

Sara Wilson - Moolarben Stage 2 - Additional Biodiversity Offset Data

From: "Mark Jacobs" <MJacobs@yancoal.com.au>
To: <David.Kitto@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 11/29/2013 4:30 PM
Subject: Moolarben Stage 2 - Additional Biodiversity Offset Data
CC: <Sara.Wilson@planning.nsw.gov.au>, <mmoore@yancoal.com.au>

David,

In addition to previous ecological surveys/assessments undertaken for the Moolarben Coal Project Stage 2 Biodiversity offset, we have undertaken more targeted ecological surveys in 2013 at the proposed Stage 2 offset properties over the past nine months. These surveys have collected substantial additional data regarding threatened species and their habitats within the Stage 2 offset areas, including for the Regent Honeyeater.

With regard to the Regent Honeyeater and the current draft condition requiring a payment of \$850,000 to OEH for the national Regent Honeyeater program, Yancoal is unaware of the justification for the requirement of these funds, nor does Yancoal consider the funding warranted to offset the potential impact of the Stage 2 Project given the detail provided previously and supported by the recent additional surveys (summarised below).

Regent Honeyeater Conclusions

Specific outcomes relevant to the Regent Honeyeater considering the recent additional surveys are as follows:

- There are no records for the Regent Honeyeater within the Stage 2 disturbance area from surveys undertaken by Yancoal or a third party, despite numerous surveys targeting this species.
- Due to local and regional records, the Regent Honeyeater is considered a potential occurrence within the Stage 2 disturbance area and therefore was assessed as such in the Stage 2 Environmental Assessment. The threatened species assessment in the Stage 2 Environmental Assessment concluded (for the Regent Honeyeater) that no known habitat would be impact by the Project (only potential habitat), and that movement corridors "*would not be greatly impacted*".
- A total of **1,744 ha** of Regent Honeyeater habitat is confirmed as present within the offset areas, compared with the conservative estimate of **685 ha** of potential habitat in the Stage 2 disturbance area.
- The commitment to regenerate grassland areas within the offset areas to woodland using species typical of the *White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland* endangered ecological community (recognised habitat for the Regent Honeyeater) will increase the area of habitat for the Regent Honeyeater that is conserved/created by the Project by an additional 1,160 ha, a total of **2,904 ha** of habitat for the Regent Honeyeater in the offset areas in the medium to long term.
- The area of potential Regent Honeyeater habitat would also be further increased by the existing commitments to revegetate 1,502 ha of the Stage 2 disturbance areas (excluding the final void) to a mosaic of forest/woodland with species typical of the *White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland* endangered ecological community (recognised habitat for the Regent Honeyeater). This will provide a total of **4,406 ha** of known and potential Regent Honeyeater habitat (when combined with the offset areas) in the medium to long term.
- **NB:** In this regard, Yancoal would accept a condition that requires habitat for the Regent Honeyeater (as well as other threatened fauna species) to be targeted in the disturbance area revegetation and the

offset areas regeneration. Rewording the current text in Condition 27 of Schedule 3 of the draft conditions would be an appropriate location for this requirement.

- Significant habitat for the Regent Honeyeater includes Box-Ironbark eucalypt associations, particularly where they occur on wetter and more fertile sites, as well as River She-oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) woodlands (Ingwersen, Geering, and Menkhorst 2013 – Draft *National Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater* *Anthochaera phrygia*). Significant habitat occurs to varying degrees in habitat identified as suitable for Regent Honeyeaters within all of the Stage 2 offset properties and on lands immediately adjacent to the offset properties.
- Specific “key” forage species for the Regent Honeyeater include (Ingwersen *et al.* 2013 – Draft *National Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater* *Anthochaera phrygia*):

Mugga Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*;

Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*;

White Box *Eucalyptus albens*;

Blue-leaved Stringybark *Eucalyptus agglomerata*;

Broad-leaved Ironbark *Eucalyptus fibrosa*;

Blakely’s Red Gum *Eucalyptus blakelyi*;

Grey Gum *Eucalyptus punctata*;

Box Mistletoe *Amyema miquellii*; and

Needle-leaf Mistletoe *Amyema cambagei* on River She-oak *Casuarina cunninghamiana*.

- All of these flora species except Needle-leaf Mistletoe on River She-oak have been recorded within the boundaries of the Moolarben Stage 2 offset properties (although River She-oak itself has been recorded). Although this mistletoe species was not identified during surveys, it is likely that the species would occur in River She-oak within and/or adjacent to the offset properties.
- The Draft Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater (Ingwersen *et al.* 2013) acknowledges that further key forage species, regularly used areas and significant habitat are likely to be identified during the implementation of actions recommended in the recovery plan. It is highly likely that additional habitat features for the Regent Honeyeater identified in the future through that process will be well represented within the offset properties.

2013 Additional Surveys – Other Important Outcomes

The additional surveys have:

1. Targeted all threatened flora and fauna species considered potential occurrences within the Stage 2 disturbance area.
2. Targeted habitat requirements of all threatened flora and fauna species considered potential occurrences within the Stage 2 disturbance area.
3. Collected additional detailed floristic data to support the vegetation community mapping of the offset properties, specifically focussed on the *White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland* endangered ecological community.

Key findings of the additional surveys include:

- The area of *White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland* endangered ecological community present within the offset areas has been confirmed.
- The recent surveys recorded **12 additional threatened species** that had not previously been recorded in the offset areas. With this additional data there are confirmed records for 18 threatened (TSC Act) fauna species within the offset areas. Four of these threatened species are unique to the offset areas i.e. have not been recorded within the Stage 2 disturbance area and were not considered potential occurrences within the Stage 2 disturbance area.
- Confirmed habitat (i.e. based on surveys targeted at recognised habitat requirements) for **all 41 threatened fauna species** considered potential occurrences within the Stage 2 disturbance area (and surrounds) within the offset areas.
- Of the 16 threatened species recorded or considered likely to occur within the Stage 2 disturbance area, **14 have been recorded** in the offset areas. The two exceptions are the Hooded Robin (vulnerable) and the Little Lorikeet (vulnerable). **Habitat** for both of these species has been confirmed (i.e. based on surveys targeted at recognised habitat requirements) in the offset areas as follows: Hooded Robin (1,317 ha disturbed, 3,492 ha offset) and Little Lorikeet (685 ha disturbed, 1,424 ha offset).

The results of this work are currently being finalised in a detailed report which will be available and provided to the Department in the next two weeks.

On the basis of the results of these additional surveys Yancoal maintains its position that the proposed biodiversity offset provides an adequate offset for residual impacts associated with the Stage 2 Project, without the need for additional funding i.e. without the need for \$850,000 for the Regent Honeyeater.

Regards,
Mark

Mark Jacobs | General Manager, Environment, Approvals & Community Relations

Yancoal Australia Ltd

OFFICE: Level 7, 167 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

POSTAL:

PHONE: +61 (2) 9220 9910

FAX: +61 (2) 9220 9999

MOBILE: 0408 634 613

EMAIL: MJacobs@yancoal.com.au

WEBSITE: www.yancoal.com.au



*** NOTICE - Change of Address ***

From 24 June 2013 the registered address of Yancoal Australia Ltd, its subsidiaries and assets managed on behalf of Yancoal International (Holding) Co. Ltd will be Level 26, 363 George Street Sydney, NSW 2000.