



COMMISSION FINDS MERIT IN EXPANDING RIX'S CREEK MINE BUT RECOMMENDS MORE INFORMATION ON IMPACTS NEEDED

31 August 2018

A review by the state's Independent Planning Commission has found the proposed expansion of Bloomfield Collieries Limited's Rix's Creek open cut mine in the state's Hunter Valley has merit. However further improvements need to be explored particularly in relation to rehabilitation and final landform, both important issues raised by the community in multiple forums.

The proponent is seeking to expand the open cut coal mine and continue operations there until 2038. It's estimated an additional 25 million tonnes of product coal, with royalties of almost \$100 million, would be recovered over that period.

The Commission was asked by the Minister for Planning last December 2017 to examine the proposed modifications to the mine, 5km northwest of Singleton. The Department of Planning and Environment referred the application to the Commission in May 2018 for a review with public hearing, as requested by the Minister for Planning.

Commission Chair, Professor Mary O'Kane AC, and two other Commission Members, Mr Andrew Hutton and Mr Tony Pearson, undertook the review.

As part of its review, the Commission examined the Environmental Impact Statement, Response to Submissions and all other documentation relating to the project.

The commission met with the applicant, Department of Planning and Environment and Council, held a public hearing in Singleton to listen to community views, and visited the mine site and surrounding areas. It received and carefully considered public submissions. It also commissioned two separate independent reports.

The Commission has today released the final report from its review which identifies key issues which require more information or consultation before a full and thorough assessment of the project can be completed:

- air quality;
- noise and blasting;
- rehabilitation and mine closure planning;
- final void and final landform;
- water – surface, groundwater and void water;
- biodiversity;
- social and economic impacts; and
- heritage.

The Commission's preliminary view is that "if the applicant can satisfactorily address the various recommendations contained within this review report the Project may have merit."

However, the Commission notes "that its view may change on any determination decision, including because of the provision of additional information in response to this review, information provided to the Commission independently of this review, additional matters raised in undertaking its final assessment of the Project".

The Commission's conclusions contained in the review report represent its preliminary views at this stage of the assessment process.

The Project now returns to the applicant and the Department for response and final assessment. It will come back to the Commission at a later date for determination.

For more information about the Rix's Creek Continuation Project, go to:

<http://ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2018/05/rixs-creek-continuation-of-mining-project-ssd-6300>

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: DAVID MCNAMARA 0428 836127