

**This meeting is part of the review process.**

**Meeting note taken by:** Robert Bisley

**Date:** 25 May 2018

**Time:** 9:00am

**Project:** Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project (SSD 6300)

**Meeting Place:** Independent Planning Commission office. Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street, Sydney. Metropolitan Room.

**Attendees:**

**Commission Members:**

Mary O'Kane (Panel Chair), Andrew Hutton, Tony Pearson

**Commission Staff:**

Robert Bisley (Senior Planning Officer), Anna Summerhayes (Legal counsel – observing)

**Applicant:**

John Richards, Chairman, The Bloomfield Group (TBG); Brett Lewis, Managing Director/CEO, TBG; Geoff Moore, Chief Development Officer, TBG; Chris Knight, Environmental Manager, TBG; Garry Bailey, General Manager Mining Development, TBG; Simon Murphy, Project Manager, AECOM; Aleks Todoroski, Director, Todoroski Air Sciences; Tony Welbourne, Director, Global Acoustics

**Meeting Purpose:**

For the applicant to brief the Commission on the Rix's Creek Continuation of Mining Project (SSD 6300).

The Chair opened the meeting, outlining how the Commission was refining and introducing new process because of both legislative changes and a recent internal review of procedures. Of most relevance to this project would be the Department and applicant both addressing the Public Hearing; Counsel Assisting to provide support to the Commission panel in the running of the Public Hearing and lastly the invitation of key community groups to the site inspection.

The following matters were discussed in the project briefing with the applicant:

- The applicant presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission summarising the project's relevant issues. The presentation addressed the following:
  - Project background:
    - A history of the operations at the Bloomfield, Rix's Creek, Rix's Creek North and Integra mines and an outline of the historic development of Rix's Creek mine. The development of this application coincided with the applicant's purchase of Integra operations in 2015.
    - A summary of the consent order procedures, how the applicant breached the original consent and the agreed Court's consent orders issued in August 2017.
    - The applicant prepared a revised Response to Submissions following the agreed Court's consent orders.
    - The current operations produce 60% metallurgical coal and 40% thermal coal.
    - The current development application is approaching the exhaustion of the remaining resources within the release area.
  - Many of the management plans for Rix's Creek and Rix's Creek North have been integrated across the sites which are now managed as a complex, however they operate under two different instruments of consent.
  - The applicant outlined that the property acquisition requirements have been met due to the current Rix's Creek mining operation and the applicant accepts the Department's proposed conditions relating to acquisition under the proposed modification.

- The applicant spoke to Biodiversity issues:
  - The applicant identified that 5,808 credits are required to offset the application.
  - The applicant stated that delivering the required credits can be achieved through creating land-based offset sites with suitable biodiversity values, paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund and purchasing suitable credits on the market.
  - The applicant is currently revisiting the federal species requirements under the EPBC Act – It isn't foreseen that this will changing any aspect of the project.
  - The applicant identified that it had commenced negotiations to purchase a property as a land-based offset.
- The applicant spoke to Groundwater issues:
  - The depth of the mining project will not intersect with the alluvial groundwater.
  - Any groundwater impacts will be contained within the lease.
- The applicant spoke to Surface water issues:
  - Levee banks will be prepared to remove the risk of flooding.
  - Concerns were raised to the applicant about the project's impact on steam water quality.
- The applicant stated that Pit 3 has been designed so the final land form can withstand a 100-year Annual Recurrence Interval event.
- The applicant explored the integration of out of pit emplacement into pit 3 backfill, however due to geotechnical constraints, safety issues and the elevation of the site, the emplacement was not considered as it increased environmental impacts on sensitive receivers.
- The applicant is currently negotiating a draft Voluntary Planning Agreement with Singleton Council.
- The applicant stated that stakeholder consultation has been undertaken through the establishment of a Rix's Creek Community Consultative Committee, opening a shop front drop-in premises on Singleton's main street and talking directly to impacted residents.
- An economic assessment was undertaken by the applicant which compared incremental costs vs incremental benefits, using coal prices identified by Macquarie Bank. The applicant acknowledged differences between its economic assessment and the one prepared by the Department.
- The applicant spoke to acoustic impacts:
  - The applicant's consultant stated that they have undertaken extensive noise modelling and that it incorporates best practice noise reduction techniques into its current operations.
  - The applicant's consultant identified that the Department predicted that noise received at sensitive receivers will be 2-5dbA lower than what Rix's Creek historically produced.
  - The applicant identified that the current operations receive about 20 noise complaints a year, predominantly sourced from the Northern residents of Singleton. The applicant highlighted that the proposed mining area and out of pit emplacement moves away from Singleton, reducing the impact on the highest concentration of sensitive receivers.
- The applicant spoke to Air quality issues:
  - The applicant's consultant stated that Receiver 1 is located close to the mine and will be heavily impacted by the project. The applicant identified that it currently has a negotiated agreement with Receiver 1.
  - The applicant identified that there will be seven other receivers that register exceedances above the annual average PM<sub>10</sub> Cumulative. However, the exceedances are due to the cumulative impacts of the application and other mines

within the region and are not related to the proposal.

- The applicant stated that acquisition rights are available for the impacted receivers.
- The applicant's consultant indicated that its analysis took into account planned (but not currently approved) mines/expansions in its cumulative assessment

The Chair noted that she and the applicant's Mr Richards overlapped briefly during a previous role at Coal Innovation NSW.

**Documents:**

The applicant presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Commission at the meeting.

**Outcomes/Agreed Actions:**

The applicant agreed to provide the Commission with the following additional documentation:

- A copy of the PowerPoint presentation;
- A map of all properties to be compulsory acquired;
- The last 2-3 community newsletters, advertisements prepared by the applicant that were published within local newspapers;
- Information on the historical coke oven facilities and process;
- Details of the Annual Average PM<sub>2.5</sub> Cumulative assessment; and
- The proposed mine schedule showing the mining and rehabilitation areas at key intervals through the life of the mine.

**Meeting closed at:** 10:45am