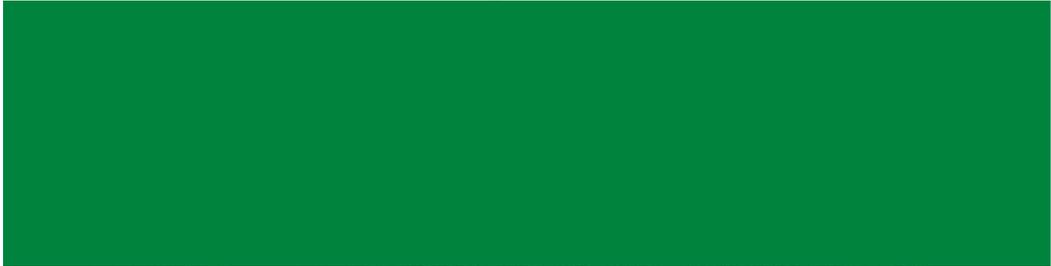


Stratford Extension Project Environmental Impact Statement



SECTION 3

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES



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3 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONSULTATION

This section describes the consultation undertaken prior to and during the preparation of this EIS, including a summary of the issues raised by stakeholders. Where relevant, references are provided to the EIS sections and/or specialist appendices where the issues are considered and addressed. Section 3.2 specifically identifies where the design of the Project has been amended in response to specific issues of concern or interest.

3.1.1 Objectives

The level of consultation undertaken during the preparation of this EIS is considered to be in accordance with the DGRs (Attachment 1) and is adequate and appropriate for a State Significant Development under Division 4.1 of Part 4 of the EP&A Act.

Open communications with stakeholders have been encouraged during consultation, consistent with the principle of Yancoal's corporate environment and community relations policy (Section 3.3.1).

Consultation conducted during the preparation of this EIS has provided the opportunity to identify issues of concern or interest to stakeholders and to consider these issues in this EIS.

3.1.2 Request for DGRs and Planning Focus Meeting

A request for DGRs and supporting information (GCL, 2011) was lodged with the DP&I in October 2011. A Planning Focus Meeting (PFM) for the Project was subsequently held on 9 November 2011. The objective of the PFM was to familiarise government stakeholders with the Project and to identify key issues that should be considered in the preparation of this EIS. The meeting included a site inspection and presentation on the Project and the proposed EIS studies.

The meeting was convened by the DP&I and attended by representatives from each of the following government agencies:

- OEH (and the EPA, formerly part of the OEH);
- NOW;

- DTIRIS – DRE;
- GSC;
- Great Lakes Council; and
- MidCoast Water.

The PFM covered a broad range of relevant issues, including the following:

- water management, including proposed water storages (Sections 2.12, 4.4.3 and 4.4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- waste rock geochemistry investigations (including PAF waste rock and CHPP rejects) and potential impacts (Sections 2.10, 2.11 and 4.5.3 and Appendix L);
- socio-economic impacts (Sections 4.16, 4.17 and 6.9 and Appendix P);
- coal mining logistics, including operating hours (Sections 2.7.1 and 3.2);
- potential groundwater impacts (Section 4.4.2 and Appendix A);
- potential surface water impacts (Section 4.5.2 and Appendix B);
- potential noise and blasting impacts (Sections 3.2 and 4.6.2 and Appendix C);
- potential air quality impacts (Section 4.7.2 and Appendix D);
- potential terrestrial flora and fauna impacts (Sections 4.9.2 and 4.10.2 and Appendices E and F);
- potential aquatic ecology impacts (Section 4.11.2 and Appendix G);
- potential heritage impacts (Sections 4.12.2 and 4.13.2 and Appendices I and J);
- potential road transport impacts (Section 4.14.2 and Appendix N);
- potential soil and land use impacts (Sections 4.3.2 and 5 and Appendix K); and
- proposed rehabilitation (Section 5).

In addition to the PFM, a range of State, Local and Federal Government agencies were consulted during the development of this EIS as described in Sections 3.1.3 to 3.1.5, respectively. Subsequent to the PFM, DGRs were issued by the DP&I on 14 December 2011.

3.1.3 State Government Agencies

Consultation with key NSW State Government agencies in relation to the Project commenced prior to submission of the request for DGRs and supporting information in October 2011. In addition, SCPL continues to consult with relevant State Government agencies on a regular basis in relation to the current mining operations at the Stratford Mining Complex.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

The DP&I is consulted regularly in relation to implementation of the existing planning consent requirements at the Stratford Mining Complex.

As described in Section 3.1.2, consultation specific to the Project was initiated with the DP&I during the request for DGRs and PFM.

A Project meeting was held with the DP&I on 7 December 2011 to discuss the proposed biodiversity offset strategy. Further meetings were held in May 2012 to discuss the Project prior to lodgement of the Development Application and EIS. Key issues discussed with the DP&I included:

- overview of the EIS studies and details of the specialist consultants contributing to the EIS (Sections 1.3 and 1.4);
- key findings of the noise and blasting assessment, air quality assessment and proposed mitigation measures (Sections 3.2, 4.6 and 4.7);
- groundwater and surface water assessment findings (Sections 4.4 and 4.5);
- the proposed biodiversity offset strategy for the Project (Sections 4.9.4, 4.10.4 and 4.11.4);
- Aboriginal cultural survey findings within and surrounding the Project area (Section 4.12); and
- the EIS consultation programme (this section).

Office of Environment and Heritage and Environment Protection Authority

In October 2011, the EPA was formed as a separate statutory entity from the OEH. A summary of consultation with the OEH and EPA are provided below.

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, the OEH participated in the PFM. A meeting was held with OEH and EPA representatives in Newcastle on 1 March 2012 to provide an overview of the Project and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- key findings of the flora and fauna surveys and assessments conducted within the Project area and the proposed biodiversity offset areas; and
- the proposed biodiversity offset strategy for the Project.

OEH and EPA representatives also participated in a site visit of the proposed biodiversity offset areas on 20 March 2012. A further meeting was held with the OEH on 14 May 2012. Key issues discussed with the OEH and EPA included:

- biodiversity values of the proposed offset areas including threatened species and habitats present in the area (Sections 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 and Appendices E, F and G);
- biodiversity assessment methodology (Sections 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11);
- flora and fauna survey methods and results (Sections 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11); and
- long-term security and management of the biodiversity offset areas (Sections 4.9.4, 4.10.4 and 4.11.4).

The EPA's comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 30 November 2011.

A meeting was held with the EPA on 11 April 2012 to discuss a number of key issues including:

- key findings of the noise and blasting and air quality assessments and proposed mitigation measures;
- surface water assessment findings; and
- Aboriginal cultural survey findings within and surrounding the Project area.

EPA representatives also participated in a site inspection on 4 May 2012. Key issues raised by the EPA at the meetings were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project DGRs documented in the letter dated 30 November 2011. In summary these included:

- biodiversity, native vegetation, threatened species and biodiversity offsets (Sections 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 and Appendices E, F and G);

- noise and blasting (Sections 3.2 and 4.6 and Appendix C);
- air quality and greenhouse gas emissions (Sections 4.7 and 4.8 and Appendix D);
- groundwater and surface water (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- Aboriginal cultural heritage (Section 4.12 and Appendix I);
- rehabilitation (Section 5);
- waste (Section 2.15);
- water and soils (Section 4.3); and
- actions that would be taken to avoid or mitigate impacts or compensate for unavoidable impacts (Sections 4, 5 and 7).

Consultation undertaken with the OEH during the preparation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment is summarised in Appendix I.

Department of Primary Industries

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), including the NOW and Forestry, Agriculture and Fisheries sections were consulted during the preparation of this EIS. Comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in correspondence from the DPI dated 5 December 2011. A briefing package was provided to the DPI on 30 April 2012 providing an update on the Project and an overview of key issues and assessment findings including:

- potential impacts on land resources and agricultural production (Section 4.3.2 and Appendix K);
- rehabilitation (Section 5); and
- geochemistry, including management of PAF materials and CHPP rejects (Sections 2.10.4, 2.11 and 4.5.3 and Appendix L).

Mapping data, including agricultural suitability mapping used for the Agricultural Assessment (Appendix K), was sourced from Catchments and Lands (Crown Lands Division). Consultation with the NOW is discussed below.

NSW Office of Water

The NOW has been consulted during the operation of the Stratford Mining Complex, specifically in relation to the existing groundwater licensing requirements (administered by the NOW) and disposal of excess water through on-site irrigation.

As discussed in Section 3.1.2, the NOW participated in the PFM. The NOW's comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 6 December 2011.

A meeting was held with the NOW in Newcastle on 12 December 2011 to provide a Project briefing, including background to the existing Stratford Mining Complex operations, and to discuss the scope and data upon which the groundwater and surface water assessments would be based. The meeting was attended by the groundwater and surface water specialists (i.e. Dr Noel Merrick and Mr Tony Marszalek, respectively). A follow-up meeting was also held with the NOW in Newcastle on 9 March 2012.

These meetings were used to discuss the following:

- existing surface water and meteorological monitoring programme (including results of surface water quality and stream flow monitoring);
- existing groundwater/geological data (i.e. exploration drill holes, regional geological model/mapping, NOW PINNEENA database, NOW stream flow monitoring sites, groundwater levels/data from the existing SCM and bore census results);
- regional groundwater model extent and calibration;
- groundwater model predictive groundwater inflows to the open cuts;
- interactions of the Avon North Open Cut and the Dog Trap Creek alluvium;
- key operations, activities and infrastructure of potential relevance to interactions with the Project and potential cumulative impacts;
- proposed approach to groundwater licensing under the *Water Sharing Plan for the Lower North Coast Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2009* (the Water Sharing Plan);
- design concepts for the up-catchment diversion works;
- harvestable right and assessment of licensing requirements;
- site water balance;
- potential impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems; and
- proposed Project water management approach.

The key issues discussed with the NOW included, but were not limited to:

- consideration of water licensing principles, water sharing plans and their licensing requirements (Attachment 5);
- geotechnical stability of the Avon North Open Cut proximal to Dog Trap Creek (i.e. potential for blasting to destabilise) (Section 2.7.2);
- design considerations for up-catchment diversion works (Section 2.12.2 and Appendix B);
- potential impacts on surface water and groundwater resources, adjacent licensed water users, groundwater dependent ecosystems and basic landholder rights (Sections 4.4.2 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- site water demands and reliability of water supply (Sections 2.12 and 2.14.5 and Appendix B);
- Project water management system including on-site irrigation and management of contained water storages such that there is no release to downstream watercourses (Sections 2.12.2 and 2.12.4 and Appendix B); and
- potential impacts on stream flow and geomorphology (Section 4.5.2 and Appendix B).

Division of Resources and Energy (within the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services)

Consultation with the DRE continues to be undertaken regularly in accordance with the requirements of existing mining leases and exploration tenements (administered by the DRE) for the Stratford Mining Complex.

SCPL presented the Conceptual Project Development Plan (CPDP) to representatives of the DRE (previously Industry and Investment NSW) on 30 September 2010. As described in Section 3.1.2, the DRE also participated in the PFM.

The DTIRIS comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 24 November 2011. In summary, the issues raised by the DTIRIS were in relation to:

- mining titles (Section 6);

- Project description information including:
 - mine layouts and scheduling (Section 2.4);
 - mine infrastructure (Section 2.14);
 - coal preparation and coal handling activities (Sections 2.8 and 2.11);
 - surface facilities and storage requirements (Sections 2.14); and
 - water management (Section 2.12);
- rehabilitation information including:
 - post-mining land use (Section 5.2.2);
 - rehabilitation objectives and domains (Section 5.2.3);
 - rehabilitation methodology (Section 5.3);
 - strategic rehabilitation completion criteria (Section 5.2.5); and
 - conceptual final landform design (Section 5.2.2).

A briefing package was sent to the DRE in March 2012 providing a summary of the status of the EIS, progressive mine development plans which had changed since the CPDP and describing how the DTIRIS input to the DGRs had been considered and addressed in the EIS.

Transport for NSW (including Centre for Transport Planning, Roads and Maritime Services)

The NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 10 November 2011. In summary, the issues raised by the RMS were in relation to:

- potential traffic impacts and the capacity of local and classified road networks (Section 4.14.2 and Appendix N);
- potential impacts on intersections (Section 4.14.2 and Appendix N); and
- identification of any necessary road network infrastructure upgrades (Section 4.14.3 and Appendix N).

SCPL provided a briefing package to the RMS on 7 March 2012 that included an update on the Project and a summary of the draft results and conclusions from the Road Transport Assessment (Appendix N).

The issues raised by the RMS have been considered during the preparation of this EIS and are specifically addressed in Appendix N.

NSW Heritage Council

The NSW Heritage Council's comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 22 November 2011.

In summary, the issues raised by the NSW Heritage Council were in relation to:

- identification and survey of items of non-Aboriginal heritage significance (Section 4.13.1 and Appendix J);
- potential impacts on items of non-Aboriginal heritage significance (Section 4.13.2 and Appendix J); and
- potential impacts on Aboriginal heritage sites and Aboriginal community consultation (Sections 4.12.2 and 3.1.7 and Appendix I).

The issues raised by the NSW Heritage Council have been considered during the preparation of this EIS and are specifically addressed in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Appendix I) and the Non-Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (Appendix J).

NSW Dams Safety Committee

The NSW Dams Safety Committee (DSC) initially indicated that they did not have any further comments to the Project DGRs (correspondence dated 18 November 2011) as there were currently no prescribed dams at the Stratford Mining Complex. The DSC subsequently provided more prescriptive requirements inferring potential prescribed dam status if the Stratford East Dam were to be expanded as part of the Project. As a consequence, the DGRs specifically listed the DSC as a State Government authority that must be consulted during the preparation of the EIS.

SCPL subsequently informed the DSC (in correspondence dated 21 March 2012) that following the results of the site water balance modelling (Appendix B), there was no longer a requirement to lift the Stratford East Dam as part of Project. Therefore, no further DSC requirements would be relevant to the proposed Project to be described in the EIS. In response, the DSC provided correspondence (letter dated 21 March 2012) confirming that:

SCPL will not have to consult further with the DSC in regard to this matter prior to submission of the EIS.

NSW Health

SCPL provided NSW Health (Hunter/New England area) with a letter and briefing package (including an overview of the air quality and noise and blasting assessment results) in April 2012. Of relevance to potential health issues, the dispersion (air quality) modelling and sleep disturbance (noise) modelling results were provided to NSW Health.

NSW Health responded to the briefing package in July 2012 requesting the consideration of hazards that can impact human health, including potential noise impacts (Section 4.6), air quality impacts (Section 4.7) and impacts on the availability of community infrastructure (Section 4.17).

3.1.4 Local Government Agencies

Gloucester Shire Council

As described in Section 3.1.2, the GSC participated in the PFM for the Project.

Consultation with the GSC also involved a prior presentation by SCPL to the Mayor, General Manager and Director of Planning at the GSC on 19 October 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Project and the proposed environmental assessment process and consultation programme.

The GSC provided correspondence to SCPL (letters dated 23 November 2011 and 19 March 2012) indicating that a resolution had been passed by GSC to oppose 24 hour mining operations due to potential noise impacts (Section 4.6.2 and Appendix C). Other key issues raised by the GSC included potential sleep disturbance and subsequent health issues, specifically for residents potentially adversely affected by the Avon North Open Cut and Stratford East Open Cut (Section 4.6 and Appendix C).

A further meeting was held with the GSC on 2 May 2012. The meeting was used to discuss the following:

- operational hours (Sections 2.7.1 and 3.2);
- potential noise and dust emission impacts (Sections 4.6 and 4.7 and Appendices C and D);
- air quality monitoring (Sections 4.7.3 and 7 and Appendix D);
- blasting and vibration (Section 4.6 and Appendix C);

- road realignments, closures and blasting notifications (Section 2.6.1, Section 2.7.4 and Section 4.6); and
- rehabilitation (Section 5).

In summary, the issues raised by the GSC were in relation to:

- 24 hour mining operations (Sections 2.7.1 and 3.2);
- noise and blasting impacts (Sections 3.2 and 4.6 and Appendix C);
- real-time noise monitoring (Sections 4.6.3 and 7 and Appendix C);
- employment generating effects of the Project (Section 4.17 and Appendix P);
- community infrastructure (Section 4.17 and Appendix P);
- potential interactions with other major projects and cumulative impacts (Section 2.5 and Section 4);
- potential impacts on tourism (Appendix P); and
- local infrastructure contributions (Sections 4.17 and 6.2.8).

The GSC is represented on the SCM Community Consultative Committee (CCC) (Section 3.3.2).

The GSC has also prepared a document titled '*Consideration of Exploration and Mining Applications – A New Approach*', which was presented to the NSW Government and a number of industry groups (GSC, 2011a). The views and issues raised by the GSC in this document have been considered where relevant in this EIS. The community survey undertaken by the GSC as part of the preparation of this document is described further in Section 3.1.7.

As the Project is located in the Gloucester LGA, consultation with the GSC has also been undertaken during the preparation of the EIS specialist studies, including notification as part of the Aboriginal community consultation (Section 3.1.7).

SCPL continues to pay community infrastructure contributions to the GSC in accordance with the Development Consents (DA 23-98/99 and DA 39-02-01).

Great Lakes Council

As described in Section 3.1.2, the Great Lakes Council participated in the PFM. During the PFM, the Great Lakes Council raised the issue of whether the Project included any surface development or mining activities within the Karuah River Catchment.

The Project does not include any surface development or mining activities within the Karuah River Catchment (Appendix B).

The Great Lakes Council's comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 30 November 2011. In summary, the issues raised by the Great Lakes Council were in relation to:

- potential traffic impacts, including additional heavy vehicles in the Great Lakes Council area (Section 4.14.2 and Appendix N); and
- local infrastructure contributions (Sections 4.17 and 6.2.8).

Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority

The Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority's (CMA's) specific input to the Project DGRs was documented in correspondence dated 1 December 2011. A meeting was held with the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA on 12 April 2012. Key issues discussed with the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA included:

- proposed revegetation (Sections 4.9 and 5); and
- biodiversity offset measures, including long-term security (Sections 4.9.4, 4.10.4 and 4.11.4).

The Hunter-Central Rivers CMA was generally supportive of the biodiversity offsets strategy for the Project and its contribution to restoring linkages within an OEH recognised climate change corridor (Section 4.9.4).

The Hunter-Central Rivers CMA was also consulted as part of the Aboriginal community consultation (Section 3.1.7).

Contribution of the Project consistency with relevant guiding principles of the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Authority Plan is provided in Attachment 6.

3.1.5 Federal Government Agencies

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

A meeting with Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) was held on 21 October 2011 to discuss the Project and Referral of the Project under the EPBC Act. SCPL subsequently lodged a Referral under the EPBC Act with SEWPaC on 3 November 2011. On 5 December 2011, a delegate of the Commonwealth Minister declared the Project to be a 'controlled action' for the purposes of the EPBC Act, due to potential impacts on the following controlling provisions under Part 3 of the EPBC Act:

- listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A of the EPBC Act); and
- listed migratory species (sections 20 and 20A of the EPBC Act).

The delegate of the Commonwealth Minister also determined on 5 December 2011 that the proposed action is to be assessed by accredited assessment under the EP&A Act pursuant to section 87(4) of the EPBC Act.

SEWPaC's specific input to the Project DGRs was provided on 14 December 2011. A copy of SEWPaC's requirements is provided in Appendix H of this EIS. Information about the controlled action and its relevant impacts and matters (as outlined in Schedule 4 of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations, 2000* [EPBC Regulations]) is provided in Appendix H along with references to where the applicable content is provided in this EIS.

A meeting to discuss the findings of the environmental impact assessments relevant to the controlled action decision (i.e. listed threatened and migratory species under the EPBC Act) and the proposed biodiversity offset strategy was subsequently held with SEWPaC on 15 March 2012. Key issues raised by SEWPaC during the meeting included:

- threatened species mitigation strategies for the New Holland Mouse (Section 4.10.3);
- threatened species records and potential habitat mapping (Sections 4.9 and 4.10); and
- long-term security of proposed biodiversity offset areas (Sections 4.9.4, 4.10.4 and 4.11.4).

3.1.6 Infrastructure Owners, Service Providers and Other Resource Companies

TransGrid

TransGrid owns and maintains a 132 kV power line that runs parallel to the eastern extent of the Stratford Mining Complex, which would require relocation for the Project (Section 2.6.2 and Figure 2-1). TransGrid's specific input to the Project DGRs was documented in correspondence dated 30 November 2011.

SCPL initially met with TransGrid on 5 December 2011 to provide background information regarding the Project and to discuss the conceptual relocation design for the power line. Representatives of TransGrid undertook a site inspection on 6 December 2011. SCPL provided further correspondence (letter dated 16 January 2012) to TransGrid regarding the required relocation works (including timing) for the 132 kV power line.

SCPL commenced formal discussions and requirements for easement agreements during a workshop with TransGrid in relation to the proposed relocation on 25 May 2012. No response had been received by SCPL at the time of writing this EIS.

MidCoast Water

A meeting was held with MidCoast Water on 12 December 2011 to provide a Project briefing, including background to the existing Stratford Mining Complex operations, and to discuss the scope and data upon which the groundwater and surface water assessments would be based. A follow-up meeting was held on 9 March 2012.

The key issues discussed with MidCoast Water included:

- potential surface water impacts, particularly surface water quality impacts to Avondale Creek and Dog Trap Creek (Section 4.5.2 and Appendix B);
- site water balance and water management, including the "no contained water storage overflow" objective (Section 4.5 and Appendix B);
- erosion and sediment control (Sections 4.3 and 4.5 and Appendix B); and
- potential interactions with the AGL Gloucester Gas Project (Section 2.5).

MidCoast Water's specific input to the Project DGRs was documented in correspondence dated 1 December 2011.

Australian Rail Track Corporation

The ARTC is the authority responsible for the management of rail property relevant to the Project. SCPL provided a letter to the ARTC on 19 March 2012 including information on the Project with a request to confirm the availability of an additional peak rail path and ongoing rail movements for the Project. The ARTC responded to SCPL (letter dated 16 April 2012) confirming that:

...given the current and planned network configuration, ARTC expects that there would be options for up to 6 paths per day to be available to accommodate peak demand.

RailCorp

The ARTC is the authority responsible for the management of rail property relevant to the Project, however, the DGRs required SCPL to consult with downstream coal chain operators (including RailCorp) regarding the Project.

SCPL provided RailCorp with a letter and briefing package regarding the Project (including supporting information and community newsletter) in April 2012.

As RailCorp is also a member of Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator Limited, no further consultation was undertaken with RailCorp based on the consultation undertaken with the ARTC.

Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator Limited

The DGRs required SCPL to consult with downstream coal chain operators (including Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator Limited) regarding the Project. SCPL provided a letter and Project briefing package to Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator Limited on 19 March 2012, including information on the Project with a request to confirm the availability of an additional peak rail path and ongoing rail movements for the Project. No further consultation was undertaken with Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator Limited based on the response received from the ARTC.

Newcastle Port Corporation

SCPL provided a letter to the Newcastle Port Corporation (NPC) on 19 March 2012 including information on the Project with a request to confirm the availability of an additional peak rail path and ongoing rail and port movements for the Project.

The NPC responded to SCPL (letter dated 4 April 2012) advising that the:

NPC has no concerns about the capacity of the port to handle the proposed expansion anticipated by the project.

Telstra

The Project would require relocation of two sections of an existing Telstra phone line that service residents to the northeast of the Project (Section 2.6.6). SCPL has engaged GW Engineers Australia Pty Limited to co-ordinate an options assessment of the proposed phone line relocations in consultation with Telstra.

AGL Gloucester LE Pty Ltd

SCPL has regularly consulted with AGL regarding the potential interactions between the Project and regional CSG development (the AGL Gloucester Gas Project). SCPL also obtained and incorporated relevant data and information made available to the public by AGL for the conceptual groundwater model (Section 4.4.2). At the time of writing, AGL and SCPL are in the process of negotiating a co-operation agreement with respect to areas where the two operations are expected to interact (Section 6.4.1).

Gloucester Resources Limited

SCPL obtained and incorporated relevant data and information made available to the public by GRL for the mine plans in the numerical groundwater model (Section 4.4.2). Meteorological data was also made available by GRL for the EIS (Section 4.2.1).

3.1.7 Public Consultation

Local Community and Affected Landholders

During the preparation of this EIS, Project-specific newsletters were produced by SCPL in November 2011, February 2012 and May 2012 and distributed to inform the local community of the Project, and to provide updates on the progress of the EIS and specialist studies.

The Project newsletters were distributed to:

- local residents in Stratford and Craven;
- the DCM and SCM CCCs;
- the GSC; and
- the broader community through placement on the SCPL website (Section 3.3.3).

Copies of the Project newsletters are provided in Attachment 4.

Community information sessions for the Project were held on 7 and 8 March 2012 at the Stratford Hall. Notification of the community information sessions was provided via the Project newsletters.

The community information sessions provided members of the local community with the opportunity to raise any specific questions or issues of concern relating to the Project with SCPL representatives and the specialists preparing the EIS studies.

Issues raised by members of the local community during the Project community information sessions relevant to the EIS included, but were not limited to:

- 24 hour mining operations (Sections 2.7.1 and 3.2);
- employment generating effects of the Project (Section 4.17 and Appendix P);
- potential noise, blasting and air quality impacts on residents of Stratford (Sections 3.2, 4.6 and 4.7 and Appendices C and D);
- access to Rural Fire Service fire trails (Section 2.6.5);
- anticipated demand on community infrastructure resulting from the Project and community development contributions (Section 4.17 and Appendix P); and
- potential impacts of the Project on surface water quality (Section 4.5.2 and Appendix B).

In addition, SCPL continues to liaise with the local community through the established SCM CCC (Section 3.3.2). The distribution of information to the local community via the SCM CCC aligns with the principle of Yancoal's corporate environment and community relations policy (Section 3.3.1).

At the SCM CCC meeting held on 25 October 2011, SCPL presented an overview of the Project and described the key milestones in the planning and assessment process.

At subsequent SCM CCC meetings held on 1 December 2011, 29 February 2012 and 20 June 2012, SCPL provided updates on the EIS and specialist studies and described the refinements to the Project since the request for DGRs and supporting information was lodged in October 2011. The SCM CCC members also participated in a site visit on 29 February 2012.

Key issues discussed with the SCM CCC relevant to the EIS included:

- 24 hour mining operations (Sections 2.7.1 and 3.2);
- potential noise and blasting impacts and mitigation measures (Sections 3.2 and 4.6 and Appendix C);
- community sponsorships and support programmes (Section 3.3.4);
- additional rail movements and rail operating times (Section 2.9);
- rehabilitation and land management (Section 5); and
- community engagement during the assessment/approval process (this section).

SCPL staff and representatives have also undertaken one-on-one meetings with potentially affected landholders regarding the Project.

Aboriginal Community

Aboriginal community consultation was undertaken in accordance with OEH's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010* (DECCW, 2010a) and the *Draft Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation* (DEC, 2005b). In accordance with these guidelines, SCPL notified the following parties regarding the Project:

- Coffs Harbour OEH Environment Protection and Regulation, Country, Culture and Heritage Group Office (OEH EPRG Coffs Harbour);
- Office of the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983*;
- National Native Title Tribunal;
- Native Title Services Corporation Limited (NTS Corp);
- GSC;
- Hunter-Central Rivers CMA;
- Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC); and
- Forster LALC.

In addition to the written notifications, a Public Notice was placed in the Gloucester Advocate, Great Lakes Advocate and Dungog Chronicle (July 2011) seeking registrations from interested Aboriginal parties. The notice invited Aboriginal persons or groups who wished to be consulted in relation to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment for the Project to contact SCPL.

Subsequent to the above, the following Aboriginal parties/groups registered their interest in being involved in the consultation process:

- Cultural Consulting Services;
- Do-Wa-Kee Cultural & Heritage Surveys;
- Forster LALC;
- Gloucester Worimi First People;
- Karuah LALC;
- Maaingal Group Worimi Nation; and
- Mookibakh Aboriginal Traditional Owners.

All stakeholders who registered were invited to participate in the Aboriginal heritage assessment.

A detailed description of the consultation undertaken with the registered Aboriginal parties/groups during the preparation of this EIS is provided in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Appendix I) and Section 4.12.

Community Survey

In August and September 2011, the GSC completed a community survey to document local community perceptions in regards to the social impacts of mining and exploration within the greater Gloucester area (GSC, 2011b). Councillors from the GSC drew upon the information provided by the wider community and developed the document titled '*Consideration of Exploration and Mining Applications – A New Approach*', which was presented to the NSW Government and a number of industry groups (GSC, 2011a). The GSC also held a community forum on 25 October 2011 to advise the results of the survey. The views and issues raised by the local community at the forum have been considered where relevant in this EIS.

The community survey sought comments on a number of key issues, including:

- social impacts of mining on the community;
- the importance of noise, general health effects, water security and air quality impacts attributable to mining;
- land acquisition and compensation for mining-related social impacts;
- offset requirements for mining projects;
- compatibility of mining activities with agriculture and/or scenic/environmental areas; and
- socio-economic assessment requirements for mining applications.

A total of 314 participants completed the survey, the majority of which had lived in the Gloucester LGA for more than 20 years (GSC, 2011b). The survey results indicated that the social impact of exploration and mining activities on the community was perceived to be very high, with the analysis of comments indicating that impacts were perceived to be mostly negative in nature (GSC, 2011b).

Approximately 25% of respondents identified economic benefit as one of the social impacts associated with mining and exploration activities.

The majority of respondents did not consider that agriculture and mining/exploration could co-exist, and were opposed to mining or exploration activities occurring in scenic or environmental protection areas (GSC, 2011b). The majority of respondents rated the importance of impacts on water security, air quality and general health attributable to mining/exploration as very high. The importance of noise impact issues attributable to exploration and mining activities was also rated as very high, although approximately one third of respondents indicated that noise impact issues were associated with other noise sources, not just mining (GSC, 2011b).

The majority of respondents agreed that mining/exploration companies should be required to acquire land or pay compensation for mining related social impacts and should also undertake an independent economic assessment of mining that considers existing economic activity as well as social, environmental and community impacts (GSC, 2011b).

Staff and Contractors

Approximately 125 people (including Yancoal staff and on-site contractor's personnel) are currently employed at the Stratford Mining Complex. In addition to the mechanisms described in Section 3.3, a number of meetings and briefings for employees have been conducted during the preparation of this EIS.

3.2 PROJECT DESIGN AMENDMENTS IN RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED

Key issues of concern raised during the consultation process that resulted in amendments to the Project design are summarised below. Alternatives to the Project are also discussed in Section 6.9.2.

Noise and 24 Hour Mining Operations

The Project design was amended as follows to address concerns raised over potential noise impacts and 24 hour mining operations:

- BRNOC – no proposed change to mining operation hours (7.00 am to 7.00 pm);
- Roseville West Pit Extension – reduction in mining operation hours (from 7.00 am to 10.00 pm to 7.00 am to 6.00 pm);
- introduction of extra quiet (XQ) fleet equipment;
- maximisation of in-pit waste rock emplacement opportunities; and
- installation of haul road and rail loop acoustic bunding.

Air Quality

The Project design was amended as follows to address concerns raised over potential air quality impacts on surrounding landholders:

- maximisation of haul road and waste rock emplacement watering opportunities;
- minimisation of waste rock haulage distances and active disturbance areas through mine scheduling and design; and
- dust suppression on active waste rock emplacements, in addition to dust suppression on haul roads and irrigation on rehabilitated and topsoiled areas.

3.3 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT

3.3.1 Environment and Community Relations Policy

Yancoal's corporate environment and community relations policy states:

Yancoal accepts its responsibility to conduct its operation in a lawful and environmentally sound manner and to work in consultation with the community and other stakeholders.

We will:

- *Identify, assess and manage potential environmental aspects, impacts and community risks.*
- *Implement and validate an effective documented environment and community relations management system.*

- *Strive for continual improvement in environmental performance.*
- *Provide the resources and training necessary to achieve our goal.*
- *Deliver outcomes that meet or exceed our licenses and approvals.*
- *Comply with applicable legislation and regulations.*
- *Foster positive relationships with regulatory agencies and community representatives.*
- *Be accountable for our actions.*

We will strive for excellence in environmental management and in the establishment of effective and sustainable community relationships.

3.3.2 Community Consultative Committee

The CCC is established and operates in accordance with the existing Development Consents (DA 23-98/99 and DA 39-02-01) and exploration tenement (EL 6904).

The CCC meets quarterly and the meeting minutes are available publicly on the SCPL website. Members of the CCC were selected based on nominations from community representatives and other stakeholders and includes local residents, GSC and Yancoal representatives.

As described in Section 3.1.7, during the preparation of this EIS, briefings on the status and progress of the Project were provided and discussed with the members of the CCC.

3.3.3 Website and Community Hotline

SCPL maintains a website within the Yancoal web domain (www.yancoalcoal.com.au) for the general public to keep up to date with the operations at the Stratford Mining Complex.

The web domain is a significant source of information including:

- mine operations;
- community initiatives (including community complaints line) and environmental management;
- CCC meeting minutes;
- investor details;
- career opportunities; and
- contact details.

The website provides information on the environmental management and performance of the Stratford Mining Complex, including:

- environmental management plans;
- independent environmental audits;
- annual reviews;
- environmental monitoring results;
- SCM CCC meeting minutes; and
- complaints registers.

Yancoal maintains a dedicated community hotline (1300 658 239) for residents to contact a Yancoal representative with any questions or concerns they may have regarding Yancoal operations in the Gloucester Basin, including the Stratford Mining Complex.

3.3.4 Community Programmes and Sponsorships

SCPL continues to support the local community through sponsorships of community organisations and direct community contribution payments to the GSC. SCPL plays an active role in local communities through financial contributions to regional events and facilities.

Past recipients of financial contributions have included:

- Gloucester Country Club Limited;
- Gloucester Junior Cricket Association Inc.;
- Gloucester Men's Bowling Club;
- Stroud Rodeo Association;
- Gloucester Junior Show;
- Gloucester High School;
- Gloucester Little Athletics;
- Dungog Agricultural, Horticultural & Pastoral (AH&P) Association;
- Gloucester AH&P Association Inc.;
- Gloucester Blue Light;
- St Josephs Primary School;
- Gloucester Junior Rodeo;
- Gloucester Magpies Junior Rugby League Inc.;
- Dungog Pony Club;
- Dungog Historical Society Inc.;
- Gloucester Soccer Club Inc.;
- Gloucester District Tennis Association;
- Stroud Show Association;
- Gloucester Rugby Union Club;

- Williams Valley Wombats Rugby League Football Club;
- Gloucester Bowling Club Cricket Team;
- Gloucester Public School;
- Stroud Rugby League Football Club Inc.;
- Barrington Public School Parents and Citizens (P&C) Association;
- Gloucester Shakespeare On Avon Festival;
- Gloucester Returned Services League Sub-Branch;
- Apex Club of Gloucester;
- Stroud Road Community Hall & Progress Association Inc.;
- Gloucester Branch Australian Stock Horse Society Youth Committee;
- Stroud International Brick-Throwing Committee;
- Gloucester Basketball Association;
- Gloucester Lions Club;
- Stroud Men's Shed Inc.;
- Stroud Cricket Club;
- Gloucester Bowling Club Fishing & Social Club;
- Dungog & District Netball Association;
- Gloucester Pony Club;
- Gloucester Pre School Inc.;
- Gloucester Mountain Man Tri Challenge; and
- Rural Fire Service – NSW.

Other community groups that have received funding assistance include:

- Avon Valley Archers;
- Booral Public School;
- The Bucketts Way Neighbourhood Group Inc.;
- Dungog National Servicemen's Association;
- Gloucester Tourist Office;
- GSC Hillcrest Appeal;
- Stratford Public School; and
- Stroud Public School P&C Association.

SCPL would continue to provide funding contributions to community programmes and groups during the life of the Project.

3.3.5 Community Support Program

The Community Support Program commenced in February 2012. The programme offers funding assistance to a wide range of community groups and projects in the Lower Hunter and Gloucester Basin.

The aim of the Community Support Program is to help benefit a wider range of community needs such as education, environment, health, infrastructure projects, arts, leisure and research.

Local community groups are invited to submit applications throughout the year, with applications closing on 31 March and 30 September of each year.

3.3.6 Public Reporting

In accordance with the Development Consents (DA 23-98/99 and DA 39-02-01), SCPL produces an Annual Review (previously referred as Annual Environmental Management Reports [AEMRs]) to also review the environmental performance of the development. Copies of historical AEMRs are also available on the SCPL website (Section 3.3.3).

Yancoal also publishes Annual and Quarterly Reports for investors which are made available within the Yancoal web domain (www.yancoal.com.au).

Yancoal is registered on the National Greenhouse and Energy Register (established under section 16 of the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act, 2007* [NGER Act]), which is publicly available on the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE) website (www.climatechange.gov.au). Yancoal's reporting requirements under the NGER Act are described in Sections 4.8 and 6.9.

GCL and Yancoal are also registered participants of the Commonwealth Government's Energy Efficiency Opportunities (EEO) program (www.ret.gov.au/energy/efficiency/eeo), which requires corporations to identify, evaluate and report publicly on cost effective energy savings opportunities.

Information relevant to the Stratford Mining Complex EPLs (EPL 5161 and 11745) is available via a public register on the EPA's website (www.environment.nsw.gov.au).

SCPL also provides annual National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) reports to the OEHL (and now also the EPA). Emissions data for the Stratford Mining Complex is publicly available on the Federal Government's NPI website (www.npi.gov.au) and is also reported in the Annual Reviews.

3.3.7 Contractors and Suppliers

Local contractors engaged at the existing Stratford Mining Complex include:

- Ditchfield Contracting Pty Ltd;
- Trevor Harris Contracting; and
- Trellis Earthworks.

Wherever possible, SCPL endeavours to utilise the services of local providers. Approval of the Project would allow SCPL to continue to support local suppliers and contractors to the Stratford Mining Complex, providing additional security and longevity of employment in the region.