

Gary Mulhearn
Environment & Community Manager
Yancoal Australia Ltd
PO Box 267
Singleton NSW 2330

13/10/2020

Dear Mr Mulhearn

**Mount Thorley Warkworth Complex (SSD 6464 and SSD 6465)
Rehabilitation Management Plan**

I refer to your letter dated 4 September 2020 and supplementary emails dated 18 September 2020 seeking the Department's comments on the revised Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) for the Mount Thorley Warkworth Complex which has been prepared in accordance with relevant requirements of the above development consents.

The Department notes that the revised RMP includes:

- minor changes to the final landform to facilitate the partial backfilling of the South Pit Void;
- reclassification of approximately 1,050 ha of the "Grassland" and "Woodland Other" domain areas for which performance criteria for the "Ecosystem and Land Use Establishment" phase have not yet been fully met;
- revised rehabilitation forecasts for 2020 and 2021; and
- earlier commencement of tailings emplacement in the Loders Pit Tailing Storage Facility.

The Department considers that the emplacement of waste rock in the South Pit Void is generally consistent with the rehabilitation strategy described in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Warkworth Continuation Project (dated June 2014). The Department is also of the view that the partial backfilling of the void would be more consistent with the rehabilitation objective of minimising the size and depth of final voids, as outlined in condition 56 of Schedule 3 of SSD 6464, than the Indicative Final Landform shown in Appendix 6 of the development consent.

The Department notes that the proposed partial backfilling of the South Pit Void is an interim measure, pending further investigation regarding the potential for future underground mining with access via the residual South Pit Void. If an underground access is not required, the Department understands that the South Pit Void is intended to be fully backfilled. You are requested to continue liaising with the Department and other relevant agencies, including the Resources Regulator and Mining Exploration and Geosciences within Regional NSW, regarding the progress of these investigations.

The Department also notes that, notwithstanding any statements in the EIS, no tailings should be emplaced in the South Pit Void without further consultation with the Department and other relevant agencies and appropriate revisions to the Complex's Water Management Plan.

The Department has reviewed the other proposed amendments to the RMP outlined above, noting that the majority of these changes reflect the recommendations of the *Independent Review of Rehabilitation Progress: Mount Thorley-Warkworth Mine* dated 30 September 2019. The Department has no further comment in respect of these amendments.

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

Yours sincerely



Matthew Sprott

Director
Resource Assessments (Coal & Quarries)