



Coalpac

Proprietors of Invincible Colliery
and Cullen Valley Mine

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Carl Dumpleton
Senior Planner, Mining Projects
NSW Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39,
Sydney NSW 2001

16th July 2014

Dear Carl,

Response to Lithgow Environmental Group (LEG) and Colong Foundation for Wilderness (CFW) Submission dated July 11th 2014

We offer the following response to the letter and attachments sent to DP&E by LEG and CFW on the 15th July 2014.

The core thrust of the submission is the statement on Page 9;

"The Colong Foundation and Lithgow Environment Group have an in principle objection to the destruction caused by open-cut coal mining in the Gardens of Stone region."

In order to prosecute this position the submission is wide ranging in its scope but is underpinned by a number of errors, misunderstandings and a patent lack of knowledge in specialist areas.

The main errors are listed below in the order they arise;

1. *"The Department of Planning and Environment has made two policy decisions in relation to the Coalpac imbroglio. The Department will not approve contour open-cut mining along hillsides or open-cut mines with disproportionately high perimeter to area ratios will not be approved".* – These were not policy decisions simply comments on aspects of a previous proposal.
2. *"The 10 million tonnes of coal in the proposed modifications are not needed for stop-gap energy security or to prevent rising prices"* – The availability of competitively priced coal for local power generation is key to energy security and consumer cost control as noted in the letter to Department of Planning & Environment (DP&E) from Division of Resources & Energy (DRE) in May 2014 (Section 5.3.11 of the Response To Submissions (RTS)).
3. *"There are several hand stencils of concern, and perhaps an aboriginal grinding groove beside a source of permanent water located in the proposed modification areas"* – There is one hand stencil that has been identified and reported upon in the RTS. The other reference is believed to be to a known site in the AHIMS beyond the Modification Boundaries. Neither of these known sites will be impacted by the Modifications.
4. *"The BioBanking Assessment Methodology as applied to these proposed offsets and modifications is a work in progress"* – The Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) have stated their satisfaction with the Biodiversity Offset Proposal in their response to the RTS dated 30th June 2014.

5. *"On page 51 of the reply to submissions report, Hansen Bailey assumes that pumping from the neighbouring mine, Baal Bone Colliery, will continue, even now that this mine is closed and decommissioned."* – Baal Bone Colliery is neither closed nor decommissioned. It continues to be held in care and maintenance under its current Part 3A Planning Approval.
6. *"The presence of sulphides in this coal seam is evidenced by the underground 'heating'".* – The heating referred to is the result of ongoing burning of historically emplaced coal and carbonaceous material that was conventionally ignited following the closure of the Tyldesley Colliery in the 1960's. It is not the product of any spontaneous combustion or exothermic chemical reactions.
7. *"The second set of issues is associated with any discharges of effluent coming from the Invincible mine. The effluent is contaminated with metals and salts and should not be discharged without treatment using reverse osmosis technology".* – The assertion that Invincible Colliery actively pollutes local waterways is false. Both Invincible Colliery and Cullen Valley Mine has a good compliance record regarding the quality of any water discharged from the site. Effective surface water management systems are in place at both sites and these will be maintained and updated for the Modifications as required.
8. *"Given the above issues the 2ML/day of effluent proposed to be discharged from the old underground workings are likely to be contaminated."* – Coalpac has made no proposal to discharge 2ML/day of effluent from the underground workings.
9. *"Regarding the allegedly decommissioned of pump (WAL36458) at Long Swamp in the headwaters of the Cocks River; this pump has not been removed and appeared operational when inspected from outside of the fenced enclosure".* – Discharge from this site was voluntarily suspended in May 2008 in consultation with the DECC (now OEH). The pump was removed a number of years ago and the power has been disconnected.
10. *"We understand there to be a dedicated rail siding for this plant (Mount Piper Power Station) that enable Clarence and Airly mines to provide coal to it".* – There is no current dedicated rail siding at Mount Piper Power Station and as stated in the RTS it would require a significant lead time and expense to implement the capability to receive coal by rail.
11. *"The argument that the modifications are needed so overburden is generated to fill six voids is incorrect".* – This statement is itself false and deliberately misinterprets the statements made in Section 5.2.6 of the RTS. The rehabilitation of the existing mining voids is possible, and provided for, however, it should be noted that this would not provide the best final landform and rehabilitation outcome for the area in the long term. The final landform created by the Modifications will be of a higher standard and quality than if the existing approval areas were to be rehabilitated. The rehabilitation and final landform for the Modifications will complement the existing Conservation Reserves in proximity and will be compatible with any potential future additional reservation initiatives.

12. *"The factor of safety of 1.3 gives insufficient comfort, and a factor of 2 would be more appropriate, as Centennial Coal is proposing such a level of safety for its first workings at the Airly Colliery (Airly Mine Mod 3, June 2014, page 4)".* – This statement demonstrates a patent lack of understanding of this specialist area. The actual factor of safety for the proposed highwall mining design is in excess of 4 under the highest stress levels.

We trust that the above addresses your concerns and are available to meet to discuss any of the above issues further as required.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'IF' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Ian Follington
Chief Executive Officer