

20 February 2026

Jack Turner
Team Leader
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Mr Turner

Liddell Coal Mine (DA 305-11-01) Modification 9 – Muswellbrook Shire Council (Staff) comments on Modification Report

Reference is made to the following:

- ‘*Liddell Coal Operations Modification 9 Modification Report*’ (Xenith, 2025) (Modification Report); and
- Request to provide comment on the Modification Report via the Major Projects Portal.

Liddell Coal Operations Pty Limited (LCO) operates the Liddell Coal Operations (Liddell) which is located approximately 25 kilometres (km) northwest of Singleton and 26 km southeast of Muswellbrook.

Liddell operates in accordance with State Significant Development Consent DA 305-11-01 (as modified). DA 305-11-01, originally granted in 2002, facilitated the continued open cut operations at Liddell as well as consolidating previous development approvals for open cut and underground mining operations into a single consent. Active mining operations at Liddell have concluded, with the last coal being mined in 2023 and LCO is currently progressing mine closure and rehabilitation works.

Liddell has a long history of underground mining with some of the remnant first workings situated beneath the Main Northern Rail Line (MNRL) and other public infrastructure. As assessment of these workings has recently occurred. Council has been advised that in order to alleviate any pillar failure risk and subsequent subsidence beneath the MNRL and other public infrastructure, LCO has identified the need to complete a work program involving the backfilling of remnant underground workings to provide long-term stability in select locations (Target Area 1 and Target Area 2) across the Liddell site.

LCO is seeking to modify DA 305-11-01 by way of a modification application (MOD9) to permit the targeted backfilling of remnant underground workings (Target Area 1 and Target Area 2) at Liddell. This includes the use of grout (a cementitious mix of either coal ash or blended coal ash, materials which comply with the *Coal Ash Exemption 2014*, mixed with general purpose cement). Grout will be delivered to the target areas via a series of boreholes, within areas of approved disturbance at Liddell.

MOD9 generally proposes the following:

- Construction and use of a temporary grout batching compound for each target area on existing hardstand areas;
- Approximately 70 boreholes to access the underground workings;
- Transportation of materials used for the activities via approximately 40 truck deliveries (i.e. 80 movements) per day generally transported via highway routes; and
- Decommissioning and rehabilitation of disturbed areas including sealing of boreholes.

Council Staff has reviewed the Modification Report and provide comments below.

1. Section 1.2 of the Modification Report states that ‘in order to alleviate any pillar failure risk and subsequent subsidence beneath the MNRL and other public infrastructure, LCO is proposing the targeted backfilling of remnant underground workings’. Further clarification should be provided regarding the specific public infrastructure referenced (e.g. powerlines, roads) and its location in relation to the proposed backfilling works. An updated plan should be referenced in any approval.
2. As stated in Section 3.5 of the Modification Report, fly ash will be sourced from either Eraring Power Station or Bayswater Power Station. It is the preference of Staff that the material be sourced from Bayswater Power Station, given its closer proximity to the Project site and the associated reduction in heavy vehicle movements, haulage distances, and cumulative transport impacts on the regional road network.
3. Staff note the following from the Modification Report:
 - The proposed daily vehicle movements (light and heavy vehicles) for MOD9 remain well within those approved for Liddell (Section 6.4);
 - The level of service at the Old New England Highway/New England Highway intersection (primary access point for MOD9 vehicles) is expected to remain the same (Section 6.4);
 - Dust from hardstand areas and exposed stockpiles will be managed by stockpile sprays and/or water cart and cement will be stored in enclosed silos (Section 3.2); and
 - Water use for MOD9 will be sourced from Liddell’s Integrated Water Management System (Section 6.6).

Council appreciates the opportunity to comment and would be pleased to provide additional information if requested. Should you need to discuss the above, please contact Theresa Folpp, Environmental Planning Officer, on 02 6549 3700 or email council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully



Sharon Pope
Director Environment and Planning