

Melanie Hollis
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Dear Melanie

United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project (SSD 7142, DA 305-7-2003 MOD 16 and DA 177-8-2004 MOD 3) Response to Submissions

I refer to your email dated 5 April 2017 inviting the Division of Resources & Geoscience (DRG) to provide comments on the United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine MOD 16 & MOD 3 Project.

DRG notes this submission is a partial response and has reviewed and assessed the adequacy of information provided in relation to the United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine MOD 16 & MOD 3 Project and provides the following advice.

The Department of Planning and Environment is advised that the information provided in the Response to Submissions document adequately addresses the final land use and topsoil issues raised in the submission.

However, DRG remains concerned with the lack of information provided by the applicant regarding proposed post-mining land uses for the remaining voids and the water quality in the final voids. DRG would recommend that acceptable post-mining land use is identified for the voids and this be incorporated as part of the development consent or alternatively an obligation be imposed on the proponent to explore and develop options, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, for final land uses incorporating the voids and their immediate areas into a final land use strategy and objectives within the required subsequent approvals.

The response to submissions advised that a void is required to prevent groundwater from interacting with beneficial alluvial aquifers. It also stated that *“saline systems can have high ecological value outcomes, with the United void predicting to reach a salinity broadly consistent with seawater after approximately 500 years”*.

The proponent is requested to provide information in support of their claim that the slowly increasing salinity of the final void water has “high ecological value outcomes”, citing examples where such a scenario may support a diverse assembly of species of conservation significance, or a long term

beneficial use, such as aquaculture involving marine organisms. Such information would support the development of the post-mining land use options for the voids.

DRG recommends that a condition be imposed that limits project approval for exploration activities, related to mine development, to the Project area only. For exploration outside of the Project area boundary, further approval for exploration activities will be required in accordance with conditions attached to the exploration licences surrounding the mining leases.

Except in so far as the proponent has provided inadequate information, the DRG has determined that sustainable rehabilitation outcomes can be achieved as a result of the Project and that any identified risks or opportunities for successful rehabilitation of the adverse environmental impacts of the Project can be effectively regulated through the conditions of mining authorities issued under the *Mining Act 1992*.

Should you have any enquires regarding this matter please contact Adam Banister, Acting Senior Project Officer, Royalty & Advisory Services on 4931 6439.

Yours sincerely



Zane West
Manager Royalties & Advisory Services
20 April 2017