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Resource Assessments - Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
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Dear Rose-Anne

Re: Vickery Coal Extension Project – Review of Environmental Impact Statement
Dev Ref: SSD 7480

I refer to your email dated 11 September 2018 inviting the Division of Resources & Geoscience (the Division) to provide comment on the Vickery Coal Extension Project (SSD 7480) (the Project) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submitted by Whitehaven Coal Limited (the Proponent).

The relevant units of the Division have been consulted in generating this advice. Further, the Department of Planning and Environment's Planning Services Division and the Proponent should be aware that matters pertaining to rehabilitation, final landform, environmental impacts of subsidence, subsidence management, mine operation and safety are assumed to have been assessed by the Resources Regulator. I understand that you will be seeking a separate response from the Resources Regulator.

The Division has reviewed the information supplied in relation to the Project. In view of the constraints outlined in the Proponent's EIS, the Division considers the Project to be an efficient development and utilisation of coal resources which will provide an appropriate return to the state. The Division is satisfied that, given the Proponent's mine design and mining method submissions, the Project presents an improvement to the current approved mine plan and final landform. It is, however, recommended that an independent expert examination of the project be carried out, focusing on whether the final landform is the best alternate option given there is already an existing project approval.

A resource and economic assessment undertaken by the Division which details the resource utilisation and economic benefits of the Project is appended as Attachment A.

The Division wishes to bring to the attention of the Proponent that while extraction is intended to occur within Mining Lease 1718 (Act 1992) (ML 1718), this lease was granted for mining purposes (now ancillary mining activities) only. Therefore, the extraction of coal is not currently permissible within ML 1718 and a new mining lease is required for extraction.

The Project requires a biodiversity offset strategy and proposes a number of offset areas. The Division notes that all proposed biodiversity offset areas are located within land owned by the Proponent, and upon assessment and raise no resource sterilisation concerns. It is, however, requested that the Division be consulted on any supplementary biodiversity measures to ensure

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there is no consequent reduction in access to prospective land for mineral exploration or potential for the sterilisation of mineral and extractive resources.

The Division has determined that identified risks or opportunities can be effectively regulated through the conditions of mining authorities issued under the *Mining Act 1992*.

For enquiries regarding this matter please contact Dr David Blackmore, a/Executive Director Resource Operations on 4063 6534 or assessment.coordination@planning.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Wright
Acting Deputy Secretary
Division of Resources and Geoscience

Encl.
Attachment A – Resource and Economic Assessment – Vickery Extension Project (DOC18/667094)