Newsletter Number 15 - Spring 2011

Wallarah 2
COAL PROJECT

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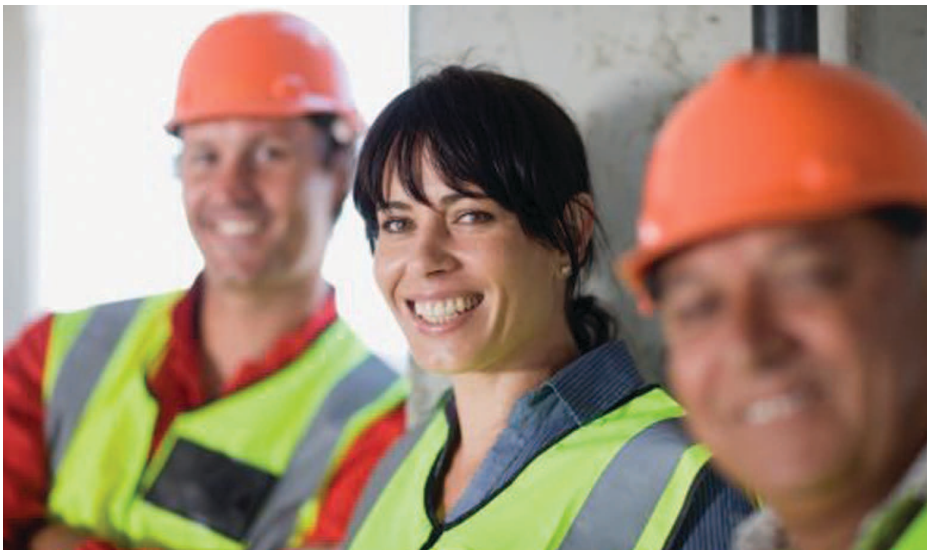


New studies underway

The Wallarah 2 Coal Project is undertaking further studies in anticipation of lodging a new project application mid 2012.

This follows a review of the previous application that was refused by the former Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly. His decision contradicted the advice of the independent Planning Assessment Commission.

One of the key factors in the project team's decision to continue the process was the Department's report to the Minister, which confirmed that the risk to the region's water supply from the project was negligible.

It is also worth noting that the Department of Planning's March 2011 report left open the prospect of a future approval: *"whilst the Department considers that coal mining could potentially be carried out, the Department is unable to support approval at this point in time."*

The project team has assessed the reasons for refusal, which mainly relate to a lack of detailed information about subsidence, ecology and archaeology impacts in the most westerly area of the mine plan.

Additional studies are now being completed on:

1. **Subsidence predictions in the western area of the mine plan**
2. **Ecological impacts in the western area**
3. **Heritage impacts in the western area**
4. **Surface water management (on the Tooheys Road site)**

Each of these matters will be comprehensively addressed in a new Environmental Impact Statement.

Throughout this process, the project team will continue to consult with the community and respond to any questions you may have.

WATER: THE FACTS

Refusal not about water supply

The project's refusal by former Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, was not about any impact on the region's water supply.

The Minister's written decision did not cite water supply among the reasons for refusal.

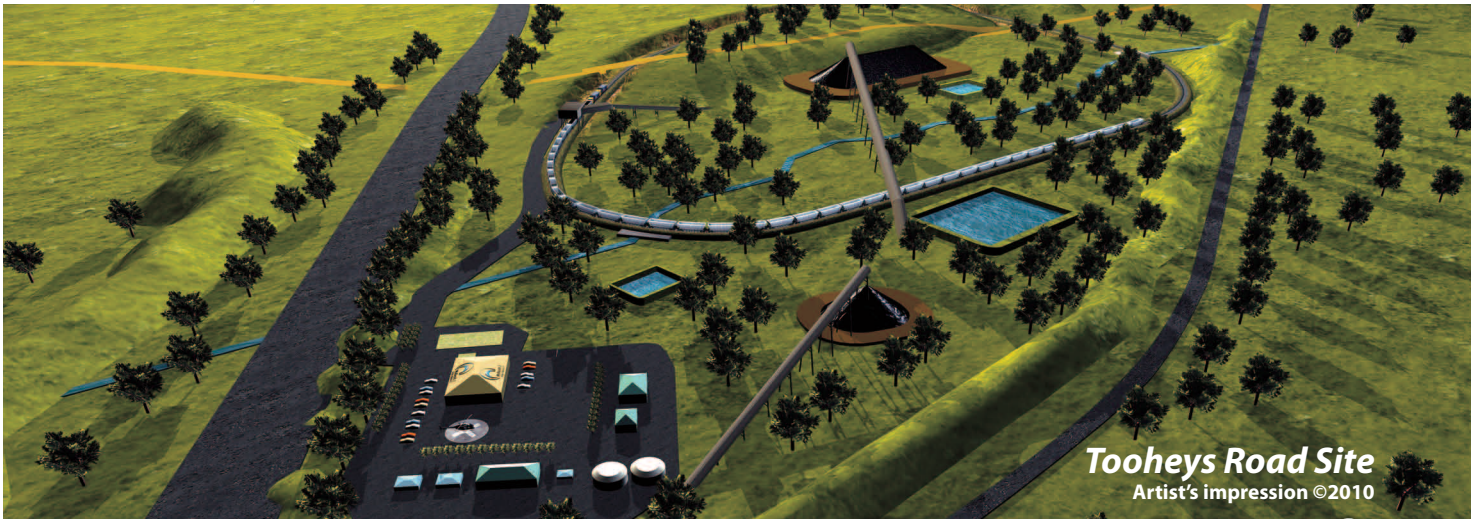
This was because four separate assessments concluded that any potential impacts from the proposed mine on the region's water supply system were minimal and that none justified refusal.

These studies were:

- An independent water review
- An international peer review
- The NSW Planning Assessment Commission
- The Department of Planning's own assessment, which said in part: ***"... the department considers the risk to the Central Coast water supply as a result of the project to be minimal and manageable."***

Potential impacts on water supply and dust/noise matters were the two most raised issues in community submissions.

The Planning Assessment Commission recommended around 40 conditions to accompany the approval all of which were reasonable for a project of this scale.



An independent overview

The following table provides a brief overview of the assessment of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project published by the Department of Planning in March 2011. Studies are now underway covering the areas where the Environmental Assessment (EA) or Ministerial project refusal recommended more work be completed.

The comments and findings included in the table provide a snapshot of the key topics at the release of the Director General's Environmental Assessment Report Section 751 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment ACT 1979 and dated March 2011.

It should be noted that both the Planning Assessment Commission and the Department of Planning recommended a range of conditions in all assessment areas should consent be given.

Outcomes of assessments

Assessment area	Status	Comment
Central Coast Water Supply	✔	The department considers the risk from the proposal to be minimal and manageable (p 24 DG's EA Report)
Flooding	✔	The department considers measures appropriate for mitigation and management of subsidence-induced flooding impacts (DG's EA Report)
Groundwater	✔	The PAC forms the view that shallow bores into alluvium would not be affected and those in hardrock only slightly and very slowly affected (p 23 DG's EA report)
Surface water impacts around mine facilities	**More Work Required**	The project does not adequately address potential surface water impacts (Tooheys Road surface facilities site) (Ministerial project refusal March 2011)
Subsidence • Model	✔	Subsidence model characterised as current best practice (p 18 DG's EA Report)
• Years 1-28	✔	The model has been appropriately calibrated and applied to the eastern part of the site (p 18 DG's EA Report)
• Years 29-42	**More Work Required**	Consideration of western areas subject to additional information to provide reasonable level of confidence (p 22 DG's EA Report)
Ecology	**More Work Required**	Additional work required on ecological impacts in western portion of the site (Ministerial project refusal, March 2011)
Heritage • Aboriginal	**More Work Required**	Uncertainty particularly in the western portion of the site (Ministerial project refusal March 2011)
• Non-indigenous	✔	The department considers this matter low risk and that impacts could be conditioned to ensure appropriate mitigation measures (p 28 DG's EA Report)
Air Quality	✔	The Department considers that the proposal can operate and comply with set air quality criteria during construction and operation (p 29 DG's EA Report)
Noise	✔	The department concurs with PAC that noise impact assessment for day/evening/night periods that noise can be adequately managed (p 33 DG's EA Report)

Contact Us

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

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