Mt Arthur Coal fined for non-compliance

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment has issued a Penalty Infringement Notice to BHP Billiton Group’s Mt Arthur Coal operation for poor dust management.

The Notice was issued by the Department on 27 June.

The Department’s Compliance team received a complaint from Muswellbrook Shire Council on the morning of 24 June. Within half an hour, a Department Officer had responded and witnessed trucks dumping overburden, at elevated levels in windy conditions, that led to dust leaving the site.

Mt Arthur Coal’s operating conditions require the mine to “implement best practice air quality management, including all reasonable and feasible measures to minimise offsite dust emissions of the Mt Arthur complex.”

‘Failure to comply with conditions of approval’ carries a $3,000 fine required to be paid within 21 days of issue.

The Department has previously issued a warning letter to Mt Arthur Coal in September 2012 for a similar incident.

The Department set up a standalone compliance office in Singleton in 2010 to oversee the Upper Hunter coal mines. The office has progressively expanded its coverage since then to include the Gloucester, Mudgee and Gunnedah regions.

“Taking a local approach to compliance lets us work closer with local authorities, as demonstrated in this case,” said a Department spokesperson.

“Our role is to listen to community concerns, conduct audits, respond to complaints, investigate potential breaches and take enforcement action where breaches are confirmed.”

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