

Tuesday, 3 July 2012

Feedback sought on proposed mine expansion in the Lower Hunter

The public is being invited to comment on a proposal for the expansion of an underground coal mine in the Lower Hunter region, which is being publicly exhibited by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

The proponent, Newcastle Coal Company, is seeking planning approval for the Tasman Coal extension project, located approximately 20 kilometres west of Newcastle.

The application proposes to:

- Continue and extend the operations at the Tasman Underground Mine to extract up to 1.5 million tonnes of coal per year, an increase from the current approved limit of 975,000 tonnes per year;
- Develop new pit top facilities including coal handling, administration and service infrastructure;
- Increase the operational life of the mine by 15 years from 2014 to 2029;
- Continue to transport coal by road to the Bloomfield Coal Handling and Preparation Plant for processing and dispatch; and
- Decommission the existing pit top facilities and rehabilitate the site.

The proposed extension is expected to create 40 additional mining jobs.

The department required the proponent's environmental assessment to specifically address issues including biodiversity, heritage, traffic, noise and blasting, as well as surface and ground water impacts.

The environmental assessment is on public exhibition for approximately six weeks from **Tuesday 3 July 2012 until Thursday 16 August 2012**. Interested members of the public are encouraged to lodge a submission providing feedback during this time.

Submissions received during the public exhibition period, along with the proponent's response to submissions document, will be made available on the department's website. The submissions and proponent's response will be carefully considered as part of the department's assessment of the project.

The environmental assessment for the project can be viewed during business hours at:

- **Department of Planning and Infrastructure** – Information Centre, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney;
- **Lake Macquarie Council** – 126-138 Main Road, Speers Point;
- **Cessnock City Council** – Administration Building, 62-78 Vincent Street, Cessnock; 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;
- Posted to Major Development Assessment, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, SYDNEY NSW 2001.

Media contact: Natalie Christie, (02) 9228 6295

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.