

18 June 2021

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
Resource Assessments, Planning Services  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

**Attention: Mr Stephen O'Donoghue, Director, Resource Assessments**

**Also by email:** [Stephen.ODonoghue@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.ODonoghue@planning.nsw.gov.au)  
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[Georgia.Dragicevic@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Georgia.Dragicevic@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Stephen,

**RE: METROPOLITAN COAL PROJECT APPROVAL (08\_0149) - INDEPENDENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT**

In accordance with Condition 8, Schedule 7 of the Project Approval, an Independent Environmental Audit of the Project was commissioned by the 31 December 2020. The Audit was completed on 8 May 2021 and Metropolitan has reviewed and considered the recommendations of the audit report.

In accordance with Condition 9, Schedule 7 of the Project Approval, Table 1 (attached) presents the recommendations made in the Independent Environmental Audit and Metropolitan Coal's response to these recommendations.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Stephen Love (Environment & Community Superintendent) on (02) 4294 7384 should you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely,



**JON DEGOTARDI**  
Technical Services Manager – Metropolitan Coal

**Table 1  
Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations and Metropolitan Coal Responses**

No.	Condition		Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations	Metropolitan Coal Response
	Asset	Performance Measure		
Sch 3 Cond 1	Eastern Tributary between the full supply level of the Woronora Reservoir and the main gate of Longwall 26.	Negligible environmental consequences over at least 70% of the stream length (that is no diversion of flows, no change in the natural drainage behaviour of pools, minimal iron staining and minimal gas release.	Continue implementation of iron staining source investigation, remediation and monitoring.	Metropolitan installed polyurethane (PUR) grout curtains at Eastern Tributary pools ETAH and ETAK in 2020 in accordance with the approved Metropolitan Coal Stream Remediation Plan. Metropolitan Coal will continue these works in 2021 with the recent completion of a hazard reduction burn by WaterNSW surrounding the performance measure zone on the Eastern Tributary. It is expected that the reduction in surface water/groundwater interaction due to the installation of grout curtains along Eastern Tributary will reduce iron staining over time.
Sch 4 Cond 1	<i>By the end of 2014, the Proponent shall ensure that the noise generated by the project does not exceed the noise impact assessment criteria in Table 2 at any residence on privately-owned land, or on more than 25% of any privately-owned land.</i>		Continue the identification of nuisance noise sources and implementation of noise mitigation strategies.	Metropolitan Coal will continue to progress the DPIE Voluntary Undertaking (VU) regarding noise levels from the surface facilities area in consultation with DPIE.
Sch 4 Cond 15	<i>The Proponent shall prepare and implement a Water Management Plan for the surface facilities area and two ventilation shaft sites to the satisfaction of the Director-General. This plan must be prepared in consultation with NOW and OEH by a suitably qualified expert whose appointment has been endorsed by the Director-General, and submitted to the Director-General for approval by the end of June 2010. In addition to the standard requirements for management plans (see condition 2 of schedule 7).</i>		Desilt the sediment ponds in the coal stockpile area and ensure that adequate freeboard is always maintained.	Metropolitan Coal will progressively desilt site stormwater dams and maintain capacity. Metropolitan is also investigating the feasibility of a new pontoon pump at Turkey's Nest dam with silt pumping capacity which will allow material to be pumped directly to CHPP for reprocessing.
Sch 7 Cond 2	<i>The Applicant shall ensure that the management plans required under this consent are prepared in accordance with any relevant guidelines, and include:  (c) a description of the measures that would be implemented to comply with the relevant statutory requirements, limits, or performance measures/criteria;</i>		Review the Noise Management Plan with the objective of assessing whether further (process) opportunities are available and revise the plan to reflect the current noise management program being implemented.	Metropolitan Coal is currently completing the final stage in the DPIE VU regarding noise levels from the surface facilities area.  Upon completion of the VU, Metropolitan Coal will review and, if necessary, update the Noise Management Plan to reflect any changes to site noise management based on the findings of the VU.

No.	Condition	Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations	Metropolitan Coal Response
Sch 7 Cond 4	<i>Revision of Strategies, Plans and Programs within 3 months of: (b) the submission of an incident report under Schedule 7 Condition 7.</i>	Ensure that following an incident (including significant compliance breach) or in response to on-going non-compliances that the relevant management plans are reviewed and if required revised.	Metropolitan Coal regularly reviews and will continue to review the site management plans, including after submission of an incident report in accordance with Condition 4(b), Schedule 7 of Project Approval (08_0149). In future Metropolitan will document any updates to any relevant management plans after an incident in the Annual Review.
L1.1	<i>Except as may be expressly provided in any other condition of this licence, the licensee must comply with section 120 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.</i>	Metropolitan has investigated the incident and implemented appropriate mitigation measures - No further action required.	Noted.
M4.2	<i>The (Complaints Register) record must include details of the following: (a) the date and time of the complaint; (b) the method by which the complaint was made; (c) any personal details of the complainant which were provided by the complainant or, if no such details were provided, a note to that effect; (d) the nature of the complaint; (e) the action taken by the licensee in relation to the complaint, including any follow-up contact with the complainant; and if no action was taken by the licensee, the reasons why no action was taken.</i>	Establish a detailed complaint record that meets all of the requirements of EPL Condition M4.2. Note that this record should not be made available to the public as it will identify individual complainants.	A review of the Metropolitan Coal Complaints Register has identified that the personal details of the complainant are not currently collected in order to maintain privacy when the Register is published on the company website. To rectify this Metropolitan Coal has updated the Complaints Register to include a complainant details column, which will be hidden when the Complaints Register is published on the Metropolitan website.
M4.3	<i>The record of a complaint must be kept for at least 4 years after the complaint was made.</i>	Establish as detailed complaints record that meets all of the requirements of EPL Condition M4.2. Note that this record should not be made available to the public as it will identify individual complainants.	As above. The current Complaints Register includes all complaints received since the 2009 Project Approval.

No.	Condition	Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations	Metropolitan Coal Response
50	<p><i>Where the lease holder desires to commence prospecting operations in the subject area the lease holder shall notify the Director General in writing and shall comply with such additional conditions as the Minister may impose including any condition requiring the lodgment of an additional bond or other form of security for rehabilitation of the area affected by such operations.</i></p> <p><i>Where the lease holder notifies the Director General pursuant to sub paragraph (a) of this condition the lease holder shall furnish with that notification details of the type of prospecting methods that would be adopted and the extent and location of the area that would be affected by them.</i></p>	Ensure that exploration notifications are provided to the Resources Regulator prior to commencement of those works.	Noted. Metropolitan Coal notified the Resources Regulator prior to commencement of exploration works in 2020 in correspondence dated 26 March 2020. Metropolitan Coal will continue to notify the Resources Regulator prior to the commencement of any new exploration works.
Sch 3 Cond 2	<p><i>The Proponent shall prepare and implement a comprehensive Catchment Monitoring Program for the project to the satisfaction of the Director- General. This program must:</i></p> <p><i>(a) be prepared by suitably qualified and experienced experts whose appointment has been endorsed by the Director-General;</i></p>	Review the plan for consistency with the current MOP and Extraction Plan, revise and submit to DPIE for approval.	<p>An updated Catchment Monitoring Program was produced during the development of the Longwalls 301-303 Extraction Plan and was provided to Department of Planning and Environment in February 2018, with further updates provided in April 2018.</p> <p>Metropolitan Coal will review and update the Longwalls 301-303 Catchment Monitoring Program as required during the development of the next extraction plan (i.e. for Longwall 308 on).</p>
Sch 7 Cond 2	<p><i>The Applicant shall ensure that the management plans required under this consent are prepared in accordance with any relevant guidelines, and include:</i></p> <p><i>(h) a protocol for periodic review of the plan.</i></p>	During the next review of each management plan revise the section on triggers for periodic review to include significant changes to operations or processes.	Metropolitan Coal will include a trigger to review the relevant management plans after significant changes to operations or processes at the Metropolitan Coal Mine when the management plans are next updated.