NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Our ref: OUT26/3174

Cherie Colyer-Morris
Planning Group
NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)

Email: cherie.colyer-morris@dpie.nsw.gov.au

2/04/2026

Subject: **Wilpinjong Coal Mine Mod 3 – Pit 8 Extension (SSD-6764) Modification Report – Response to Submissions**

Dear Cherie Colyer-Morris,

I refer to your request for advice sent on 17 March 2026 to the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Water Group about the above matter.

NSW DCCEEW Water Group has reviewed the Submissions Report and is satisfied with the information provided with regard to reviewing the surface water management system and the water quality performance targets. DCCEEW Water however maintains the need for implementation of a 150 m buffer to the alluvium to mitigate potential water source risks and requests further clarification of the proposed expansion of the surface water and groundwater monitoring network. Please see **Attachment A** for more detail.

Should you have any further queries in relation to this submission please do not hesitate to contact the Water Assessments team at water.assessments@dcceew.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Rob Brownbill,
Manager, Water Assessments, Planning & Knowledge Division
NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Attachment A

Detailed advice to DPHI Planning & Assessment regarding the Wilpinjong Coal Mine Pit 8 Extension Mod 3 - RTS

1.0 Water source impacts and management

1.1 Recommendation – prior to determination

That Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) requests the proponent to amend the mining layout to include a 150m buffer between the expanded pit 8 and the highly productive alluvium of Wollar Creek.

Explanation

As detailed in DCCEEW Water's response (OUT25/12927) submitted at the Modification Report stage, the combination of factors of high stream order, highly productive alluvium, groundwater dependent ecosystems and the potential for groundwater and surface water impacts arising from mining related connectivity justifies a precautionary approach. Wollar Creek is a 7th order watercourse with alluvial groundwater which is mapped as moderately to highly vulnerable. These characteristics align with the intent of defining the Schedule 3 streams in the DIPNR (2005) guideline and therefore it is considered appropriate to adopt the same considerations. It is recognised this approach extends beyond the general requirements of the NSW Aquifer Interference Policy, however the DCCEEW Water Group prefers a precautionary approach on this occasion and maintain its recommendation for a 150m buffer between open cut mining and the alluvial boundary.

1.2 Recommendation – post determination

That DPHI requests the proponent to provide clarification of the proposed expansions to the monitoring network to provide:

- An additional upstream stream gauge that measures total flow on Wollar Creek upstream of the mine and downstream of the Barigan – Wollar confluence.
- Additional nested monitoring bores within the highly productive alluvium.

Explanation

It is acknowledged a new flow gauging station is to be installed on Wollar Creek upstream of the Wollar-Wilpinjong confluence. This is supported however clarification is sought to confirm that this site is to be located downstream of the confluence of Barigan Creek to enable total-flow to be monitored.

The RTS proposes an additional groundwater monitoring site in the alluvium, however it is not clear whether this is to include a nested monitoring approach as previously recommended. Nested bores are to aid understanding of the vertical gradients across the alluvium/coal measures interface and to verify impact predictions. Further clarification on a commitment to a nested monitoring approach is requested.

2.0 Water take and licensing

2.1 Recommendation – post determination

That DPHI requests the proponent to:

- Ensure sufficient water entitlement is held in a water access licence/s (WAL) to account for the maximum predicted take from each water source prior to take occurring unless an exemption applies.
- Ensure the WALs proposed to account for water take by the project nominate the relevant extraction point and that any required dealing applications are completed prior to water take occurring.
- Update the Water Management Plan (WMP) to include changes to water take, water licensing and water management.

End Attachment A