



Ms Carolyn McNally  
Secretary  
Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

14 December 2017

Dear Ms McNally

**Determination of Modification Application  
Stratford Extension Project MOD 1 (SSD 4966 MOD 1)**

Thank you for your Department's letter received on 23 October 2017 referring the above modification application to the Planning Assessment Commission for determination under Ministerial delegation of 14 September 2011. Ms Lynelle Briggs AO, Mr John Hann and Dr Peter Williams constituted the Commission to determine the application.

Yancoal (the applicant) has lodged a modification application to amend the development consent (SSD 4966) of their Stratford Extension Project at their Stratford Mining Complex to enable it to receive, process and dispatch 2 million tonnes of run-of-mine (ROM) coal from the Rocky Hill Coal project and transport processed coal product by rail to the Port of Newcastle.

The Rocky Hill Coal project (SSD 5156) proposes to develop a new open cut coal mine approximately nine kilometres north of the Stratford Mining Complex. Sized ROM coal from this project would be transported via a new haul road to the Stratford Mining Complex, to utilise its coal handling processing plant and rail load out infrastructure. The modification application seeks to extend the operational life span of the Stratford Mining Complex to coincide with the expected operational life of the Rocky Hill Coal project. The Department of Planning and Environment has assessed this modification application concurrently with the Rocky Hill Coal project, as the Department states that the Rocky Hill project cannot proceed without the Stratford Extension Project modification also being granted.

In the circumstances, this report should be read together with the Commission's determination report on the Rocky Hill Coal project.

**Commission's Consideration**

The Commission has considered carefully the Department's assessment report, all of the information provided by the applicant, recommendations from government agencies, submissions from the public and section 96 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The Commission held a public meeting at the Gloucester Soldiers Club on 14 and 15 November 2017 to hear the public's views on this proposal and the Rocky Hill proposal. At the public meeting, the Commission heard concerns about the impact of the applicant's proposal to transport sized ROM coal to the Stratford Mining Complex via a haul road for processing and dispatch of product coal by rail to the Port of Newcastle. These concerns related to the impact of the haul road on Aboriginal heritage, noise and air quality.

The Department's assessment report identified noise, air quality, biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, and flooding and floodplain management to be the key impacts associated with the modification proposal.

The Department states that the modifications sought to the Stratford Extension Project do not exceed the existing approved limits for noise, air quality, or processing and transport of coal products.

In addition, the Department concludes that the potential noise, dust, flooding and ecological impacts have been appropriately addressed by the applicant and notes the requirement for management plans for air quality, blasting, noise and vibration, biodiversity, water and Aboriginal cultural heritage impacts, should the modification be approved.

The Commission finds that any impact from the modification would be able to be appropriately managed.

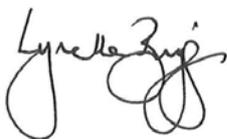
However, the Commission finds that:

- the key changes associated with the modification, which are the
  - extension of internal haul roads,
  - transport of run-of-mine coal,
  - extension of run-of-mine coal pad,
  - extension of heavy vehicle parking,
  - extension of mine life, and
  - the processing of the coal,would have no critical purpose or utility outside of the Rocky Hill Coal project;
- the modification forms an essential operational part of the Rocky Hill Coal project;
- any determination of the Stratford Extension Project should be linked to the determination of the Rocky Hill Coal project; and
- as the Rocky Hill Coal project was refused consent on 14 December 2017, then the Stratford Extension Project should also be refused.

### Commission Determination

The Commission has carefully considered the proposal, the Department's assessment of the proposal and their recommendation. For the reasons set out above, the Commission accepts the Department's recommendation that this proposal be refused.

The Commission has determined to refuse consent to the modification application subject to the reasons set out in the instrument of refusal.



**Ms Lynelle Briggs AO (Chair)**  
**Member of the Commission**



**Mr John Hann**  
**Member of the Commission**



**Dr Peter Williams**  
**Member of the Commission**

cc. The Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP  
Minister for Planning  
GPO Box 5341  
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