

Mr Ian Flood
Manager Project Development and Approvals
Wilpinjong Coal Pty Ltd

By email: iflood@peabodyenergy.com

06/12/2022

Subject: Wilpinjong Coal Rehabilitation Strategy (SSD-6764)

Dear Mr Flood

I refer to the revised Rehabilitation Strategy submitted in accordance with condition 61 of Schedule 3 of the above development consent.

I understand that the strategy includes a revised conceptual final landform having regard to the rehabilitation objectives of the development consent. The revised landform incorporates principles of micro-relief and retains two amended final voids (ie Pit 2 and Pit 6) following an assessment that concluded that backfilling these voids above groundwater equilibrium levels is not a reasonable or feasible solution.

I also understand that Wilpinjong Coal Pty Ltd continues to consult with Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd regarding opportunities to integrate the Pit 6 final void with the OC4 final void at the Moolarben Coal Complex. It is noted that decisions regarding this potential integration are not required until approximately 2028, pursuant to mine progression.

As the Rehabilitation Strategy included a groundwater review of the revised final landform, the Department sought advice from its Water Group (DPE Water) on the outputs of this assessment. DPE Water raised concern regarding risks of saline discharge into Wilpinjong Creek due to its proximity to Pit 6, and recommended an independent review of the groundwater model to advise if the model is sufficiently robust and commensurate with the risk.

The Department acknowledges advice from Wilpinjong Coal that the groundwater review was based on the 2015 groundwater model with adopted amendments following model updates undertaken in 2020.

The Department also notes that Wilpinjong Coal is required to update the groundwater model every three years, and a new model is proposed for development during 2023.

Whilst the Department considers that the Rehabilitation Strategy has generally been prepared in accordance with the relevant conditions of consent, it is also considered that groundwater equilibrium levels and potential downstream risks should continue to be modelled and evaluated over the project life. On this basis, the Secretary has conditionally approved the Rehabilitation Strategy subject to:

- a) the development of an updated groundwater model, prepared in consultation with DPE Water and in accordance with the *Minimum Groundwater Modelling Requirements for SSD/SSI Projects Technical Guideline 2022*, within 18 months of the date of this letter; and
- b) lodgement of an updated Rehabilitation Strategy:
 - a. having regard to the findings of the updated groundwater model; and
 - b. including an update on mine progression and consultation with Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd regarding an integrated final landform.

You are reminded that if there are any inconsistencies between the approved strategy and the conditions of consent, the conditions prevail.

Please ensure you make the document publicly available on the project website at the earliest convenience.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Gen Lucas on 9274 6489 or gen.lucas@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Stephen O'Donoghue
Director
Resource Assessments
As nominee of the Planning Secretary