

5.0 Other Environmental Issues

Other relevant environmental considerations in the context of potential impacts associated with the proposed modification are summarised in **Table 10**.

Table 10 – Other Environmental Considerations

Issue	Assessment
Air Quality	Coal handling and extraction would continue consistent with current, approved operations at the Russell Vale Colliery. No amendments to air quality related conditions of approval are required.
Noise and Vibration	Coal handling and extraction would continue consistent with current, approved operations at the Russell Vale Colliery. No amendments to noise related conditions of approval are required. Underground mining operations within the first 400 metres of LW6 would not generate an audible noise at surface receiver locations.
Traffic	Coal transport from the Russell Vale Colliery would continue consistent with current, approved operations. No amendments to traffic related conditions of approval are required.
Waste	As operations at the Russell Vale Colliery would not change as a result of the proposed modification, no waste streams or additional waste generation is expected. No amendments to waste related conditions of approval are required.
European Heritage	No European Heritage items have been identified as part of assessments conducted for the Underground Expansion Project (ERM 2013; Cardno, 2012a) including in and around the LW6 Modification Area.
Hazards and Risk	No changes to operations at the Russell Vale Colliery would be required beyond existing approved activities, and no additional hazards would be introduced to the site as part of the proposed modification.
Visual Amenity and Landscape	The proposed modification relates to underground mining and no changes to the scale or nature of surface facilities would be required. On this basis, the proposed modification would not have an impact on visual amenity. Some changes to landform would result from mining-related subsidence. Visual and landscape impacts relating to subsidence would be low considering the surrounding landscape is relatively undisturbed bushland with no receivers located within the vicinity of the LW6 Modification Area.

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6.0 Conclusion

Wollongong Coal Limited (the Proponent) currently operates the Russell Vale Colliery under existing project approval MP 10_0046. Under that approval, extraction of longwalls 4 and 5 (LW4 and LW5) have been completed and development of the main gate roads for longwall 6 (LW6) are currently nearing completion. Once the main gate roads for LW6 are completed (expected by the end of April 2014), the physical extent of mine development permitted by the existing project approval will be exhausted. At that time, the colliery will need to be placed into care and maintenance until such time as approval to continue mining activities is secured.

The Proponent is currently seeking approval for its Underground Expansion Project, which if approved would allow for continued mining for a period of five years. Determination of this application is not expected until late 2014.

To avoid the need to place the colliery into care and maintenance, with consequential adverse impacts on more than 300 staff currently employed on the site, the Proponent has sought to modify the existing project approval to permit the extraction of the first 400 metres of LW6. This additional extraction would permit the colliery to continue to operate in a sustainable and efficient manner with maintenance of full employment, until such time as a determination of the Underground Expansion Project application is made.

The proposed modification relates to a short, low-risk initial component of the LW6 extraction. In relative terms, the proposed modification would not significantly increase environmental impacts already approved for the existing Russell Vale Colliery. This Environmental Assessment has demonstrated that the proposed modification could be conducted with minor environmental impacts, and consistent with the requirements of the existing project approval. As a key environmental risk mitigation approach, the Proponent is committed to extracting coal from the first 400 metres of LW6 subject to an adaptive management approach, which responds to ongoing monitoring to trigger review and amendment of mining activities if required in response to identified elevated impacts. Subject to implementation of this approach, and in light of predicted low environmental impacts, the proposed modification is unlikely to have a significant impact on the natural, built or human environments.

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