

Rixs Creek – (DA 49/94 Mod 9) and Rixs Creek North (DA 08_0102 Mod 7)

Response to Submissions

The Environmental Assessment for Rixs Creek Mod 9 and Rixs Creek Mod7 described the impact of the proponent, Bloomfield Collieries, proposal to modify the Rixs Creek consent and the Rixs Creek North consent to allow for:

- Rixs Creek South Coal Handling Preparation Plant dried tailings refuse to be emplaced in Rixs Creek North overburden dumps.
- Rixs Creek South overburden to be emplaced in Rixs Creek North overburden dumps.
- Exploration drilling to be conducted in the area between Rixs Creek North mine area and the northern limit of Rixs Creek South boundary.

The notification period for the Environmental Assessment for Rixs Creek Mod 9 and Rixs Creek North Mod 7 concluded on July 25 2017. Submissions were received from;

- New South Wales, EPA
- Heritage Council of New South Wales
- Office of Environment and Heritage, New South Wales

This report details the responses to submissions.

EPA

The EPA requires additional information detailing:

- *“if exploration drilling will occur within the licence boundary or outside of the licence boundary applicable for Rixs Creek Coal Mine (Environmental protection Licence 3391);*
- *How the drilling muds are to be disposed of;*
- *How any ground water make will be re-used or disposed; and*
- *How core material will be disposed of.*

The exploration drilling will wholly occur within the licence boundary applicable to Rixs Creek Coal Mine, Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) 3391. The attached figures 1 and 2 demonstrate this.

Figure1

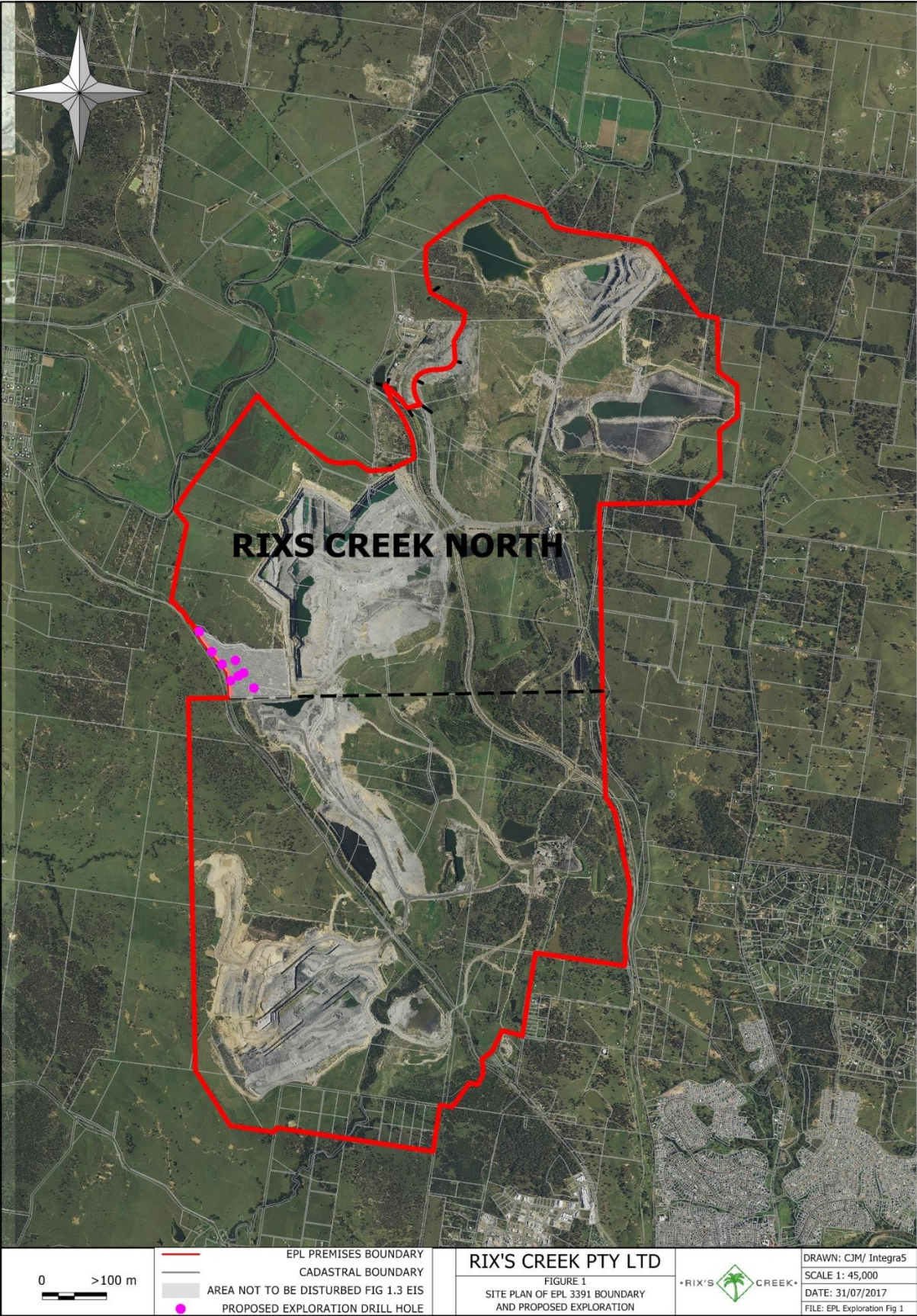


Figure 2



All of the drilling mud will be retained onsite within EPL 3391. The image below shows an above ground drilling sump arrangement similar to the planned drilling arrangements at Rix's Creek.



This arrangement is designed to have limited ground disturbance and allows the capture of all drill cuttings. The tanks give the drillers the ability to recycle the drillings fluids with the tiered tanks allowing the drill mud to drop out (as heavies) as the fluid moves to successive tanks. At completion of each hole the tanks are emptied with the material being transported to the Rixs Creek Mine Tailings Emplacement Area which is within EPL 3391.

The multiple above ground sumps also allow for any groundwater make to be re-used or to be pumped into a water cart for transport and disposal into the Mines mine water system, which is within EPL 3391.

The core material from the boreholes will be retained on site for assessment.

Heritage Council of New South Wales

Submission noted, no response required.

Office of Environment & Heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment;

- Submission noted, the drilling operations will be managed as outlined in the AECOM Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment and the Rixs Creek North Heritage Management Plan.

Threatened Species;

- 1) East Coast Flora has been contracted to undertake a survey for *Diuris tricolor* during the peak flowering period, early October, the results of which will be used to ensure any plants found are avoided.
- 2) Areas disturbed in the exploration program will be rehabilitated at the completion of the work. Post grouting of the boreholes any areas of surface disturbance will have the topsoil replaced and then cultivated and sown to pasture, within 12 months of completion. Stock will be excluded from the area until the rehabilitation flora has established, with the area being monitored as per the Rixs Creek North Rehabilitation Management Plan.
- 3) Any trees greater than 2 m tall, which are cleared for exploration works, will be put back in the disturbed area in at least a 2:1 ratio. To achieve this the disturbed areas, where a tree greater than 2 m tall is cleared, will have local provenience seed added to the pasture mix at the time of sowing. 12 monthly inspections will be carried out to ensure germination of local providence tree seed is establishing in the area at a ratio of 2:1 of the disturbed tree population.
- 4) The drilling works locations are designed to prevent harm to threatened biodiversity, the works will be assessed during and at completion with any inadvertent permanent harm to threatened biodiversity offset in accordance to the *NSW biodiversity offset policy for major projects*.