

Tuesday, 31 January 2012

Additional opportunity to comment on coal mine expansion in western NSW

The public is being invited to comment on the proposed Stage 2 expansion of the Moolarben Coal Mine, 40km northeast of Mudgee, which is being publicly exhibited by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

The proponent, Moolarben Coal Mines Pty Ltd, is seeking approval to extract up to 16 million tonnes of coal each year from the Stage 2 area, using open cut and underground longwall mining over a 24-year period. An environmental assessment for the \$120 million Stage 2 proposal was publicly exhibited by the department from 18 March 2009 to 29 April 2009, and attracted 177 submissions.

Moolarben Coal Mine already has approval for Stage 1 of its mining project, which includes extracting up to eight million tonnes of coal each year from open cut mining and four million tonnes of coal annually from underground mining.

A response to submissions and preferred project report (PPR) on the Stage 2 proposal has now been submitted to the department. In response to significant public interest and changes to the proposed development, the department is now undertaking additional public consultation to enable the community to comment on the revised proposal contained in the PPR.

The application proposes to:

- Extract coal from an area to the east of the approved Stage 1 project, including up to 12 million tonnes of coal each year from open cut mining, and 4 million tonnes of coal each year from underground (longwall) mining;
- Use Stage 1 infrastructure to process and handle coal extracted as part of the Stage 2 project, with total extraction across the mining complex limited to 17 million tonnes of coal each year and product coal limited to 13 million tonnes each year;
- Construct and operate Stage 2 infrastructure;
- Dispose of coal rejects and tailings on site; and
- Rehabilitate the site.

The PPR does not propose any change in the extraction or production rate of coal as part of the Stage 2 application, but makes a number of changes from the previously exhibited proposal including:

- Relocating and reducing the footprint of out of pit emplacement areas;
- Modifying the open cut pit disturbance area and mining sequence;
- Relocating and modifying mine and ancillary infrastructure; and
- A revised biodiversity offset strategy.

The preferred project report is on public exhibition for almost four weeks from **Tuesday 31 January 2012 until Friday 24 February 2012**. Interested members of the public are encouraged to lodge a submission providing feedback during this time.

Submissions received during the exhibition period will be made available on the department's website and will be carefully considered as part of the department's assessment of the project. After the department has completed its assessment report, the proposal will be referred to the independent Planning Assessment Commission to determine.

The preferred project report for the project can be viewed during business hours at:

- **Department of Planning and Infrastructure** – Information Centre, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney;
- **Mid Western Regional Council** – 86 Market Street, Mudgee;
- **Moolarben Coal Mine site office** – Lot 4250, Ulan Road, Ulan; and
- **Nature Conservation Council** – Level 2, 5 Wilson Street, Newtown.

All relevant project documents are also publicly available on the department's website, and can be accessed by visiting <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au> and following the links to the 'On Exhibition' page.

Submissions can be:

- Lodged online at <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au> (then search for the project);
- Emailed to plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au;
- Faxed to (02) 9228 6466; or
- Posted to Mining and Industry Projects, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, SYDNEY NSW 2001.

Media contact: Laurel-Lee Roderick, 9228 6128 or 0429 153 139

NOTE: The Department of Planning and Infrastructure is issuing this media release to encourage the community to take part in the planning process. However, it is the role of the proponent (either through its documents published on our website or otherwise) to provide further specific details about the proposal.