

Wednesday, 24 April 2013

Have your say on a proposal for the Wallarah 2 coal mine

Public comment is being sought on a new proposal for an underground coal mine near Wyong, which will undergo a comprehensive assessment for issues including water and biodiversity impacts.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure will this Friday place the Wallarah 2 coal project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and associated documents on public exhibition.

They will remain on public exhibition for an extended period of almost two months, until 21 June 2013.

The applicant, Wyong Areas Coal Joint Venture, proposes to:

- extract up to 5 million tonnes of coal per year for up to 28 years, using underground longwall mining methods;
- construct and operate a range of associated infrastructure, including rail spur, coal stockpiles, ventilation shafts, and a gas drainage and capture system;
- transport of coal from the mine by rail; and
- progressively rehabilitate the site.

The proposed underground mine is around 5 kilometres northwest of Wyong, with surface facilities at Tooheys Road and Hue Hue Road. The mining area is predominantly underneath Wyong State Forest.

Director-General Sam Haddad said the department had required the applicant to thoroughly address a range of key issues, such as the potential impacts of the mine on water resources, biodiversity, heritage, air quality, noise and traffic and transport.

A previous proposal for the Wallarah 2 coal mine was refused in 2011.

"While the previous application was refused, the mine company, like any other applicant in NSW, is legally allowed to lodge a new development application and have it considered on its merits," Mr Haddad said.

"The Department's assessment will be very thorough and will closely scrutinise a wide range of issues."

"It is expected that the project will be determined by the independent Planning Assessment Commission (PAC). It will also require approval from the Commonwealth Government.

"I encourage all interested members of the public to review the EIS during the exhibition period.

"I know local residents have already raised a number of concerns, including potential impacts on water resources and biodiversity.

“Now is the chance for local communities to formally have their say on the new proposal. Public submissions are always a key consideration in the department’s assessment and the company will also be required to respond to all the issues raised.”

At the conclusion of the public exhibition period, the applicant will need to address all issues raised in the submissions and the proposal will undergo a thorough merit assessment by the department before a recommendation is made to the PAC.

For more information on the project, including where the EIS is being exhibited and how to make a submission, please visit <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au> and search for “Wallarah 2”.

The Environmental Impact Statement and other accompanying documents may be viewed on the Department’s website (majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au), and may also be inspected from Friday 26 April 2013 until Friday 21 June 2013 during business hours at:

- Department of Planning & Infrastructure, Information Centre, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney;
- Wyong Shire Council Civic Centre, 2 Hely Street, Wyong;
- Lake Haven Library, Lake Haven Shopping Centre, Goobarabah Avenue;
- Tuggerah Library and Council Services Centre, Westfield Tuggerah, 50 Wyong Road; and
- Nature Conservation Council, Level 2, 5 Wilson Street, Newtown.

Written submissions should be marked “Attention: Director, Mining Projects” and can be:

- made online at www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au; or
- posted to Major Projects Assessment, Department of Planning & Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001.

All submissions received will be made public in line with the department’s objective to promote an open and transparent planning system.

Before making a submission, please read our privacy statement at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/privacy or call 1300 305 695 to obtain a copy.

Media Contact: Mark Skelsey (02) 9228 6275

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.