

Mr Craig White
Environmental and Approvals Specialist
Bengalla Mining Company

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06/10/2020

Dear Mr White

**Bengalla Continuation Project (SSD 5170)
Long Term Security of Biodiversity Offset Areas**

I refer to your most recent report outlining progress made to date for the long-term security of biodiversity offset areas as required under condition 28 of Schedule 3 of the above development consent.

As you are aware, the Secretary granted a 12 month extension of time to secure the biodiversity offset areas on 27 September 2019, subject to the provision of quarterly progress reports. The Department also advised that the Secretary would be reticent to grant a further extension of time without sufficient justification.

The Department is concerned that that limited progress has been made since September 2019 and the mechanism for securing the offset areas is still to be identified. The Department notes that the Bengalla Mining Company (BMC) has engaged in discussions with the National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding the dedication of the offset areas to the National Parks Estate. While the Department acknowledges that recent disruptions associated with bushfires and COVID-restrictions have presented challenges, the activities undertaken to progress this matter since September 2019 appear to be limited.

I wish to reiterate that BMC must make all reasonable efforts to finalise arrangements for the long-term security of the offset areas without further delay. If the dedication of the offset areas to the National Parks Estate cannot be completed in a timely manner, you are encouraged to pursue alternative arrangements, such as the preparation of Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements.

To facilitate the finalisation of this process, I wish to advise that the Secretary has agreed to grant a further extension to 30 June 2021 to secure the biodiversity offset areas. It is again requested that BMC provides the Department with quarterly updates of progress achieved towards this outcome over this extended period of time.

Finally, I note that BMC has also sought the Secretary's agreement to prepare separate Biodiversity Offset Management Plans for each of its three biodiversity offset areas. The Secretary has no objections in this regard, provided that each plan satisfies the relevant conditions of SSD 5170.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Lauren Evans on 9274 6311.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Sprott
Director
Resource Assessments (Coal & Quarries)
as nominee of the Planning Secretary