



Your reference :
Our reference : SF16/23773; DOC16/483093
Contact : Mr Allan Adams; (02) 6332 7610

Mr Paul Freeman
Team Leader, Resource Assessments
NSW Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Attention: Ms Melanie Prior

9 November 2016

Dear Mr Freeman

I refer to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Springvale Water Treatment Project – SSD 7592 (the Project) and to the request from NSW Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) of 23 September 2016 requesting comments and recommended conditions for the Project. I also refer to the notification of proposed amendment dated 2 November 2016.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is supportive of any project that improves water quality in the natural system of the Upper Cocks River Catchment and is pleased to see this initiative from Energy Australia and Centennial Coal.

The EPA has reviewed the EIS and provides the following comments. The EPA recommended conditions of approval are also provided Attachment 1 to this letter.

Environment Protection Licence (EPL 3607)

The EPA notes that the Executive Summary states that the project will meet Condition 12 of Schedule 4 development consent condition (SSD 5594) with regards to a reduction in electrical conductivity (EC) by 2019.

Western Coal Services and Licensed Discharge Point (LDP006)

The EPA raised the need for the assessment of the current discharge at LDP006 as the Project will involve the discharge of both excess treated mine water through LDP006 with the current combination of groundwater seepage into Cooks Dam and rainfall runoff which is presently discharged through LDP006. Having discussed the investigation and source of the current groundwater discharge at LDP006 the EPA accepts that this discharge can't be addressed by the Project and that options to address the current discharge at LDP006 will be addressed by the licensee as a separate matter to the Project.

Springvale coal will be required to apply for a new LDP for the discharge of excess treated mine water associated with the Project at Western Coal Services.

Brine Management and Disposal

The EPA understands that a crystalliser will be used to generate concentrated brine with the slurry then directed to the newly proposed crystallised salt ponds prior to disposal.

The additional salt load to be generated by the project is understood to be managed by the new crystalliser in order to maintain brine to ash ratios. The use of the crystalliser may alleviate any additional brine quantities but will result in brine with greater concentrations being disposed at the ash emplacement area.

The EPA notes that the salt ponds will be lined and be of the same design and construction of the existing brine at Mount Piper Power Station (MPPS). With regards to the existing MPPS ash placement project approval (PA09_0186), the EPA believes that a modification to PA09_0186 may be needed for the co-disposal of brine with a different chemical composition to that currently disposed at MPPS, as well as for disposal of sediment from the crystallised salt ponds.

The EPA also raised concern (EAR's 15/4/16) about the leakage of saline water from the MPPS ash emplacement area into local groundwater. Both the EPA and WaterNSW have raised concern at increased chloride levels at various monitoring sites around the MPPS ash emplacement area in recent years including near Wangcol/Neubecks Creek following a review of monitoring reports prepared by consulting firm Aurecon for Energy Australia NSW (EA).

The EPA notes that Section 2.2.7 of the original Environmental Impact Statement for the MPPS (Electricity Commission of NSW, November 1989) under Groundwater Management - Mount Piper Ash Storage describes the theory and management practices to be implemented in managing groundwater contamination associated with the ash emplacement area. The EIS states that monitoring of the groundwater collection basin (GCB) will be undertaken, and if the quality of the water would cause the water quality in Neubecks creek to be exceeded, then the water from the GCB will be pumped for reuse on site. Taking into consideration the increasing chloride levels and that the Project will facilitate the disposal of more concentrated brine to the MPPS ash emplacement area, a condition of approval might include that those recommendations contained in the original MPPS EIS for managing contamination be implemented.

Use of Thompsons Creek Dam

The EPA notes that the proposed amendment to the application will result in the transfer of excess treated water into Thompsons Creek Reservoir. The EPA is supportive of this option as it will remove the need to discharge water into Wangcol/Neubecks Creek. The EPA will review the detail of this change when it is provided. Should you have any further enquiries in relation to this matter please contact Mr Allan Adams at the Central West (Bathurst) Office of the EPA by telephoning (02) 6332 7610.

Yours sincerely



DARRYL CLIFT

Head Central West Unit
Environment Protection Authority

ATTACHMENT 1

EPA COMMENTS ON EXHIBITED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

NOVEMBER 2016

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Construction Noise – Hours of Operation

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (NVIA) indicate that the construction hours of operation associated with the project will be in accordance with those construction hours of operation as outlined by the Interim Construction Noise Guideline (DECC 2009), as follows:

7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday;
8:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturday; and
At no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

As all construction activity for the project is expected to occur during recommended standard hours, sleep disturbance impacts are not expected.

Recommended Condition of Approval 1:

The EPA recommends that the construction hours of operation (not including blasting activities) be restricted to:

*7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday;
8:00 am to 1:00 pm on Saturday; and
At no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.*

Note 1: This does not apply to emergency work to avoid the loss of life or damage to property, or to prevent environmental harm.

Note 2: This does not apply to the delivery of oversized plant or structures that police or other authorities determine require special arrangement.

Note 3: This does not apply to construction activities that shorten the length of the project so long as such works are supported by all affected noise sensitive receivers.

Note 4: This does not apply to construction activities where the proponent demonstrates and justifies a need to operate outside these hours, with the prior written approval of the determining authority and/or the EPA.

The EIS and NVIA indicate that the construction noise associated with the project will result in exceedances of the relevant criteria at many of the identified noise sensitive receivers at Lidsdale and Wallerawang.

The EPA advises that the proponent (including any contractors and sub-contractors engaged by the proponent) has statutory obligations under Sections 139 and 140 of the POEO Act in regards to noise associated with the operation of plant and when dealing with material.

The EPA understands that the linear and transient/moving nature of the construction activities associated with the project will provide for noise mitigation itself. However, the EPA further recommends;

Recommended Condition of Approval 2:

That the proponent (including any contractors and sub-contractors engaged by the proponent) must implement all feasible and reasonable noise mitigation measures during construction activities in accordance with Australian Guidelines 2436-2010 and other relevant guidelines including the Interim Construction Noise Guideline.

Recommended Condition of Approval 3:

That the proponent must consult with noise sensitive receivers and must consider periods of respite from construction activities for noise sensitive receiver, where the predicted or measured noise level from construction activities exceeds 75 dB (A) L Aeq (15 min).

Operational Noise – Hours of Operation and Noise Impacts

The EPA understands that the infrastructure associated with the project may operate at any time with minimal to no noise impact if the project specific operating rules are implemented.

The EPA therefore has no recommended Condition of Approval to this topic.

The EPA again reiterates that the proponent (including any contractors and sub-contractors engaged by the proponent) has statutory obligations under section 139 and 140 of the POEO Act in regards to noise associated with the operation of plant and when dealing with materials.

Vibration

All activities are located within the human comfort buffer distance under table 13.7 and as such no impacts are predicted during standard construction hours.

As project activities will comply with standard construction hours, the EPA has no recommended Conditions of Approval on this topic.

Blasting

Recommended Condition of Approval 4

No blasting is to be undertaken

AIR QUALITY AND ODOUR

The EPA has no recommended Condition of Approval in relation to this topic.

The EPA wishes to advise that the proponent (including any contractors and sub-contractors engaged by the proponent) has statutory obligations under Section 124 and 126 of the POEO Act in regards to air and odour pollution associated with the operation of plant and when dealing with material.

LAND CONTAMINATION

Recommended Condition of Approval 5

That the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the project include a protocol for dealing with unexpected contamination. The protocol should include a requirement for sampling and classification of the contaminated material particularly where the material is to be removed.

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL

The EPA notes that the EIS has identified all adequate/relevant guidance material in regards to erosion and sediment controls and expects that such controls will be appropriately installed and maintained during construction activities.

Recommended Condition of Approval 6

An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) must be prepared and incorporated into the CEMP for the project in accordance with the relevant guideline "Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction, Volume 1 (The Blue Book; Landcom, 2004).

Recommended Condition of Approval 7

The proponent must implement erosion and sediment control measures as detailed under Section 15.1.13 of the EIS.

WATER CONTAMINATION

Of importance is the rehabilitation of affected areas. Progressive rehabilitation should be implemented where practicable and at all other times as soon as practicable once construction activities have ceased at a particular area. The EPA would expect that the Rehabilitation Plan identified in the EIS Draft Statement of Commitments would address this.

The EPA wishes to advise that the proponent (including any contractors and sub-contractors engaged by the proponent) has statutory obligations under Section 120 of the POEO Act in regards to the pollution of water, including scour water as well as Section 167 of the POEO Act in regards to control equipment.

WASTE

Brine Waste disposal

As previously raised, the additional salt load to be generated by the project is understood to be managed by the new crystalliser in order to maintain brine to ash ratios. The use of the crystalliser may alleviate any additional brine quantities but will result in more concentrated brine waste being disposed at the ash emplacement area.

Recommended Condition of Approval 8

That the proponent apply for a modification to the existing ash emplacement approval PA09_0186 to allow for disposal of concentrated crystallised salt slurry to the ash emplacement area.

Waste in General

All waste arising from the Project construction and operations activities is to be classified for appropriate treatment such as reuse, recycling or disposal.

Recommended Condition of Approval 9

That all waste generated by the project be classified in accordance with the Waste Classification Guidelines – Part 1: Classifying Waste (DECCW 2009).

This will allow for the wastes appropriate reuse, recycling or disposal.

The EPA advises that the proponent (including any contractors and sub-contractors engaged by the proponent) has statutory obligations under Section 143 and 144 of the POEO Act in regards to waste.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND FUELS

The EPA has no recommend Conditions of Approval in relation to this topic.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

The proponent needs to be aware of the relevant incident management procedures that apply to the project, especially those identified by Part 5.7 of the POEO Act.

GENERAL MATTERS

Recommended Condition of Approval 10

That proponent be required to have in place and operate a complaint register that:

- a) records complaints (including date, time, place and nature of the complaint; and*
- b) the action that was taken to resolve the complaint; and*
- c) the feedback that was provided to the complainant.*