



Department of Primary Industries

OUT13/20570

21 AUG 2013

Matthew Riley
Planning Officer - Mining Projects
NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Riley

Thank you for your letter of 25 July 2013 concerning the review of the Environmental Assessment for the proposed Boggabri Coal Project Modification (09_0182 MOD 2).

The Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security (O AS&FS) has reviewed the EA provided by Resource Strategies Pty Ltd. Specific issues are included in Attachment 1 enclosed. A brief summary follows:

The EA has adequately addressed in general, the issues regarding noise, dust, water requirements, increase in rail usage and the area of surface disturbance.

The EA notes that there will be a requirement of external water of between 47 and 1475ML/ year which may impact on potential agricultural access to, and use of this water. The impact of this water requirement on agricultural water users has not been addressed in the EA and should be considered. The NSW Office of Water should be consulted regarding potential water issues that may arise from this proposed modification.

The additional coal trains on the Werris Creek Mungindi Railway rail line may also impact upon the accessibility of the line for other users, in particular for grain haulage. This possible impact has not been considered in the EA.

This advice from the Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security is forwarded direct to the Department of Planning & Infrastructure in accordance with agreed arrangements for mining applications that affect agricultural land. Additional advice from the other divisions within the Department of Primary Industries may be forwarded by separate letter. If you wish to discuss the issue further please call Liz Rogers on telephone 02 6391 3642 or by email liz.rogers@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Regina Fogarty
Director Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security
Encl

Specific Agricultural Impact Assessment Issues

Water Available for Agricultural Use

Whilst external water requirements have been provided (see table 3-3 below) for the modification, however there has been no consideration of any potential impacts on agricultural production that may arise as a result of this water being utilised by the mining industry. Such impacts that should be explored include growth in water use that may be triggered resulting in net reduced allocation for all water users particularly agriculture; as well as impacts on temporary and permanent trade of various licence classes.

Table 3-3
Estimated Volume of Water Required from External Sources to Make-up Demands

Landform	External water requirement (ML/yr)					
	5 th percentile (very wet)	10 th percentile (wet)	50 th percentile (median)	90 th percentile (dry)	95 th percentile (very dry)	Greatest result (driest)
Year 1	47	48	61	151	160	177
Year 5	221	314	1,020	1,376	1,412	1,475
Year 10	215	237	804	1,226	1,289	1,368
Year 21	213	213	223	542	636	744

Source: Appendix A.

NSW Office of Water should be consulted regarding potential water issues that may arise from this proposed modification.

Railway Usage

The EA states that the additional trains on the public railway (up to 11/week) will have only a minor impact on noise along the Werris Creek Mungindi Railway. With the coal being removed from the mine area by train, it will allow for a reduction in the transport of ROM coal along public roads from the Tarrawonga Mine to the Whitehaven Coal Handling and Preparation Plant. A stated saving of approximately 3.6 million coal truck kms/ year.

The O AS&FS recommends an assessment of the possible impacts that this additional coal traffic on the rail lines may have on the line availability for grain transport out of the north-west region of NSW.