



Dr Digby Short  
Manager Environment and Community Relations  
Ashton Coal Operations Pty Ltd  
Suite 1106, Level 11  
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SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Dr Short

**Ashton Coal Project (DA 309-11-2001-I)  
Longwalls 105 to 107  
Extraction Plan Approval**

The Department refers to the revised *Upper Liddell Seam Extraction Plan for Longwalls 105 to 107* (December 2015), which was prepared in accordance with condition 3.12 of Schedule 2 of the Ashton Coal Project development consent (DA 309-11-2001-I).

The Department notes that the Extraction Plan seeks approval for a revised offset longwall layout compared to the stacked longwall layout presented in the *Bowmans Creek Diversion Environmental Assessment* (EA) (Evans & Peck, December 2009). The revised longwall layout also includes shortening of Longwall 105 to avoid impacts of localised faulting. The Department is satisfied that the revised EP mine layout would result in similar or less subsidence related impacts to those approved as part of the EA layout, and can be characterised as being "generally in accordance with" the EA and the conditions of consent.

Accordingly, the Secretary's nominee approves this revised longwall layout.

The Department has reviewed the Extraction Plan, including the following separate management plans provided in the appendices, and considers them to be adequate:

- Coal Resource Recovery Plan (condition 3.12(g));
- Subsidence Monitoring Program (condition 3.12(g));
- Public Safety Management Plan (condition 3.12(g));
- Biodiversity Management Plan (condition 3.12(h)); and
- Heritage Management Plan (condition 3.12(h)).

Accordingly, the Secretary's nominee approves these components of the Extraction Plan.

The Department notes that this approval **does not** extend to approval of the following management plans:

- Built Features Management Plan (condition 3.12 (g));
- Rehabilitation Management Plan (condition 3.12(g));
- Land Management Plan (condition 3.12(h)); or
- Water Management Plan (condition 3.12(h)).

The Built Features Management Plans (for the assets owned by Ausgrid, Transgrid, Glencore, AGL Macquarie, Telstra and Singleton Shire Council) need to be updated and prepared in consultation with the relevant asset owners, to the satisfaction of the Division of Resources & Energy (DRE) of the Department of Industry, prior to any mining which may damage or otherwise impact on those assets.

In a letter to the Department dated 11 November 2015, DRE advised that the mine's Mining Operations Plan needs to be updated to address all aspects of the rehabilitation of subsidence impacts, including rehabilitation objectives, completion criteria and rehabilitation monitoring. Accordingly, the Department requires the mine's Rehabilitation Management Plan and Land Management Plan to be updated to the satisfaction of the DRE, prior to the commencement of secondary extraction of Longwall 105.

Similarly, the Department notes that the Water Management Plan needs to be updated to reflect the revised mine plan and include all recommendations made in the technical reports contained within Volume 2 of the EP, particularly options to improve the free drainage characteristics of the landform to manage the impacts of ponding. The updated Water Management Plan will need to be prepared to the satisfaction of the Secretary, prior to the commencement of secondary extraction of Longwall 105.

Should you have any questions about this matter, please contact Sara Wilson on 0414997714.

Yours sincerely



Howard Reed 22-1-16  
**Director Resource Assessments**  
as nominee for the Secretary