NSW Department has considered input by various agencies to the environmental assessment requirements for the Project. Neither Department is requesting a general review by the IESC of all potential water resource impacts for the Project. The joint referral for the IESC's advice is limited to the questions set out in the attached request for advice dated 17 January 2020.

The NSW Department has arranged for the EIS to be publicly exhibited for 52 days from 11 December 2019 to 31 January 2020. The Applicant will be asked to prepare a response to the matters raised in submissions during the exhibition period, including any advice from the IESC, and to provide this to the NSW Department for consideration.

The NSW Department will then prepare its Assessment Report and any recommended conditions of consent, which it will refer to either the Independent Planning Commission of NSW or an

appropriate delegate of the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The Commission or Minister's delegate will determine whether to approve or reject the application, from a NSW perspective, and also determine appropriate conditions of consent for the Project in the case of an approval.

On 11 April 2019, the Applicant referred the Project to the Commonwealth Department under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). On 10 July 2019, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment's delegate determined that the proposed Project is a "controlled action" requiring approval under the EPBC Act. The Project will be assessed by the NSW Department under an accredited assessment process, in keeping with the policy intent of the Bilateral Agreement between the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Given that the proposal is a controlled action, the Commonwealth Department has agreed to refer the Project to the IESC jointly so that the IESC's advice will be available to both the NSW and Commonwealth Departments. There may be a need for the Commonwealth to formally seek advice from the IESC at a later stage, to inform its separate determination process under the EPBC Act. The Commonwealth Department would consider any advice already provided in relation to this Project on making this request.

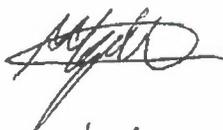
The NSW and Commonwealth Departments look to the IESC's advice as an important component in the assessment of this Project and ask for this advice to be provided in a timely manner so that it can be considered by the Applicant following the conclusion of the exhibition period, and subsequently by the NSW Department during its assessment of the application.

Full details of the potential water-related impacts of the Project are contained in the EIS. In particular, please refer to Appendix 16 (Groundwater Impact Assessment) and Appendix 17 (Surface Water Impact Assessment). Your attention is also drawn to Appendix 10 (Assessment of Commonwealth Matters), Appendix 20 (Appendix F – Aquatic Assessment) and Appendix 21 (Stygofauna Assessment).

The NSW Department's project officer is Nagindar Singh, Senior Environmental Assessment Officer within the Resources Assessment Branch. She can be contacted by phone on 8289 6873 or email at nagindar.singh@planning.nsw.gov.au.

The Commonwealth Department's key contact is Andy Huxham, Northern NSW Assessments. He can be contacted by phone on 6274 9444 or email at andy.huxham@environment.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



20/01/20

Matthew Spratt
Director
Resource Assessments
Planning and Assessment Group
NSW Department of Planning, Industry
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21/01/20

Dane Roberts
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