



Department of Primary Industries

OUT13/32092

22 NOV 2013

Ms Sara Wilson
Mining and Industry Projects
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms Wilson

Thank you for your emails of 24 October 2013, and the subsequent addendum emailed on 5 November 2013 concerning the Response to Submissions for the proposed Northparkes Mines Step Change Project.

The Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security (OAS&FS), with technical assistance from Agriculture NSW and the Strategic Policy and Economics Unit in Trade and Investment, has reviewed the addendum that contains further details relevant to the Agricultural Impact Statement provided by Umwelt. Specific issues are included in Attachment 1 enclosed.

The Response to Submissions indicates that most of the issues in relation to comments made on the proposed development have been addressed. The following is a summary of this:

- The provision of the Cunningham (2006) soil survey has improved the information on soils;
- There is still conjecture as to whether the land within the modification area is BSAL or not. Notwithstanding, the land is Land and Soil Capability (LSC) Classes II and III and therefore is regarded as higher quality agricultural land;
- The extent of salinity has been answered adequately; and
- The consideration of contaminated land has been answered adequately.

As noted in our former response to the exhibited Environmental Impact Statement, the issues of the potential adverse impact on regional employment and visual amenity will be mitigated by the proponent committing to the described mitigation measures. We support this action to minimise impacts in these areas.

This advice from the OAS&FS is forwarded direct to the Department of Planning & Infrastructure in accordance with agreed arrangements for mining applications that affect agricultural land.

Additional advice from the other divisions within the Department of Primary Industries may be forwarded by separate letter.

If you wish to discuss the issue further please call Rob Williamson on telephone 02 6391 3166 or by email robert.williamson@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Regina Fogarty'.

Dr Regina Fogarty
Director Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security

Encl

Issues raised by the Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security regarding the Northparkes Mines Step Change Project Response to Submissions

Agricultural Impact Assessment

The soil types described in Cunningham (2006) comprise of Dermosols, Chromosols and Vertosols – all soil types with the potential to be of moderate or moderately high fertility. This along with the other features means that the land in question has the potential to be regarded as Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) 'according to the Interim Protocol for Identifying and Mapping BSAL (2013).

NSW DPI therefore does not accept that the limiting factor preventing these soils from being BSAL is inherent fertility as stated. Whilst the Draft BSAL map provided for the area shows no BSAL near the site, as noted in Cunningham (2006) the soil map for this area (Narromine) is unpublished and at a scale of 1:250 000, indicating that information used for the BSAL mapping should be confirmed through a soil survey and assessed using the Interim protocol.

DGRs Key Issue – Soil and land capability and agricultural land impact

The area that will be disturbed as a result of this project is small compared to the overall area under the proponent's control. NSW DPI supports the proponent's commitment to return appropriate elements of this land to its original agricultural capability use.

Socio-economic assessment

The Response to Submissions and the Addendum do not clearly discuss the socio-economic issues raised in the Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security submission. The issues of concern related to impacts on regional employment and visual amenity. It is noted that a range of mitigation measures had been presented in the original Environmental Assessment and it is recommended that they be adopted by the proponent. The proponent should commit to implementing these mitigation measures to ensure that potential adverse impacts on regional employment and visual amenity are minimised.

It is noted that in response to a submission by an adjacent property owner in the Response to Submissions (Section 2.7.2.3) the visual impacts of the Project were discussed and addressed. The proposed mitigation measures in the Response to Submissions meets requirements.

DGR's Key Issue - Social and Economic

The Response to Submissions and the Addendum raise no further issues that require socio-economic assessment.