

INDEPENDENT EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL FOR MINING

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Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Email: via IEAPM Secretariat

Metropolitan Coal Mine – Longwalls 311 to 316 Extraction Plan

On 4 July 2024 the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) requested the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Mining (IEAPM, ‘the Panel’) to provide advice in relation the Extraction Plan (EP) for Longwalls 311-316 (LWs311-316) for the Metropolitan Coal Mine. The request for advice related to large swamps and water quality modelling and monitoring, adequacy of large swamp impact predictions and monitoring programs, adequacy of performance measures and indicators, and the water and swamp TARPs.

The Panel has already submitted advices on 5/9/2024 and 17/10/2024 which resulted in approval of the EP confined to LW311. It is now in the process of concluding an advice for LWs312-316.

There are a number of complexities and anomalies associated with: 1) the assessment process as it stood at the time; 2) aspects of how the consent approval endeavoured to capture some outcomes of this assessment process; 3) the implications of subsequent changes in legislation; and 4) the lack of consensus amongst key stakeholders as to the impact of these matters on LWs312-316 conforming to approval conditions. The Panel has previously consulted the Department on these aspects in an endeavour to gain clarity and resolution of these legacy issues as a basis for providing its outstanding advice. This only partially resolved the issues.

One of the main reasons that the complexities have not been resolved to date is the loss of corporate memory as to the circumstances and knowledge bases that informed the Planning Assessment Commission’s (PAC) determination of Metropolitan Coal Project (MCP). Therefore, I have undertaken a review of the PAC’s assessment report to inform the IEAPM Panel and stakeholders of these and to use the review as one foundation of the IEAPM Panel’s pending advice on the EP for LWs 311-316. My review has been aided by the fact that I was a member of the MCP PAC and that Dr Ann Young, who is also on the IEAPM Panel, provided advice to the MCP PAC at its request.

Against that background, I think it is important and judicious that prior to the IEAPM Panel formalising its advice on LWs312 – 316 and the Department then having regard to it, Executive Management of Energy and Resources Assessment (DPHI) should review my proposed resolution of the planning related complexities for factual completeness and correctness and for the potential to give rise to unintended consequences.

Accordingly, the proposed chapter on this matter is attached.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via the Secretariat for follow up.

Yours sincerely



Jim Galvin
Chair, Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Mining