



Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Planning
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Lands
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

13 July, 2010

NSW Government responds to Camberwell report

The NSW Government today released the Camberwell Cumulative Impact Review, a report carried out on behalf of the Department of Planning into the effects of the mining industry on Camberwell near Singleton.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the review being released today includes:

- Three expert reports, analysing air quality, noise levels and drinking water issues;
- An additional expert report on air quality which the Department asked several mining companies – who are seeking to expand their operations in the vicinity of Camberwell – to produce; and
- A Departmental overview and response to the above-mentioned expert reports.

“The reports will inform a range of government decisions relating to Camberwell, including decisions on new mining proposals, existing mining operations, health studies and monitoring regimes,” Mr Kelly said.

“The findings of the various studies confirmed the Government’s initial concerns that Camberwell was the key area of the Hunter Valley coalfields that warranted close attention in terms of mining related impacts.”

The review finds that:

- On an annual average basis, dust levels at Camberwell have been consistently below the relevant standard used by the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) to assess new mine proposals; however
- Daily dust concentrations exceeded the relevant short term standard during 2008 between 10 and 30 days at different monitoring stations in and near Camberwell;
- Cumulative noise levels at Camberwell in 2009 were estimated at 42-44 dBA, which do not exceed the recommended maximum amenity noise criteria for a rural area, but are close to the criteria;
- Noise levels are predicted to rise by a further 2 dBA if current project applications for mines in the area were approved; and
- There was no evidence of high lead levels in drinking water in rainwater tanks in Camberwell, or that the low levels of lead which were present came from coal mining dust.

Mr Kelly said in response to the review, coal mines in near Camberwell will be required to cut back noise and dust levels, and more government inspectors will be based in the Upper Hunter by the end of August.

The NSW Government will now implement the following initiatives:

- Employ two Department of Planning compliance officers, who will be based full-time in the Upper Hunter to monitor mines’ compliance with conditions of consent;
- Targeting Camberwell as a site for the establishment of an air monitoring station as part of the 14 stations proposed for the Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network. This will allow residents to access real time data on air quality in the region;
- Requiring mines around Camberwell to employ best practice dust and noise control measures, expanding real-time monitoring and limiting mine operating practices to reduce emissions; and
- Ensuring residents are fully informed of potential health impacts of mining operations.

“The planned air monitoring network will provide reliable measures in population centres in the Hunter Valley,” Mr Kelly said.



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Mr Kelly said the government has now established a group of senior Ministers to develop a strategic plan for coal mining in NSW by the end of the year.

The Ministerial Cabinet Sub-Committee, to be chaired by Tony Kelly, and will bring together the portfolios of Planning, Infrastructure and Lands, Health, Treasury, Environment, Climate Change and Water, and Industry and Investment.

“This experienced, senior and balanced team has been charged with providing a co-ordinated strategy from government on coal mining, and greater certainty to both the mining industry and local communities across the state,” Mr Kelly said.

“The Sub-Committee’s formation is, in part, a response to today’s release of the Camberwell Cumulative Impact Review and will look at mining issues, state-wide.”

Mr Kelly said the Department of Planning expects dust and noise levels to fall significantly at Camberwell once the Ashton North-East open cut mine closes in December this year.

“That said, a number of mine proposals near Camberwell may lead to additional noise and dust emissions, and will need to be carefully considered by the Department,” Mr Kelly said.

The full package of reports released today comprised:

- A drinking water impacts report, finalised in July 2009;
- The dust report, finalized in September 2009;
- The noise report, finalised in late May 2010; and
- The additional air quality study, completed in July 2010.

The dust report was made available to the independent expert review panel appointed by the NSW Health Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant in June 2010.

After reviewing the dust report, the expert panel recommended to Dr Chant that action be taken to reduce the exposure of residents from Camberwell Village to dust impacts based on the high number of exceedances of the 24hour PM10 criteria. The above measures will assist in this outcome.

The Department of Planning and with Health and Environment officers will arrange to meet with the Camberwell community to provide a full briefing on the review findings.

More information is available on the Department’s website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au