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06 August 2014

Elle Donnelley
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2330

Dear Elle,

RE: Mont Thorley and Warkworth Projects

We have undertaken a review of the Mount Thorley and Warkworth (MT&W) Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) currently on exhibition.

Bulga Coal Management Pty Ltd (BCM) currently has an application being assessed by the Department of Planning & Environment (DP&E) and the NSW Planning and Assessment Commission (PAC) for the Bulga Optimisation Project (BOP) SSD-4960.

BCM is generally supportive of the neighbouring mining operations, however, we note the following as a submission on the applications.

These comments are made on the assumption that the BOP receives an approval determination largely consistent with the Draft Conditions that DP&E issued the PAC for review in May 2014. Overall we would request that a consistent approach to assessment, criteria and conditioning is adopted between the BOP and the neighbouring MT&W operations.

Noise

We note that the Noise Assessments for the MT&W EIS's have used the BOP EIS data for cumulative assessments. However in August 2013 BCM submitted the Response to Submissions and Revised and Amended Project Application Assessment Report (RTS) which contained revised predictions. BCM seek to understand any cumulative impacts on the neighbouring villages with reference to the RTS data. In particular, the early phases of the MT&W Projects prior to the introduction of the noise attenuated fleet.

We note that in some areas of Bulga Village higher background noise levels have been used than compared to the BOP Assessments. This results in higher Project Specific Noise Levels at these properties than in the BOP Assessments or Draft Conditions. If as part of the approval process for the BOP, additional conditions regarding cumulative noise criteria are added, BCM request that the MT&W and BOP approvals are conditioned by DP&E in manner that will ensure that any potential cumulative impact issues that may arise throughout the life of both projects can be resolved fairly, and BCM is not disadvantaged by having lower noise limits.

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Surface Water

We note the MT&W EIS's propose and increase in discharge to Loders Creek from 100 ML/day to 300ML/day. This is the same creek system that the BOP seeks to discharge to. We request that any approval for the MT&W projects be conditioned to require MT&W to develop an agreed management protocol with BCM prior to MT&W increasing their discharges to Loders Creek.

Ground Water

We note that the Groundwater modelling does not appear to account for the extent of the BOP pit shell and mining. We also note that the modelling does not seem to account for the removal of the barrier between Mt Thorley mine and Bulga Open Cut. The removal of the pillar would have the effect of the two pits operating as a contiguous final void, as discussed in the BOP Assessments, with MTW groundwater reporting to the BOC final void. Therefore it is not possible for BCM to predict the water balance of the Bulga Open Cut final void and any associated liabilities or management measures, particularly following mine closure. . BCM request that DP&E seek clarification from MTW regarding the cumulative groundwater aspects of the MTW final void and its potential interaction with the Bulga Open Cut final void.

Traffic

We note that during the assessment process for BOP, BCM provided DP&E with revised calculations regarding the Golden/Highway/Mitchell Line of Road/Putty Road intersection. The revised modelling was presented following the Mount Thorley Warkworth appeal case. BCM, note that as a result of the BOP this intersection is predicted to maintain a satisfactory level of service.

Should you wish to discuss the above, please do not hesitate to call me on 0438 433 857.

Yours sincerely



Tim Walls
Approvals Manager Bulga Optimisation
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