



Mr Troy Favell
Environment & Community Manager
Wambo Coal Pty Ltd
Private Mail Bag 1
SINGLETON NSW 2330

Dear Mr Favell

**North Wambo Underground Mine
Longwalls 7 and 8 Extraction Plan**

The Department has completed its review of the Extraction Plan for Longwalls 7 and 8, including the supplementary content for section 1.6.2 and new Attachment 6 included in your letter dated 2 May 2013. The Department notes, in particular, that Wambo Coal Pty Ltd (WCPL) has committed to:

- prepare and submit a "Grouting Options Paper" by 30 August 2013; and
- reach agreement with the Department and DRE on the extent of grouting in the Homestead Mine workings prior to the commencement of second workings in Longwall 8.


The Director-General is satisfied that the Extraction Plan, as modified by the supplementary content for section 1.6.2 and new Attachment 6, complies with Condition 22C of Schedule 4 of Development Consent 305-7-2003, on the basis that WCPL fulfils its commitment to secure the Department's agreement on the extent of additional grouting in the Homestead Mine workings prior to the commencement of second workings in Longwall 8. Approval is therefore granted for the extraction of Longwall 7 under the Plan, with approval of the extraction of Longwall 8 to remain contingent on a satisfactory agreement on the extent of grouting.

The Department notes that your letter states that there is "no material risk of pot hole or chimney failure at the base of the alluvium at depths of cover greater than 110m". The Department has examined WCPL's additional technical report (DgS, 23 May 2012) and notes that the report focuses on the depth of cover necessary to avoid sinkhole expression *at the surface*, in order to prevent sinkholes affecting heritage values within the Wambo Homestead Complex. In the Department's view, the report does not fully assess the depth of cover necessary to avoid impacts to groundwater where sinkhole development intercepts the base of the alluvium, but where it does not fully propagate to the surface (ie all calculations in Figures 41a – 41c include the value "s"). Further, and more importantly, it is not based on a reasonable minimisation of the risk of connective cracking at the base of the alluvium (as against actual goafing) caused by collapses within the Whybrow Seam workings, which is the Department's aim.

Therefore, the Department requests that serious consideration is given in the Grouting Options Paper to extending the grouting program to fill *all* parts of the Homestead Mine workings that are directly beneath any part of the bed and the alluvium of North Wambo Creek, irrespective of depth of cover. The Department considers that this would be a limited extension to what is already an extensive grouting program. However, it does recognise that particular surface environmental constraints may inhibit the complete fulfilment of this aim.

Please feel welcome to telephone Mr David Mooney, Senior Planner, on 9228 2040 should you wish to discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely,


Howard Reed 16.5.13
Manager Mining Projects
As the Director General's nominee