From: [redacted]
To: PAC Enquiries Mailbox
Cc: [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]
Subject: Springvale Mine Water plant - background on mine water volumes
Date: Wednesday, 24 May 2017 4:26:49 PM

Could you please bring the following Background Statement on Mine Water to the attention of Commissioner David Johnson.

In 2006 Springvale mine established the Springvale Delta Water Transfer Scheme (SDWTS) to remove mine water from the headwaters of the Wolgan River catchment, where it had contributed to the death of two nationally endangered upland swamps. The mine water was transferred to the Coxs River catchment via Licenced Discharge Point 009 (LDP009) and then Sawyers Swamp Creek.

The Environmental Protection Licence 3607 (EPL 3607) permits a mine water discharge of 30ML/day from LDP009. Centennial Coal is seeking a modification to its current mine consent to allow this discharge to continue for two more years while it constructs a mine water transfer, treatment and reuse scheme near Mt Piper Power Plant.

The underground mine workings of the Springvale mine area hydraulically connected to the Angus Place Mine and the SDWTS is designed to service both these mines. Angus Place Mine is in care and maintenance and also managed by Centennial Coal.

In addition under EPL 3607 Springvale LDP001 can discharge mine water up to 10ML/day. The Angus Place Mine LDP001 under ELP 467 can also discharge 2ML/day of mine water.

Under these EPL pollution licences the maximum amount of mine water that Angus Place and Springvale mines can legally discharge is 42ML/day.

Centennial Coal proposed mine water treatment project (SSD7592) is being determined by the Planning Assessment Commission. Initially the transfer pipeline for this proposed treatment plant had a capacity of 36ML/day but the Department of Planning and Environment required the pipeline to be increased to a 42ML/day capacity.

Further, this current total of mine water approximates the average daily water demand of the Mt Piper Power Plant. So the proposal is designed to be a zero discharge system with an offline storage dam at Thompsons Creek to store treated mine water till needed by the power plant. There are to be no discharges from the proposed plant.

This project SSD7592 also seeks consent for a new 36ML/day pipeline to take mine water off Newnes Plateau. This pipeline will duplicate the current 30ML/day SDWTS pipeline.

So the maximum capacity of the SDWTS off Newnes Plateau will become 66ML/day if SSD7592 is approved as proposed, even though the transfer pipeline to the water treatment plant will be sized to the 42ML/day transfer pipeline.

The undertakings to divert all the mine water from Angus Place and Springvale to the transfer pipeline could be meaningless unless approval requires Springvale LDP001 and Angus Place LDP001 flows to be accommodated, a maximum of 12ML/day of mine water.

Approval of SSD7592 and the existing development consent can allow up to 78ML/day of mine water to be produced by these mines, with only 42ML/day treated at the treatment plant. The remaining mine water permitted, up to 36ML/day, can be legally discharged via Springvale LDP009 and LDP001 and Angus Place LDP001.

The environmental assessment and review process needs to comprehend that the project is vastly undersized. From the evidence published in various environmental impact statements, the proposed mine water treatment project SSD7592 is half the size required to treat all the mine water that can be legally producedif SDWTS is allowed to be duplicated.

The volumes of mine water generated by these two mines are very large. These are quite possibly the wettest underground coal mines in the world and the mine water is discharged into our drinking water catchment.

Further, these mine water discharges will not cease when coal mining ceases. The legacy of mine water pollution from Angus Place and Springvale will without end or treatment.

Yours faithfully,

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