



Review of Environmental Assessments

Rocglen Mine Mod 1 Coal Haulage 10_0015 Mod1

&

Tarrawonga Mine Mod 1 Coal Haulage 11_0047 Mod 1

SUBMISSION

Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union

Northern Mining & NSW Energy District

March 2014

On 6 January 2014 Whitehaven Coal Mining Pty Ltd applied to the Minister, Department of Planning seeking approval to allow the transportation of coal to the Whitehaven CHPP along the Approved Whitehaven ROM Coal Road Transport Route for the life of the currently approved Tarrawonga and Rocglen Coal Mines. This Project is sought under Section 75W of the EP&A Act, 1979.

The Director General made the Environmental Assessment publicly available on the 11 March 2014 and the opportunity for public submissions is available.

The Union is pleased to take the opportunity to comment on the Tarrawonga and Rocglen Mine Modification Projects and related activities Environmental Assessments.

The Mining and Energy Division is a Division of the CFMEU under the Federal Workplace Relations Act 1996, with over 120,000 members, one of the largest in Australia. The Division covers several industries including the coal industry, coal ports, metalliferous mining industries, electrical power generation, oil and gas and the Nation's small coking industry.

The Northern Mining & NSW Energy District Branch of the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division, being the branch that on behalf of the organisation which is making the submission is the principal Union representing coal miners in the Northern District Coalfields of New South Wales. The Tarrawonga Mine facility is located approximately 15km north-east of Narrabri and the Rocglen Mine facility is approximately 25 km north of Gunnedah are wholly within the State's Northern District Coalfields.

The Union is familiar with these facilities and has engaged the services of an Environmental Consultant with extensive experience in local government and environmental assessments on coal mining related projects.

After reviewing all the material and taking advice, the Union supports these applications to refine the cumulative transportation of ROM Coal from these facilities to the Whitehaven CHPP as proposed.

Modification – Tarrawonga Coal Mine

Due to the recent downturn in coal prices, Boggabri Coal Pty Ltd (BCPL) and Whitehaven do not currently consider it to be economically viable to process and transport Tarrawonga coal via Boggabri infrastructure.

As such, the Modification would involve an increase in the road haulage of Tarrawonga ROM coal (from 2 to 3 Mtpa) along the Approved Road Transport Route for the life of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

However, Whitehaven would manage the use of the Approved Road Transport Route such that the cumulative ROM coal transported from all Whitehaven coal mines (i.e. the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, Rocglen Coal Mine and Vickery Coal Project) to the Whitehaven CHPP would not exceed:

- 3.5 Mtpa (i.e. the currently approved rate¹) prior to the commissioning of the proposed private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass (Figure 1); and
- 4.5 Mtpa (i.e. the maximum annual rate described and assessed in the Vickery Environmental Impact Statement [EIS]) following the commissioning of the proposed private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass.

Therefore, in comparison with what is currently approved, or previously assessed in the Vickery EIS, the Modification would increase the maximum annual rate of ROM coal road haulage on the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route only (i.e. between the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and the Vickery Coal Project).

All dwellings proximal to the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route are currently owned by Whitehaven and/or Boggabri Coal Pty Ltd (BCPL), or are subject to a purchase agreement by Whitehaven.

Notwithstanding the above, should financial circumstances improve, Tarrawonga ROM coal would be transported to the Boggabri Coal Mine for processing and transportation as described in the Tarrawonga EA.

Modification – Rocglen Coal Mine

The Modification would not change the currently approved rate of ROM coal transported from the Rocglen Coal Mine to the Whitehaven CHPP (or any other approved operations at the Rocglen Coal Mine).

However, it is expected the Rocglen Project Approval (10_0015) would be modified to include a condition to reflect the commitment to manage the cumulative road haulage of ROM coal from the Tarrawonga and Rocglen Coal Mines and the Vickery Coal Project. As such, this EA also supports an application to modify Project Approval (10_0015) for the Rocglen Coal Mine.

Approved Road Transport Route

The Approved Road Transport Route comprises:

- northern section (between the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and Vickery Coal Project) – a combination of private roads and public roads (Rangari Road, Hoad Lane and Blue Vale Road);
- eastern section (between the Rocglen Coal Mine and Vickery Coal Project) – a combination of private roads (Rocglen Coal Mine Access Road) and public roads (Shannon Harbour Road); and
- southern section (south of the Vickery Coal Project) – Blue Vale Road and a section of the Kamilaroi Highway.

Whitehaven and BCPL have purchased, or entered into purchase agreements, with a number of properties adjacent to the Approved Road Transport Route.

All dwellings proximal to the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route are currently owned by Whitehaven and/or BCPL, or are subject to a purchase agreement by Whitehaven.

Approved ROM Coal Haulage Rate

Whitehaven is currently approved to transport a total of up to 3.5 Mtpa of ROM coal to the Whitehaven CHPP along the Approved Road Transport Route, consisting up to 2 Mtpa from the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and 1.5 Mtpa from the Rocglen Coal Mine.

Vickery Coal Project

Whitehaven lodged an application (SSD-5000) for approval of the Vickery Coal Project on 17 December 2012.

The NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DP&I) is currently assessing the Vickery Coal Project.

The Vickery Coal Project would involve the development of an open cut coal mine producing up to 4.5 Mtpa ROM coal for a period of approximately 30 years, and would be located approximately 25 km north of Gunnedah.

Up to 4.5 Mtpa ROM coal from the Vickery Coal Project would be transported along the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route to the Whitehaven CHPP.

The Vickery Coal Project also includes construction of an approximately 1 km long section of private haul road (including an overpass over the Kamilaroi Highway) between Blue Vale Road and the Whitehaven CHPP. This would remove the need for coal trucks to cross the Kamilaroi Highway.

The private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass would be constructed prior to the cumulative road haulage of ROM coal along the Approved Road Transport Route (i.e. from the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, Rocglen Coal Mine and Vickery Coal Project) exceeding the currently approved road haulage rate of 3.5 Mtpa.

It is understood that the conditions of any Development Consent for the Vickery Coal Project would limit ROM coal haulage along the Approved Road Transport Route to:

- 6.00 am to 10.00 pm Monday to Friday; and
- 7.00 am to 6.00 pm Saturday.

ROM Coal Haulage Hours

It is proposed that for the Modification, the Tarrawonga ROM coal haulage transportation hours would be updated to be consistent with those expected for the Vickery Coal Project, which are as follows:

- 6.00 am to 10.00 pm Monday to Friday; and
- 7.00 am to 6.00 pm Saturday.

In comparison with what is currently approved or previously assessed in the Vickery EIS, this would result in an additional hour of ROM coal haulage along the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route (i.e. between 6.00 am and 7.00 am) on weekdays. However, there are currently no privately-owned dwellings along the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

Management of Cumulative ROM Coal Haulage

Notwithstanding the proposed increase in Tarrawonga ROM coal haulage, Whitehaven would manage the use of the Approved Road Transport Route such that the cumulative ROM coal transported from Whitehaven coal mines (i.e. the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, Rocglen Coal Mine and

the Vickery Coal Project) to the Whitehaven CHPP would not exceed:

- 3.5 Mtpa (i.e. the currently approved rate) prior to the commissioning of the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass.
- 4.5 Mtpa (i.e. the maximum rate described and assessed in the Vickery EIS) following the commissioning of the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass.

That is, cumulative ROM coal haulage along the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route would not exceed the maximum annual rate described and assessed in the Vickery EIS.

Notwithstanding, the Vickery EIS assessed the transport of up to 4.5 Mtpa of Vickery ROM coal on a 24 hour per day, 7 day per week basis. For the Modification, the cumulative ROM coal transported to the Whitehaven CHPP would be limited to those described to avoid ROM coal haulage during the night-time period (i.e. 10.00 pm to 6.00 am).

It is expected that both the Tarrawonga Project Approval (11_0047) and Rocglen Project Approval (10_0015) would be modified to include a condition to reflect the commitment to manage the cumulative road haulage of ROM coal from Whitehaven mines to the Whitehaven CHPP. It is also expected that any Development Consent for the Vickery Coal Project would include a consistent condition of approval.

In accordance with Development Consent (DA 0079.2002), the Whitehaven CHPP is currently approved to process up to 3 Mtpa of ROM coal, and the rail loadout facility at the Whitehaven CHPP is approved to handle up to 4.1 Mtpa of product coal. As a result of these existing constraints, not more than approximately 4.5 Mtpa of ROM coal could be received and processed/handled at the Whitehaven CHPP without infrastructure upgrades and additional environmental approvals.

Therefore, Whitehaven considers the commitment to limit the cumulative transport of ROM coal to the Whitehaven CHPP to 4.5 Mtpa to be reasonable for the Modification.

Tarrawonga Coal Mine

There would be no change to the following key components of the currently approved Tarrawonga Coal Mine due to the Modification:

- mining operations (i.e. open cut coal mining and waste rock emplacement);
- maximum annual ROM coal production rate;
- mine life;
- mining tenements;
- surface development extent;
- water supply or management;
- peak number of employees;
- deliveries and consumables;
- the construction of Goonbri Road realignments and associated mine access road intersection prior to any project works occurring within 25 metres (m) of the existing Goonbri Road alignment, or on the southern/eastern side of the existing road alignment;
- use of an existing on-site mobile crusher for coal crushing and screening of up to 150,000 tonnes of domestic specification coal per annum for direct collection by customers at the mine site; and

- use an existing on-site mobile crusher to produce up to approximately 90,000 cubic metres (m³) of gravel materials per annum for direct collection by customers at the mine site.

Rocglen Coal Mine

The Modification would not change any component of the currently approved Rocglen Coal Mine operations, including the transport of up to 1.5 Mtpa of ROM coal to the Whitehaven CHPP.

Notwithstanding, the amount of Rocglen ROM coal transported to the Whitehaven CHPP would be managed in consideration of the amount of ROM coal transported from the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and/or the Vickery Coal Project.

Consultation

Consultation with the DP&I regarding the Modification was undertaken in December 2013.

The Vickery EIS described the cumulative transport of up to 4.5 Mtpa of ROM coal along the Approved Road Transport Route to the Whitehaven CHPP, which would not change for the Modification.

The Vickery EIS was placed on public exhibition by the DP&I between 5 March and 14 April 2013. As such, stakeholders and other interested parties have had the opportunity to review and provide comments on the proposed cumulative transport of up to 4.5 Mtpa of ROM coal along the Approved Road Transport Route to the Whitehaven CHPP during public consultation for the Vickery EIS.

Road Transport

A Road Transport Assessment Review was undertaken by GTA Consultants (2014) for the Modification.

Tarrawonga Coal Mine

An assessment of potential road transport impacts was undertaken for the Tarrawonga EA by Halcrow (2011).

The assessment considered the haulage of up to 2 Mtpa of Tarrawonga ROM coal to the Whitehaven CHPP in Year 1 of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine. Following Year 1, it was assumed that up to 3 Mtpa of Tarrawonga ROM coal would be directly hauled to the Boggabri Coal Mine.

The assessment also considered other road traffic generated by the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, including employee movements, deliveries and the collection of domestic specification coal/gravel by customers.

No significant impacts on the performance, capacity, efficiency and safety of the local road network were predicted, and no specific monitoring or mitigation measures were considered warranted.

Vickery Coal Project

An assessment of potential road transport impacts was undertaken for the Vickery EIS by GTA Consultants (2012).

The assessment considered the potential impacts of the haulage of up to 4.5 Mtpa of ROM coal along the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route (i.e. between Vickery and the Whitehaven CHPP) as well as other road traffic generated by the Vickery Coal Project.

In addition, the assessment considered the potential cumulative impacts associated with traffic expected to be generated by the following relevant sources:

- Tarrawonga Coal Mine;
- Rocglen Coal Mine;
- Boggabri Coal Mine;
- Maules Creek Coal Mine; and
- background traffic growth associated with other (non-mining) sources.

No significant impacts on the performance, capacity, efficiency and safety of the road network were expected to arise as a result of the Vickery Coal Project, including any consideration of expected cumulative impacts with other traffic sources. Therefore, no specific traffic monitoring or mitigation measures were considered to be warranted.

Northern Section of the Approved Road Transport Route

The increase in road haulage of Tarrawonga ROM coal (from 2 to 3 Mtpa) is predicted to increase the average weekday ROM coal haulage truck movements on the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route from approximately 348 to 520 vehicle movements per day.

Consultants concluded the increased road haulage of Tarrawonga ROM coal for the Modification would result in no significant impacts on the performance, efficiency and safety of the road network relevant to the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route, given the following:

- There would be no change to the Level of Service of the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route, as the peak hourly volume of traffic associated with the Modification would remain significantly below the volume associated with a Level of Service A (i.e. the best traffic conditions).
- While there would be a small increase in the potential interaction between school buses and ROM coal haulage trucks, the increase is considered to be sufficiently small such that no additional measures or protocols are considered warranted.

Southern Section of the Approved Road Transport Route – No Highway Overpass

Prior to the commissioning of the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass, Whitehaven would manage the use of the Approved Road Transport Route such that the cumulative ROM coal transported from Whitehaven coal mines would not exceed the currently approved rate of 3.5 Mtpa of ROM coal.

Therefore, no additional road transport impacts are predicted on the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route prior to the commissioning of the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass (i.e. in comparison to those currently approved for the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and Rocglen Coal Mine).

Southern Section of the Approved Road Transport Route – With Highway Overpass

Following the commissioning of the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass, Whitehaven would manage the use of the Approved Road Transport Route such that the cumulative ROM coal transported from Whitehaven coal mines would not exceed 4.5 Mtpa ROM coal.

As such, the Modification would not change the maximum annual ROM coal haulage rate of 4.5 Mtpa assessed in the Vickery EIS on the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

No significant impacts on the performance, capacity, efficiency and safety of the road network were expected to arise as a result of the Vickery Coal Project, including in consideration of expected cumulative impacts with other traffic sources such as the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and Rocglen Coal Mine.

Notwithstanding, for the Modification ROM coal haulage of up to 4.5 Mtpa on the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route would occur during the hours detailed, rather than 24 hours per day, 7 days week as described in the Vickery EIS.

It is predicted this would result in an increase (i.e. in comparison to what was assessed in the Vickery EIS) in average weekday ROM coal haulage truck movements from approximately 670 to 780 vehicle movements per day.

Consultants concluded the increased average weekday ROM coal haulage truck movements for the Modification would result in no significant impacts on the performance, efficiency and safety of the road network relevant to the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route, given the following:

- The construction of the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass would mean that ROM coal trucks would no longer use the intersections between the Approved Road Transport Route and the Kamilaroi Highway, which would reduce potential interactions with other traffic.
- There would be no change to the Level of Service of the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route, as the peak hourly volume of traffic associated with the Modification would remain significantly below the volume associated with a Level of Service A.
- While there would be a small increase in the potential interaction between school buses and ROM coal haulage trucks, the increase is considered to be sufficiently small such that no additional measures or protocols are considered warranted.

Road Traffic Noise

A Road Traffic Noise Assessment Review was undertaken by Wilkinson Murray (2014) for the Modification.

Tarrawonga Coal Mine

An assessment of potential road traffic noise impacts on public roads was conducted by Wilkinson Murray (2011) for the Tarrawonga EA.

Potential road traffic noise impacts were assessed against the criteria specified in the NSW

Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise (ECRTN) (EPA, 1999) (which has now been replaced by the *NSW Road Noise Policy* [RNP] [DECCW, 2011]).

No exceedances of the relevant road traffic noise criteria were predicted at the closest privately-owned receiver locations along the Approved Road Transport Route, including during Year 1 of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine (i.e. when 2 Mtpa of ROM coal was assessed as being transported to the Whitehaven CHPP).

Vickery Coal Project

An assessment of potential road traffic noise impacts on public roads was conducted by Wilkinson Murray (2012) for the Vickery EIS.

The assessment considered the potential impacts of the haulage of up to 4.5 Mtpa of ROM coal along the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route (i.e. between Vickery and the Whitehaven CHPP), as well as other road traffic generated by the Vickery Coal Project and other sources (such as the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and Rocglen Coal Mine).

The predicted noise levels at the two privately-owned receivers closest to Blue Vale Road along the Approved Road Transport Route were predicted to be below the relevant RNP road traffic noise criteria.

Wilkinson Murray (2012) also undertook an assessment of the potential noise impacts associated with the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass noise levels against the existing noise levels associated with the Kamilaroi Highway.

Combined noise from all traffic was predicted to meet the RNP road noise criterion of 60 dBA LAeq(15hour) for the day time period, and noise from the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass alone was predicted to meet the RNP criterion for a new arterial road of 55 dBA LAeq(15hour).

Rocglen Coal Project

Project Approval (10_0045) contains road traffic noise criteria, which requires that noise generated by the Rocglen Coal Mine and Tarrawonga Coal Mine on public roads does not exceed the following criteria at existing residences on privately-owned land:

- day – 55 dBA LAeq(1 hour);
- evening – 55 dBA LAeq(1 hour); and
- night – 50 dBA LAeq(1 hour).

It is noted the road traffic noise criteria in the Rocglen Project Approval (10_0045) (dated September 2011) is inconsistent with the road traffic noise criteria in the more contemporary Tarrawonga Project Approval (11_0047) (dated September 2011), and is also inconsistent with the relevant RNP criteria.

Existing Compliance

Cumulative road traffic noise monitoring is conducted in accordance with the existing Road Traffic Noise Management Plan for the Rocglen Coal Mine.

Based on monitoring conducted in 2012 and 2013 (i.e. since Tarrawonga Project Approval [11_0047] was granted), no exceedances of the Tarrawonga road traffic noise criteria have been reported (inclusive of cumulative road traffic from the Rocglen Coal Mine on the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route).

Notwithstanding, it is noted that monitoring conducted in June 2013 recorded a road traffic noise level of 57 dBA LAeq(1 hour) during the day at the “Brooklyn” dwelling located adjacent to the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

This represents a 2 dB exceedance of the existing Rocglen criteria of 55 dBA LAeq(1 hour) for the day time period. However, as noted in the RNP, 2 dB represents a minor impact that is considered barely perceptible to the average person.

In addition, as described above, the Rocglen road traffic noise criterion for the day time period (55 dBA LAeq [1 hour]) is inconsistent with the more contemporary Tarrawonga criterion for the day time period (60 dBA LAeq[period]). It is expected that the Rocglen road traffic noise criteria would be updated for the Modification to be consistent with the Tarrawonga road traffic noise criteria and the RNP.

Northern Section of the Approved Road Transport Route

Wilkinson Murray (2014) predicted potential road traffic noise impacts associated with the transport of 3 Mtpa of Tarrawonga ROM coal along the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

Since the Tarrawonga EA and Vickery EIS, Whitehaven and BCPL have purchased, or Whitehaven has entered into purchase agreements, with a number of properties proximal to the northern section of the Approval Road Transport Route.

The closest privately-owned receivers, the “Braymont” and “Jeralong” dwellings, are located over 4 km away from the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

By comparison, the Tarrawonga EA assessed potential road traffic noise impacts at the “Kyalla” dwelling, which is located approximately 180 m from the Approved Road Transport Route, with no exceedances of the relevant road traffic noise criteria predicted at “Kyalla”, including during the transport of 2 Mtpa of Tarrawonga ROM coal.

No exceedances of the relevant day time road traffic noise criteria were predicted at any privately-owned receivers along the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route due to the Modification.

There would be no ROM coal haulage during the night-time period for the Modification, and therefore, no exceedance of the night-time road traffic noise criteria is expected.

Southern Section of the Approved Road Transport Route

Wilkinson Murray (2014) predicted potential road traffic noise impacts associated with the cumulative transport of 4.5 Mtpa of ROM coal along the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

The closest privately-owned receivers to the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route are the “Brooklyn” and “Weroona” dwellings.

It was predicted that there would be no exceedance of the relevant road traffic noise criteria at either the “Brooklyn” or “Weroona” dwellings during the day time period.

There would be no ROM coal haulage during the night-time period for the Modification, and therefore, no exceedance of the night-time road traffic noise criteria is expected.

As the relevant road traffic noise criteria are predicted to be met at the two closest receivers, then the criteria would be anticipated to be met at all other receivers along the southern section of the Approved Road Transport Route.

Private Sections of Approved Road Transport Route

Potential noise impacts associated with ROM coal haulage on the private sections of the northern section of the Approved Road Transport Route have been assessed by Wilkinson Murray (2014) against the criteria for industrial noise in the NSW Industrial Noise Policy (INP) for the Modification.

Potential noise levels associated with ROM coal haulage trucks on the private sections of the Approved Road Transport Route are predicted to be negligible at the closest privately-owned receivers, the “Braymont” and “Jeralong” dwellings, which are located over 4 km away.

As such, the Modification is predicted to result in no change to currently approved or previously assessed operational or cumulative noise levels at all privately-owned receivers.

Private Haul Road and Kamilaroi Overpass

Wilkinson Murray (2014) has undertaken an assessment of the potential noise impacts associated with ROM coal haulage trucks using the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass.

No exceedances of the relevant RNP road noise assessment criteria for the day time period were predicted at any of the privately-owned receivers surrounding the private haul road and Kamilaroi Highway overpass due to the Modification.

Air Quality

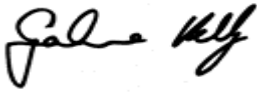
The Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment prepared for the Vickery EIS (PAEHolmes, 2012) considered potential dust emissions associated with ROM coal transport along the Approved Road Transport Route.

It was concluded that, as the on-highway trucks used for transportation of ROM coal to the Whitehaven CHPP would be covered to minimise potential dust emissions and the trucks would travel along sealed roads, dust emissions would be negligible.

Therefore, it was concluded that ROM coal transport along the Approved Road Transport Route would result in negligible dust emissions is relevant for the Modification.

In Summation

The Union considers that on balance, these Modifications are consistent with currently approved Development Consent objectives of the EP&A Act, and therefore supports the Proponent's applications.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grahame Kelly', written over a faint, light blue grid background.

Grahame Kelly
DISTRICT SECRETARY