



## Department of Primary Industries

15 JAN 2013

OUT12/32683

Mr Paul Freeman  
Senior Planner  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Freeman

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 November 2012 concerning the review of the proposed Stratford Extension Project.

The Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security (O AS&FS) has reviewed the Agricultural Assessment (AA) (deemed Agricultural Impact Statement) prepared in October 2012 by Stratford Coal Pty Ltd. Specific issues are included in Attachment 1 enclosed. A brief summary follows:

The AA's conclusion that "the project does not include highly productive soils, nor does it include areas of high value or strategic agricultural lands" is accepted. The area does not contain mapped Strategic Agricultural Land, Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land or Critical Industry Cluster areas.

However, there are some remaining unanswered issues relating to agricultural impacts (note Attachment 1) which should be clarified including the need for further information about the economic impacts to existing local and district agricultural activities.

If you wish to discuss the issue further please call Liz Rogers on telephone 02 63913642 or by email [liz.rogers@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:liz.rogers@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

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

Encl

### Specific Agricultural Assessment Issues

#### General

- It is acknowledged that the project is not on highly valuable agricultural land and its footprint is considered relatively small.
- The Director General Requirements (DGRs) require assessment on contamination. The AA identified subsoil salinity and it is important that the salt is not mobilised into project waterways. Further detail is required regarding mitigation measures to prevent further salinisation of Avondale Creek.
- The company has a credible record in reclaiming mined land. This is a sound indicator of future land management. The AIS stated that a Property Management Strategy (PMP) would be developed. That action is supported by this Department as the strategy should cover undisturbed, rehabilitated and biodiversity off-set lands.
- The PMP should include ongoing monitoring provisions.

#### Socio Economic

- The AA stated that the existing dairy operation to the north of the project (on land owned by the proponent) would lose 20% of currently available land. Although it was stated that the operation would continue, the AA should describe the impact of the loss of land to the operation.
- The AA should include an assessment of the impacts on agricultural support services, processing and value added industries including district and regional employment. Where relevant the AA should also detail critical mass thresholds of agricultural enterprises required to maintain and attract investment in agricultural service industries and infrastructure.
- There was no discussion in the AA of the potential impacts on adjoining rural land values as a result of altered visual amenity or agri-tourism impacts due to altered landscapes.