

James Wearne
Group Manager Approvals and Environment
Centennial Coal

By email: James.Wearne@centennialcoal.com.au

13/12/2021

Dear Mr Wearne

**Airy Coal Mine Expansion (SSD-5581)
Point Hatteras Panel and Pillar Mining Zone Extraction Plan**

I refer to the Point Hatteras Panel and Pillar Mining Zone Extraction Plan lodged with the Department on 7 October 2021, in accordance with Condition 7 of Schedule 3 of the consent for the Airly Mine Extension Project (SSD 5581).

The Department has carefully reviewed the plan in consultation with the Airly Independent Expert Panel (the Panel), the Biodiversity Conservation and Science Division (BCS) of the Department, Regional NSW - Mining Exploration and Geoscience and the Resources Regulator.

The Department acknowledges that greater than predicted subsidence levels and impacts have occurred with previous mining at Mt Airly. The Department also notes that a more conservative mine design has been employed under this Extraction Plan, with significantly larger pillars and adoption of setbacks from key sandstone features within the Cliff Line Zone.

The Panel has advised that the proposed mine layout is likely to limit potential subsidence impacts, effects and environmental consequences to low levels, and provides protection to all cliffs within the Cliff Line Zone from mining induced subsidence impacts. Additionally, the Panel considers the proposed subsidence monitoring network is suitable for confirming maximum subsidence and is suitable for informing subsidence management processes under the Trigger Action Response Plan.

However, the Panel has identified the potential for subsidence to exceed 125mm within a portion of the mine plan where four miniwall panels are located side-by-side. This area is identified as Zone 1 in **Attachment A**. Similar concerns were raised by BCS in its review of the plan. The Panel has recommended that prior to proceeding with extraction of this portion of MW15A, that a review of subsidence monitoring be undertaken to confirm whether extraction of the full length of MW15A should proceed. The Panel has subsequently advised that this recommendation extends to the extraction of MW15B.

The Department agrees that extraction of the southern portion of MW15A and the length of MW15B should be contingent on Centennial Coal demonstrating that subsidence levels and trends are within predictions and likely to remain less than 125mm should the full length of MW15A and MW15B be extracted.

BCS has recommended additional subsidence monitoring to provide an appropriate early warning for potential exceedance of subsidence thresholds. Based on the advice of the Panel, the Department considers the proposed subsidence monitoring network adequate for identifying areas of maximum vertical subsidence, however agree that some additional monitoring would provide a more robust framework for identifying and responding to subsidence trends.

Subsequently, the Planning Secretary approves the extraction of MW13 to MW16, subject to the Extraction Plan and the following conditions:

1. Within three months of the date of approval of the Extraction Plan, Centennial Coal must install a line of GNSS units (or fixed survey pins) above panels and pillars where 3 miniwalls are proposed to be extracted side by side (that is, the southern end of MW13, MW14, MW15B and the northern end of MW14, MW15A, MW16). GM16 and GM25 or 26 could form a part of these lines.
2. Prior to secondary extraction commencing within MW15B or the area of MW15A shown within Zone 1 in **Attachment A**, Centennial Coal must demonstrate to the Satisfaction of the Planning Secretary that:
 - (a) subsidence effects, impacts and environmental consequences are within predicted levels;
 - (b) subsidence is not expected to exceed 125mm should full extraction of MW15A and MW15B proceed;
 - (c) the subsidence impact performance measures outlined in Table 1 of Schedule 3 of SSD 5581 are expected to be met should full extraction of MW15A and MW15B proceed; and
 - (d) relevant monitoring data has been reviewed by the Airly Independent Expert Panel and any recommendations of the panel have been addressed.
3. Within two months of the date of approval of the Extraction Plan, Centennial Coal must submit a revised TARP, to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary. The revised TARP must be developed in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and include:
 - (a) provision for notification to and consultation with the NPWS for triggers relating to NPWS managed land or assets; and
 - (b) appropriate triggers and responses for water level changes at the Nissen Hut dam, including provision for an alternative source of firefighting water if water levels are impacted.
4. Within two months of the completion of each miniwall panel, or as otherwise agreed by the Planning Secretary, Centennial Coal must prepare and submit to the Department and the NPWS, an end-of-panel report:
 - (a) reporting all subsidence effects (both individual and cumulative) for the panel and comparing subsidence effects with predictions; and
 - (b) reviewing implications for mine design/panel dimensions and monitoring requirements for subsequent panels.

To the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Gabrielle Allan on 9585 6078.

Yours sincerely



Jessie Evans



Planning,
Industry &
Environment

Director

As nominee of the Secretary



Planning,
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Attachment A – Point Hatteras Panel and Pillar MW13-MW16 and Zone 1

