



Our reference: SF20/40051; DOC20/359496
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12 May 2020

LIDSDALE SIDING COAL LOADER MODIFICATION 3

I refer to the Planning Matters Portal notification received on 21 April 2020 from the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) requesting the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) provide comment on the modification report for the modification to development consent 08_0223-Mod 3 (Mod 3) for the Lidsdale Siding (the premises).

The EPA understands that Mod 3 is seeking to only modify the consent to remove the Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP) established 08_0223-Mod 1 (Mod 1). No changes to the existing consent conditions associated with the number of train movements and coal loading and unloading frequencies will occur. The removal of the TARP thereby allows the premises to receive coal outside of the emergency situations defined in the TARP which therefore means the following will occur at any time:

- no more than seven laden trains will arrive at or leave the site each day;
- no more than five laden trains will arrive at or leave the site each day, when averaged over a calendar year;
- either loading or unloading will occur on a given day (not both); and
- the premises will receive and unload trains during the daytime period only.

The EPA provides the following comments with respect to Mod 3:

Project Justification

The EPA notes that the justification for development consent Mod 1 was due to continued lower yields from the Springvale Mine. It is understood that the approval of this mod together with the modification to Clarence Colliery's development consent (DA 504-00) resulted in coal being transferred to the Mount Piper Power Station (MPPS) from Airly and Clarence Mines to alleviate the yield issues related to the Springvale Mine.

Subsequently, development consent 08_0223-Mod 2 (Mod 2) was approved on 14 October 2019 which allowed an increase in the number of laden trains being unloaded at the premises. This modification enabled an increase in the volume of coal that can be unloaded at, and transferred from, the premises to MPPS. The *Lidsdale Siding Modification report for the modification to development consent September 2019* (the Mod 2 Report) stated at section 1.5, page 6: "*The proposed modification will allow for temporary, short-term increases in coal transfer on a campaign basis to address coal supply shortfalls at MPPS.*"

The *Lidsdale Siding Modification report for the modification to development consent April 2020* (the Mod 3 Report) section 1.5, page 6 states: "*The proposed modification would allow an ongoing supply of supplementary coal to MPPS and remove risks associated with coal supplies being provided by a*

single mining operation. The continued supply of coal from the facility will help support the ongoing and efficient operation of MPPS and continued supply of electricity to NSW.”

It is reasonable to assume that the intent of Mod 1 and Mod 2 was to ensure that coal could be supplied to MPPS from multiple sources. The Mod 3 Report does not provide any evidence which indicates concerns remain regarding supply from the processes established through Mod 1 and Mod 2 and as such further justification for Mod 3 is recommended.

Environmental Assessment

Noise

Requirement to consider mitigation

The predicted noise levels exceed both the site-specific Project Noise Trigger Levels (PNTLs) and the established EPL noise limits at the majority of the residential receivers. Step 5 under the assessment process in Section 6.1.1 of the Noise Policy for Industry (NPfI) states: Where the project noise trigger levels are exceeded, assess feasible and reasonable noise mitigation strategies.

The proponent does not appear to have evaluated any reasonable and feasible mitigation measures as part of the modification application. Chapter 5.4 of the noise report states that these exceedances are largely due to historical and existing noise levels and are not caused by the modification. This implies that the premises does not currently meet the noise limit requirements of its EPL. The proponent should provide further explanation as to whether the premises currently meets its requirements under the existing EPL.

Furthermore, historical exceedances are not considered a sufficient justification to not consider reasonable and feasible mitigation for a modification. For existing premises, Section 6.1.1 of the NPfI does allow for noise limits different from the PNTLs to be established, however only after reasonable and feasible mitigation has been exhausted. The proponent should provide an analysis of reasonable and feasible mitigation for noise emissions from the premises.

Sound Power Levels

The statement under Table 5.3 of the Mod 3 noise report states: *“As this report shows, the noise emissions from the site are predicted to be the same as currently approved operations and have been shown to be reducing over time as a result of new unloading methodology and mitigation measures implemented at the site”.*

However, the information provided in the Mod 3 noise report does not substantiated this statement. Sound Power Levels (SWLs) for some equipment were measured for Mod 3 and found to be significantly lower than assumed for Mod 1 (see page 18 of the Mod 3 report). This suggests that the predicted noise levels between Mod 1 and Mod 3 cannot be compared because they are based on fundamentally different assumptions. Unless the predictions for Mod 1 and Mod 3 use consistent assumptions, a meaningful comparison cannot be made. The proponent should review and update the assessment accordingly.

Table 5.2 presents the acoustically significant plant and their sound power levels. The SWL nominated for the locos applies to activities under approved train unloading operations. However, the locos would seem to perform other tasks when on the premises such as moving the train in and out of the premises. This activity does not appear to have been addressed in the report and may results may differ from noise levels presented in this report and previous reports, given that previous assumed SWLs were found to be different to actual measured levels. The proponent should provide

an explanation of previous predictions and if they should be revaluated following the findings of the most recent measurements.

Noise modelling

The proponent has stated that noise prediction have been undertaken in accordance with International Standard (ISO) 9613-2 Acoustics — Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors — Part 2: General method of calculation within the iNoise software package. However, Table 5.1 presents two sets of meteorological conditions which have been modelled; standard and noise enhancing. Given that ISO9613-2 is not capable of predicting specific meteorological conditions, the proponent should provide more detail on how each condition has been modelled and justification that the method is appropriate.

The Mod 3 noise report states that a model validation has been performed using noise measurements on site. The proponent should provide the results of the validation in the noise report.

Recommendation

The EPA recommends the Department seeks a response from the proponent in regard to the matters discussed above.

Should you have any further enquiries in relation to this matter please contact Mr Matthew Prince at the Central West (Bathurst) Office of the EPA by telephoning (02) 6883 5354 or via email central.west@epa.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SL', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sheridan Ledger
Unit Head Regulatory Operations
Environment Protection Authority