



Sustaining energy for the future

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Government issues requirements for environmental assessment

The NSW Department of Planning has issued the Wallarah 2 Coal Project with a set of Environmental Assessment Requirements (EAR's and formerly known as Director General's Requirements (DGR's) for the Environmental Assessment Report.

EAR's are essentially specific matters which the Government requires to be addressed along with more than 80 other generic topics in the environmental assessment for the Wallarah 2 Coal Project. The EAR's reflect local matters.

Announcement by Minister

In announcing the release of the EAR's on 10th August 2009 the NSW Minister for Planning, the Hon Kristina Keneally, MP, said:

“These assessment requirements were written after considering a range of recommendations from the local community, who provided us with feedback earlier this year on the Chikarovski report.”

Ms Keneally said the beginning of merit assessment of the Wallarah Coal Project followed an extensive, independent inquiry into the broader impacts of underground coal mining in the Wyong area.

“The inquiry, chaired by former Liberal Opposition Leader Kerry Chikarovski, says mining proposals in the Wyong area can be examined on their merits,” Ms Keneally said.

“The findings of the Chikarovski report followed a detailed investigation by

experts in subsidence, groundwater and social impact, as well as community feedback and a number of public hearings.

“This inquiry has also allowed the community to provide input into the requirements for the Wallarah Coal Project, as well as present feedback on the proposal itself at the outset.”

Ms Keneally said that prior to any determination of the Wallarah Coal Project, the proposal will be put under the microscope by:

- An independent review of the project, including public hearings, conducted by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC);
- An independent water expert who will review the adequacy of the surface and groundwater data in the sub-catchments affected by the proposal;
- An international peer review of this water review; and
- An extensive community consultation process.

Our Commitments

The Wallarah 2 Coal Project has made a number of commitments during the exploration process in the preparations for the submission of an Environmental Assessment Report. Some are the direct result of community consultation feedback. They include:

- The only mine plan the company will submit is one which safeguards

the region's water supply and alluvial groundwaters from the effects of mining.

- Avoiding impacts on water supply, dams and other infrastructure.
- Protecting the amenity of existing and future residential areas.
- Coordination of infrastructure requirements for the project and

that required for the development of the Wyong Economic Zone.

- After approval, establishing a Community Trust Fund for the benefit of the Wyong and Central Coast community.
- Assurance that there would be no surface transport of coal from west of the F3.

The EAR's

The EAR's for the Wallarah 2 Coal Project as outlined by the Minister for Planning in her media statement of 10 August 2009 cover a range of requirements for the project, and are available to view on the Department of Planning's website: www.planning.nsw.gov.au.

Requirements that the Wyong Coal Joint Venture must address include:

- Subsidence, with full regard to potential impacts on the surrounding natural and built environment;
- Impact on regional water supplies, surface water, groundwater and flooding;
- Impacts on regional biodiversity;
- Construction and operational noise and vibration;
- Greenhouse gas emissions, including mitigative measures;
- Transport efficiency in relation to the surrounding freight networks
- Impacts on air quality;
- Impacts on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage;

- Visual impacts of surface facilities
- Human health risks with regard to air quality, noise and drinking water quality
- Waste outputs and rehabilitation; and
- Social and economic impacts.

In summary, the whole assessment process will include a number of important steps, including:

- The proponent must prepare a detailed environmental assessment (EA) addressing each of the listed requirements in consultation with relevant councils and Government agencies;
- If the EA adequately addresses each requirement, it will be placed on exhibition for a minimum of 30 days, otherwise the proponent will be requested to revise the assessment before exhibition;
- Prior to public exhibition, relevant Government agencies, councils, the community and adjacent landowners will be notified of the upcoming

exhibition and invited to comment;

- The proponent will be required to respond to all issues raised in submissions and amend its project if necessary, and lodge this with the Department for assessment;
- Concurrently, an independent expert will be appointed to review the adequacy of the surface and groundwater data in the sub-catchments that will be affected by the Wallarah Coal Project, and this Water Review will be the subject of an international peer review;
- In addition, the PAC will hold public hearings and independently review the proponent's EA and the Water Review;
- Finally, the Department will assess the merits of the proposal with regard to the findings of the PAC, the Water Review and the international peer review; and
- The entire assessment will be provided to the Minister for determination.

In the Community

Wallarrah 2 Coal Project was pleased to join with so many members of the wider community to help raise funds for the Dunsdon boys from Lake Macquarie who so sadly lost their father recently in a fire. The fundraising event at the Bay Hotel in Bonnells Bay will support the trust fund for 9-year-old Zachariah, 8-year-old twins Talon and Marcus and 7-year-old Solomon.

People from many parts of the community came together for the fundraiser. Wallarah 2 Administrative Assistant, Vicki Holt and Environment and Community Manager Peter Smith are shown with Manly NRL stars, Matt Orford and Ben Stewart.



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What they Mean

As regular readers of this newsletter would know the Wallarah 2 Coal Project has been conducting studies covering more than 80 topics to develop the information required for the submission of an Environmental Assessment Report (EA).

These studies cover such topics as economic impacts, dust and noise emissions, effects on water regimes, both surface and sub-surface, transport, ecology, social and many more.

Environment Assessment Requirements provide targeted areas for the EA to address that are of special interest to the Government in terms of the local environment and the community.

These EAR's constitute one of the most comprehensive sets of requirements ever undertaken under the NSW planning regime.

The EA will comprise several volumes each containing hundreds of pages.

The company will make every effort to keep the community informed as we move towards the submission of the Environmental Assessment as required by the merit based approvals process. We are of course happy to provide you with whatever information is complete so if you have specific questions we will make every effort to provide the answers.

More than 1000 Jobs

The Wallarah 2 Coal Mine will create 720 local jobs and a further 336 jobs in neighbouring regions when it is operating. The mine will directly employ 300 people and local recruitment will be targeted.

It will add about \$200 million to the local economy each year during operations.

Incorrect statements about employment and economic benefits have been made by individuals who have been provided with the correct numbers at meetings of the Community Consultative Committee.

The 720 jobs will be on top of the construction jobs, which will include 1800 jobs that will be created during the first year of construction alone.

The Central Coast Research Foundation has found that more than \$1 billion will be added to the regional economy in these first three years of construction.

The Foundation reports that of a total initial expenditure by the company of more than \$700 million, an estimated \$600 million may be spent in the Central Coast.

Groundwater Monitoring

Walarah 2 Coal Project sought and has approval from the Department of Water and Energy (now Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water) to construct groundwater monitoring bores throughout the valley.

These bores will form a part of a larger groundwater monitoring network that will be established for the long term after approval of the Wallarah 2 project.

The proposed additional information during mining operations has been a commitment by the company over the past decade. The Strategic Inquiry Panel also noted that little information was available from non-project sources including Wyong Council and local property owners.

The Planning and Development Process



Planning the Mine

A mine plan is the way in which coal is to be extracted. Developing a mine plan is a complex process affected by many underground features and by the need to minimise effects on surface structures.

It is common for mine plans to be modified repeatedly during the long process of assessment of environmental effects and planning.

To get to the final mine plans as proposed by the Wallarah 2 Coal Project there have been 14 major changes to accommodate community and government expectations and to achieve an acceptable outcome for all stakeholders. Complex design studies, computer modelling and perhaps the most extensive environmental studies ever conducted for a mine has helped finalise the plan.

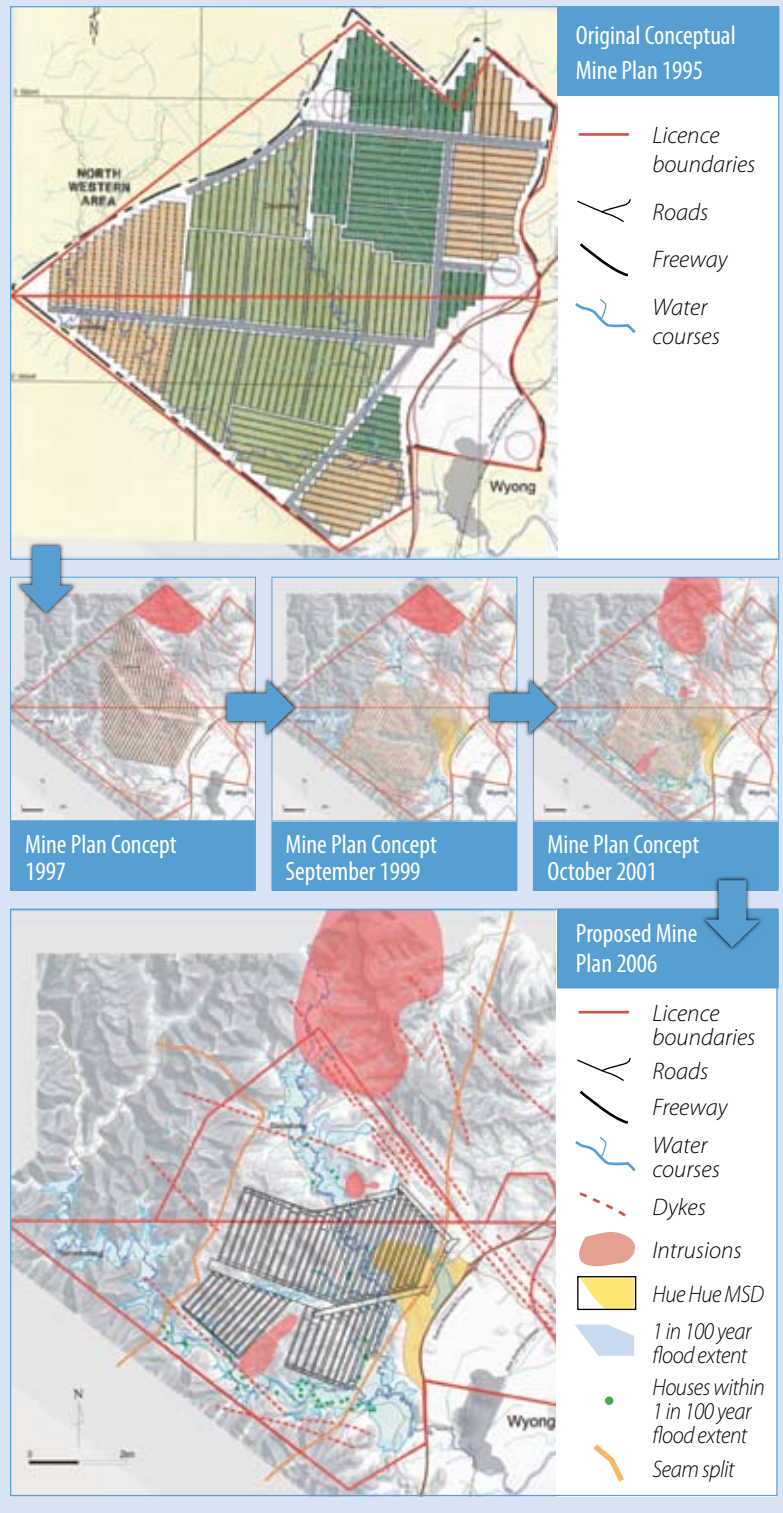
Understanding what is above a potential mine extraction is essential to good planning and for the Wallarah 2 Mine this included the first ever flood study of the valleys.

Identification of every structure above the mining areas, the largest geological studies for any mine, and much more all contributed to the knowledge bank for this plan. In fact experts in more than 10 engineering and scientific disciplines were involved in developing the information needed for development of a final plan.

The areas above where mining will take place are declared Mines Subsidence Districts and this classification provides not only for structures to be built which are able to meet the stresses of subsidence it also ensures repairs of any damage caused by mining will be undertaken at no cost to the owner.

These diagrams illustrate just some of the changes made to the mine plan. The first shows the normal starting position that assumes almost all the coal can be extracted. The other illustrations show some of the changes and the final plan. You will see that underground geological interruptions as well as natural and man-made surface infrastructure have had to be protected.

Mine Plan Evolution



Contact Us

We hope you find the newsletter valuable but as always we welcome your inquiries and comments that you can direct either by:

Telephone: 02 4352 7500
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Interview: Our offices are at 25 Bryant Drive, Tuggerah.
You are welcome to visit but it is advisable to telephone first to ensure the person who can best help is available.