RESPONSE TO MEDIA
METROPOLITAN COLLIERY & IRON CONCENTRATIONS IN WATERWAYS

Monday 30 December 2013

The department is well aware of the issues relating to iron concentrations and has raised this with Metropolitan Colliery's operator, Peabody.

In a recent letter to the company, the department made it clear that it does not consider the proposed adjustment of baseline levels to be appropriate and requested that the extraction plan be revised to ensure the baseline remains at pre-mining levels.

The department has also analysed the company's 2012 Annual Review in detail and noted the various reported exceedances in water quality measures. The department notes that the company has commissioned an independent peer review of these reported exceedances and is also in the process of preparing its 2013 Annual Review which is expected to include further information on water quality issues.

The department will fully consider all of this relevant information and analysis before finalising its review of the mine's draft Extraction Plan.

**On the amount of the increases**

The department is aware of some measurements that have shown a doubling of iron concentration. The department will be analysing these measurements in close consultation with other relevant agencies such as the Sydney Catchment Authority and Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to determine whether these increases represent a more than minor impact on water quality and/or a breach of the mine's operating conditions.

As this work is ongoing, it is not possible to predict the outcome of this analysis or any possible course of action that may result.

There is no specified timeframe for the completion of the department's review, however the department is working to finalise its analysis as soon as possible, while ensuring all relevant factors are fully and appropriately considered.