



OUT13/36701

Matthew Riley
Planning Officer
Mining Projects
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Riley

**Cobbora Coal Project (10_0001)
Draft Condition of Development Consent**

I refer to your email of 11 December 2013 regarding the Cobbora Holding Company Pty Ltd proposal to develop the Cobbora Coal Project and the draft Conditions of Development Consent.

NSW Trade & Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services, Division of Resources & Energy (DRE) has reviewed the proposed Condition of Development Consent and provides the following comments which are directed at specific areas of DRE responsibility for this proposal.

DRE request that all references to the Executive Director Mineral Resources be replaced with Director General of Department of Trade & Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services.

Should you have any enquires regarding this matter please contact Julie Moloney, Principal Adviser, Industry Coordination on (02) 4931 6549.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Delany
Acting Director, Industry Coordination

12.12.13



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CVL:A0420213

18 December 2013

Mr Matthew Riley
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
C/O matthew.riley@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Matthew

DRAFT CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – COBBORA COAL PROJECT

Reference is made to your email requesting comment on the draft conditions of approval for the Cobbora Coal Project.

Mid-Western Regional Council requests that two amendments be made to the draft conditions of approval both relating to draft condition 40.

1. That the Mid-Western Regional Council be included in the table under *Appropriate Road Authority* for Spring Ridge Road south of the mine.
2. That the timing for the construction work for Spring Ridge Road south of the mine be upon approval of the project rather than prior to construction works. This request is made on the basis that commitments were made to undertake this work and upgrading of the Laheys Creek / Castlereagh Highway has been commenced with a project scope undertaken which has raised community expectation that the upgrade would occur imminently.

Should you have any queries in relation to this matter please contact me on 63782820.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Warwick Bennett", is written over the "Yours faithfully" text.

WARWICK BENNETT
GENERAL MANAGER



Office of Environment & Heritage

Your reference:
Our reference:
Contact:

DOC13/95234
Erica Baigent
(02) 68835311

Howard Reed
Manager, Mining and Industry Projects
Major Projects Assessment
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2011

Attention: Matthew Riley

Dear Matthew

RE: Cobbora Coal Project – Draft Conditions

I refer to your email dated 11 December 2013 seeking comments from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) on the draft approval conditions for the Cobbora Coal Project. Thank you for providing OEH the opportunity to comment.

OEH has previously provided comments on an earlier draft of approval conditions relating to indirect/supplementary offsets and translocation. Those comments (email dated 3 October 2013) are included with this letter for your information and reference. OEH also provided some recommendations related to the approval conditions in correspondence dated 2 September 2013.

OEH has only been able to undertake a brief review of the current draft conditions in the time available, and the focus has been on how the previous OEH comments have been addressed. Our advice on the draft conditions is provided in Attachment A.

If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact Erica Baigent, Conservation Planning Officer on (02) 6883 5311.

Yours sincerely

SONYA ARDILL
Senior Team Leader Planning, North West Region
Regional Operations

18 December 2013

Cobbora Coal Mine – Draft Approval Conditions

OEH Comments

1. Biodiversity Offset Strategy

From the draft conditions we understand the 'Group 1 Offsets' (*'Formal Biodiversity Offset Properties'*) as defined in the current Biodiversity Offset Package (BOP) will be required to be secured in perpetuity and the 'Group 2 offsets' (*'Additional areas to the formal biodiversity offset properties to provide biodiversity conservation outcomes'*) will not be secured in-perpetuity. From conversation between Erica Baigent (OEH) and Matthew Riley (DoPI) on 17 December 2013 we understand that the areas in Group 2 are considered by DoPI to be an obligation over the life of the project only and are considered a 'mitigation' rather than 'offset' measure.

Within the Group 1 properties in Table 11 of the draft conditions, we note that one area has been labelled 'Southern NPWS' as per the proponent's current BOP. Please note that discussions with the proponent regarding potential OEH Estate additions are ongoing with no agreements reached to date. Acceptance of lands by OEH will be dependent on the outcome of assessments and whether the proponent will provide appropriate management funding. For clarity and consistency we recommend that the area title 'Southern NPWS' be changed to 'Southern' in the same way that the approval has removed the 'SCA' from the proponent's area titles for 'Cobbora', 'Adelyne' and 'Goonoo' in Table 11.

2. Condition 35 Biodiversity Management Plan

From the headings in the draft approval conditions it appears that 'Biodiversity Offset Strategy', 'Supplementary Offsets' and 'Translocation of Flora Species' are considered as distinct, individual requirements ie both 'Supplementary Offsets' and 'Translocation of Flora Species' appear to be separate from the 'Biodiversity Offset Strategy'. It is on this understanding that OEH has reviewed the requirements of the Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP).

- Condition 35(e) requires the BMP to include *'detailed performance and completion criteria for evaluating the performance of the biodiversity offset strategy, and triggering remedial action (if necessary)'*. This requirement appears to apply only to the 'Biodiversity Offset Strategy' not the 'Supplementary Offsets' and 'Translocation of Flora Species'.
- Condition 35 (f) requires a detailed program for implementing the supplementary offsets and translocating the threatened flora species within the project disturbance boundary. The condition does not outline any specific requirements for the 'detailed program'
- Condition 35 (g) requires the BMP to set out the measures that would be implemented for a range of actions which appear to be primarily related to the biodiversity offset strategy. However it is noted that this list includes *'collecting and propagating seed'* and *'protecting vegetation and fauna habitat outside the approved disturbance area'* which could possibly be related to the supplementary offsets and translocation of threatened flora species.
- Condition 35 (i) requires the BMP to include a *'seasonally based program to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these programs and measures, and progress against the detailed performance and completion criteria'*. This condition appears to apply to all programs (including the supplementary measures and translocation of threatened flora species) however earlier in Condition 35(e) it appears that the detailed performance and completion criteria would only be developed for the Biodiversity Offset Strategy.
- Condition 35 (j) requires the BMP to *'identify the risks that could prevent the successful implementation of the biodiversity offset strategy, supplementary offset measures, and translocation program, and described the contingency measures that would be implemented to*

mitigate against these risks'. OEH supports the inclusion of the supplementary offsets and translocation program in this risk assessment and requirement for contingency measures to mitigate the identified risks.

- In correspondence dated 2 September 2013, OEH recommended that any approval conditions *'require the completion of adequate and targeted biodiversity surveys in the offset areas to provide the baseline data necessary to inform the adaptive management of these areas...'*. There does not appear to be a specific requirement in Condition 35 for the collection of this baseline data, although a note below Table 11 of the conditions does indicate that certain areas of 'native pasture' have been flagged as requiring further survey effort to define the condition, class and level of disturbance. There is also a reference to baseline data in Condition 1 'Integrated Land Management'. Nevertheless OEH recommends the inclusion of a specific requirement in relation to the collection of baseline data within Condition 35.

Overall, OEH is concerned to ensure that the approval conditions contain appropriate provisions and sufficient detail to guarantee that all research and on-ground actions, including the proposed supplementary offsets and translocation of threatened flora species, are undertaken with specific and measurable objectives, sufficient baseline data, clear funding schedules, project plans, performance and completion criteria, contingency measures and monitoring and reporting arrangements. It is not clear whether the current draft conditions adequately address these in all cases. We request DoPI to consider whether these matters are appropriately captured in the current draft conditions.

OEH has previously flagged the importance of the BMP addressing and accommodating the complexities associated with the proposed propagation trials for, and management of additional populations of, the subject threatened flora species. OEH would support the inclusion of individual approval conditions for both the supplementary offsets and a threatened species translocation plan which contain specific, detailed requirements for the content of these programs within the BMP.

3. Condition 37 Conservation Bond

OEH supports the inclusion of the translocation program in the calculation of the sum of the conservation bond as per Condition 37.

4. Indirect Impacts

OEH has previously recommended (2 September 2013) that:

- Any approval conditions relating to the monitoring and adaptive management of indirect impacts such as light spill, dust and noise, contain the specific requirement to monitor and mitigate the impacts of these factors on biodiversity assets in the area, and
- Any approval conditions relating to the development of the ILMP (or similar plan) for the project require the proponent to fully justify the design and placement of all fauna movement structures and monitor their usage.

We encourage DoPI to consider how these matters could be addressed within the draft approval conditions.

5. Condition 39 Heritage Management Plan (HMP)

In line with our previous recommendations we support the inclusion of the requirement for the HMP to describe the measures that would be implemented to investigate and document the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the biodiversity offset areas. We continue to advocate the specific inclusion of a condition instructing the construction of adequate protection and stabilisation of creeks associated with protected Aboriginal sites within the Project Area, and which ensures that adequate measures are put in place in the Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan to manage sensitive areas exposed to traffic thoroughfares.

ED13/580891
MW/MC

13 December 2013



Mr M Riley
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Riley

COBBORA COAL PROJECT - DRAFT CONDITIONS

I refer to your email to Council's General Manager of 11 December 2013 and our subsequent telephone conversation on 12 December 2013 regarding the draft conditions for the Cobbora Coal project.

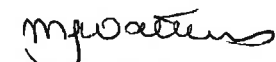
While Council has no objections regarding the draft conditions, as discussed, it appears that the Department has not referenced/attached the same draft Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) that has been agreed to in principle by Council and Cobbora Holding Company Pty Ltd.

I provide attached a copy of the draft VPA that was considered by Dubbo City Council on 25 November 2013 and which is currently on public exhibition until 10 January 2014.

Council strongly objects to the changes by the Department and requests that the VPA be amended to reflect the agreement reached between Council and Cobbora Holdings Company Pty Ltd.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need to discuss the matter further.

Yours faithfully



Melissa Watkins
Director Environmental Services



Department of Primary Industries

OUT 13/36663

19 DEC 2013

Matthew Riley
Planning Officer
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

E matthew.riley@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Riley

Thank you for your email of 11 December 2013 concerning the review of the draft project approval and associated conditions for the proposed Cobbora Coal Project.

The Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security (O AS&FS) has reviewed the draft project approval conditions provided by your Department.

O AS&FS has identified that a number of issues of concern raised in its response to the Planning Assessment Commission recommendations and the Revised Preferred Project Report have not been fully addressed by the draft project approval conditions.

Suggested alterations to the draft project approval conditions to address these concerns are included in Attachment 1. A summary of our concerns relating to the draft project approval conditions follow:

Agricultural Land Resource Assessment

- That Environmental Performance Condition 1 (c) should specify land and soil capability rather than agricultural capability.
- That Environmental Performance Condition 1 (g) does not adequately reflect the O AS&FS recommendations on agricultural trials as noted in our response to the Planning Assessment Commission and the Revised Preferred Project Report.
- That Environmental Performance Condition 52 (e) needs to clarify that all O AS&FS recommendations on the re-establishment of agricultural land be incorporated.

Agricultural Socio-Economic Assessment

- That Environmental Performance Condition 50 needs to consider actual agricultural productivity (relative to regional averages) as an outcome of mine site rehabilitation.

This advice from the Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security is forwarded direct to the Department of Planning & Infrastructure in accordance with agreed arrangements for mining applications that affect agricultural land. It includes comments

provided by officers in Agriculture NSW and NSW Trade & Investment. Additional advice from the other divisions within the Department of Primary Industries may be forwarded by separate letter.

If you wish to discuss the issue further please call Rob Williamson on telephone 02 6391 3166 or by email robert.williamson@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Therese Hulme
A/Director Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security

Encl

Exhibition of *Cobbora Coal Project Approval: Draft Conditions*

Agricultural Land Resource

Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security (O AS&FS) has identified that a number of issues raised in its response to the Planning Assessment Commission recommendations and the Revised Preferred Project Report have not been addressed.

O AS&FS recommends that the following conditions be incorporated into the project approval conditions to ensure these issues are addressed.

Issue 1: Schedule 3 Environmental Performance Condition 1 (c)

Schedule 3 Environmental Performance Condition 1 (c) directs the proponent to map agricultural capability but does not specify how this is to be mapped. O AS&FS recommends that this be amended to specify land and soil capability.

Recommended consent condition in response to this issue:

That Schedule 3 Environmental Performance Condition 1 (c) is amended to read:

“map the land and soil capability and biodiversity regeneration potential of all the Proponent’s landholdings (including those landholdings in the mining and offset areas), describe the existing land tenure arrangements and include suitable baseline data on the current condition of the landholdings;”

Issue 2: Schedule 3, Environmental Performance Condition 1 (g)

Schedule 3 Environmental Performance Condition 1 (g), dot point 2 directs the proponent to carry out a series of various agricultural and biodiversity rehabilitation trials, yet does not specify the conditions detailed by O AS&FS (section 2 (a) in the O AS&FS response to the Planning Assessment Commission recommendations and the Revised Preferred Project Report.)

Recommended consent condition response to this issue:

That Schedule 3, Environmental Performance Condition 1 (g) dot point 2 is amended to read:

“a program to carry out a series of trials of various agricultural and biodiversity rehabilitation and endemic vegetation re-establishment techniques, supported by a local seedbank of endemic species and incorporating all of O AS&FS’s recommendations on the re-establishment of agricultural land as outlined in section 2 (a) of its response to the Planning Assessment Commission recommendations and the Revised Preferred Project Report”.

Issue 3: Schedule 3, Environmental Performance Condition 52 (e)

O AS&FS recommends a minor change that the Rehabilitation Management Plan incorporate all of its recommendations on the re-establishment of agricultural land in its response to Planning Assessment Commission recommendations and the Revised Preferred Project Report.

Recommended consent condition response to this issue:

That Schedule 3, Environmental Performance Condition 52 (e) is amended to read:

“incorporate **all of** O AS&FS’s recommendations on the re-establishment of agricultural land as outlined in section 2 (a) of its response to the Planning Assessment Commission recommendations and the Revised Preferred Project Report”.

Socio-Economic Assessment

Issue 4: Schedule 3, Rehabilitation Objectives Condition 50

Schedule 3 Rehabilitation Objectives Condition 50 does not adequately address the rehabilitation level of agricultural lands at the mine site, specifically agricultural productivity.

Recommended consent condition response to this issue:

That in Table 14 (*Rehabilitation Objectives*) for the “Mine site (as a whole)”, the second dot point be amended to read:

“Restore at least 427 ha of the disturbance area to land with a Class III land and soil capability and agricultural productivity consistent with regional best practice (which may include mixed farming systems).”



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Our reference:
Contact:

EF13/8518
Brad Tanswell 02 6883 5367

Mr Howard Reed
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Matthew Riley

Dear Mr Reed,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Conditions of Consent provided in the Draft Project Approval for the proposed Cobbora Coal Mine (ref 10_0001) received by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on 11 December 2013.

Additionally I refer to:

- The EPA's submission to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DoPI) dated 16 November 2012 commenting on the Environmental Assessment placed on public exhibition.
- The EPA's submission to DoPI dated 8 March 2013 commenting on the Response to Submissions Report;
- The EPA's submission to DoPI dated 10 September 2013 commenting on additional information provided on the Submission Report; and
- The EPA's submission to DoPI dated 23 September 2013 also commenting on additional information provided on the Submission Report.

The EPA has reviewed the Draft Conditions of Consent and has determined that it generally supports the Draft Conditions contained in the Draft Project Approval.

The EPA notes the wording in the proposed conditions requiring the preparation of various management plans does not specifically address some of the issues raised by the EPA in submissions provided by the EPA to DoPI in the various submissions outlined above. However the EPA notes the management plans of relevance to the EPA are required to be prepared in consultation with the EPA providing the EPA with an opportunity to ensure these issues are addressed.

The EPA would also like to advise prospective proponents of the mine that every Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO) licence will contain a number of mandatory conditions regarding monitoring and discharge requirements and limits for various environmental media (e.g. air, water, noise etc). Where these requirements have not been addressed/agreed to prior to issue of consent, this information must be provided prior to or with an application for an EPL for the EPA's consideration and must be agreed to before the EPA can issue an EPL. The EPA notes this information must be included in the various management plans of relevance to the EPA which must be submitted with an application for an EPL.

The EPA notes that the proposal will require an environment protection licence pursuant to the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* to commence construction activities and to operate. The proponent will need to make a separate application to the EPA to obtain this licence once development project approval is granted.

Should you have any queries regarding the EPA's submission, please contact myself at the Dubbo Office of the EPA on (02) 6883 5367.

Yours sincerely



20/12/13

BRAD TANSWELL
A/Head Pesticides, Operations and Planning
Environment Protection Authority NSW

MJT/MC/DF23012014

23 January 2014

Mr Howard Reed
Manager Mining Projects
Major Project Assessment
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Email: howard.reed@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Howard

Re: Council Feedback on the Cobbora Coal Project Proposed Final Draft Conditions

I refer to your email, dated 17 January, 2014, that contained the Cobbora Coal Project proposed final Draft Conditions.

Wellington Council has reviewed the draft and considers it sufficiently represents the interests captured in the Voluntary Planning Agreement negotiated by Council with Cobbora Holding Company Pty Limited.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Conditions.

Yours faithfully



Michael Tolhurst
GENERAL MANAGER



EPBC Ref: 2011/6158

Howard Reed
Manager Mining Projects
Major Project Assessments
Department of Planning & Infrastructure
23-33 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Reed

**Comment on draft assessment report and draft project approval conditions for the
Cobbora Coal Project**

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the Cobbora Coal Project draft approval conditions and draft assessment report, which were provided to the Department of the Environment (the Department) for comment on 17 January 2013 and 21 January 2013, respectively. Please find below the Department's comments on the draft assessment report and conditions:

Assessment Report:

1. Section 6.1 (Biodiversity) In order for the Assessment Report to contain sufficient information to enable the Minister for the Environment (or his delegate) to make an informed decision for this project under the EPBC Act, the Department requests that a description of the project's impacts on each of the EPBC Act listed threatened species of concern and discussion of the relevant measures proposed to address these impacts (mitigation and offsets). Given the short timeframe available, the Department has prepared some text on mitigation, which could be inserted into the assessment report:
 - a. The Department suggests that a table be included listing the area of impact on each fauna species (as has been provided for ecological communities and listed flora species). The relevant figures (from the Biodiversity Offsets Strategy) are:

Species	Impact Area
Australasian Bittern	9 ha
Large-eared Pied Bat	1192 ha
Regent Honeyeater	1127
Southern Long-eared Bat	1340 ha
Spotted-tailed Quoll	167 ha
Superb Parrot	304 ha
Swift Parrot	1196 ha

- b. The Department suggests that the following information on mitigation be included:

In addition to the avoidance measures outlined on p 19, the proponent has committed to a number measures to mitigate impacts within disturbance areas. These include: a two-stage clearing protocol, where non-habitat trees are cleared 24 hours before habitat trees; preservation of topsoil for subsequent rehabilitation; weed management; erosion control; and provision of fauna-rescue personnel during clearing. These, and other appropriate mitigation measures outlined on pp262–63 of the EIS, will form part of the Biodiversity Management Plan: the preparation and approval of the Plan forms one of the conditions of approval.

2. Section 6.1 (Biodiversity) Footnote 1 to table 5 (report page 16) states that Box Gum Woodland derived native grassland is not listed under the EPBC Act; the grassland form of this ecological community is listed under the EPBC Act, and the Department requests that the reference be amended accordingly.
3. Section 6.5 (Water Resources) The Department notes that the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Large Coal Mines and Coal Seam Gas provided advice on water resources on 8 April 2013, and that the assessment report could mention this advice.

Conditions

In order for the conditions to be more consistent with requirements for approval under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), the Department suggests the following amendments:

1. condition 1: the Department would consider it appropriate to be consulted on this plan as it relates to matters of national environmental significance
2. condition 29:
 - a. The Department considers that this condition, as it is currently worded, is not sufficiently prescriptive to ensure compliance. The Department therefore recommends that a plan detailing how the requirements are being met be submitted to DP&I, for approval prior to commencement.
 - b. The Department suggests that "1 in 100 year ARI flood" be amended to read either: "100 year average recurrence interval flood" or "1% (i.e. 1 in 100) annual exceedance probability flood". The Department further suggests that the term (either ARI flood or average recurrence interval) be defined in the conditions.
3. condition 34:
 - a. to ensure that the existing populations are available to maintain their contribution to the broader local population for as long as possible prior to the action commencing, the Department considers that complete translocation of plant individuals should not begin until 12 months prior to commencement of the action. Translocation trials should commence on approval utilising up to 10% of the population (or two individuals, whichever is greater) to maximise the likelihood of translocation success.
 - b. this condition should require that translocation must be undertaken in accordance with the Biodiversity Management Plan.
4. condition 35 – the Department requests that:
 - a. the Biodiversity Management Plan include details of the methods and timing of propagation trials and programs and investigations into assisted natural regeneration. Both this information and the information on translocation (condition 35(f)) should be prepared with a suitably experienced expert or experts with experience in propagation of each genus.
 - b. the results of the propagation and translocation trials and programs be made publically available, to facilitate understanding and management of the species.
 - c. the Biodiversity Management Plan outline an adaptive management approach.
 - d. condition 35b: the plan be required to be approved before commencement of the action
 - e. note that the Department would likely make approval of the Biodiversity Management Plan a condition of its approval
5. condition 1 and condition 35: The Department recommends that all management plans be required to be made publically available on the proponent's website within a specified period (e.g. one month) of receiving approval

6. The Department recommends that maximum limits be conditioned for the area of each type of vegetation and/or number of individuals of each of the EPBC Act listed flora species that will be cleared
7. Given the environmental assessment includes the commitment by Cobbora (see environmental assessment p25) to completely backfill the voids in Pits A and C and to limit the remaining final void area, the Department recommends that this be made an approval condition.

Please note that the Department considers that there is significant uncertainty of success of translocation and propagation of *Zieria ingramii* and *Homoranthus darwinoides* (and potentially *Tylophora linearis*). The Department is therefore likely to impose conditions to require the proponent to undertake remedial actions, including the sourcing of more offsets, should the propagation and translocation programs fail to result in sufficient increase in these species in the offsets areas.

The Department also notes that the versions of the assessment report and approval conditions provided for comment do not reflect the latest updates to the offsets information, which were provided by the proponent on 23 January 2014. The Department understands that the clarifications to the offsets areas do not result in a reduction of any habitat type, and so does not have any concern about the amendments, provided they are reflected accurately in the final versions of the assessment report and approval conditions. This may also affect the way in which condition 32 should be worded.

If you have any questions about these, please contact the project manager, Carl Zimmermann, by e-mail: Carl.Zimmermann@environment.gov.au, or by telephone: 02 6275 9959 and quote the EPBC reference number shown at the beginning of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Tess Burdon
A/g Director
NSW Section
3 February 2014

