Strict conditions for Wambo Coal Mine approval

The Department of Planning and Environment has applied strict conditions to its approval of an underground expansion of Wambo Coal Mine that will help protect local jobs.

“We’ve made changes to the proposal and applied tough rules to control the impact of subsidence on groundwater and the environment,” a Department spokesperson said.

“One of the main changes we’ve imposed reduces the size of the new underground mining area by almost 250 metres, so it avoids going underneath Wambo Creek channel.

“While this the expansion means less coal can be mined than originally proposed, we believe it is the right trade-off to properly manage subsidence risk.”

The approval allows extra coal deposits near the south east corner of Wambo to be mined, securing ongoing employment for the mine’s 227 underground workers while protecting the Creek channel.

“Without opening up the new underground area, substantial layoffs would have been likely,” the spokesperson said.

“The approval does not alter the existing mining methods, production rates or the size of the surface mining area.”

The Department’s assessment was supported by advice from an independent expert who confirmed that the proposal does not pose a significant risk and is in line with the rules around groundwater protection.

The spokesperson said the mine will put a monitoring regime in place so it can demonstrate that it is meeting the approval conditions imposed.

“The Department’s Compliance team will work closely with the mine and local community to make sure the rules are being followed,” the spokesperson said.

The Department put the proposal on exhibition for community feedback late last year and received 11 submissions, including one objection from a local landowner concerned with issues including subsidence.

“We’re satisfied the changes the Department has made to the proposal, on top of mine’s existing conditions, mean any subsidence impacts can be managed,” the spokesperson said.

To view the Department’s assessment of the proposal, visit www.majorprojects.nsw.gov.au

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