7 December 2012

Planning Assessment Commission
Attn: Ms Sera Taschner
Senior Planning Officer
GPO Box 3415
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Planning Assessment Commission

PROPOSED COALPAC CONSOLIDATION PROJECT

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Industry and Investment NSW—Division of Resources and Energy (DRE) response dated 4 October 2012 to the Coalpac Consolidation Project.

As I had not previously been involved with the project, and attended at late notice, I apologise for the delay in responding whilst I sought input from DRE staff. I discussed the PAC questions regarding the management of acid generating material with the Environmental Sustainability Unit (ESU) and forwarded them a copy of the submissions from Dr Washington that were kindly provided by the Planning Assessment Commission.

ESU believes the best method to address the acid drainage issues are through a Management Plan that would include testing, treating and monitoring. The acid generating material Management Plan could be a stand alone Management Plan or incorporated into the Rehabilitation Management Plan condition of the project approval. The Management Plan would need to be to the satisfaction of DRE and could include issues raised by the PAC relating to sand extraction proposed to occur early in the project. At this time DRE’s main concerns are to ensure the washery rejects are treated as a potential acid generating material and managed separately from general overburden emplacement and the Invincible Colliery Tailings Drying Area are remediated.
The PAC raised three other matters;

1. The control of the highwall mining layout – this can be achieved through good mine survey practise.

2. Subsidence impacts on rock pagoda features - I sought advice from the Principal Subsidence Engineer and he was unable to provide information detailing pagoda features within the zone of mining in recent years. I also consulted with a private organisation who indicated mining had occurred in the vicinity of rock column style features but they had not been involved with rock pagoda features. However, it is understood that Baal Bone Colliery had mining in close proximity to pagodas in their most recent SMP extraction area. In any event the applicant needs to demonstrate the rock pagoda features will not incur mining-induced damage and most importantly, pillar stability is such that there is no risk of further subsidence after mining is complete.

3. DRE’s requirement for a 1km barrier for the extinguishing of existing combustion in emplacement areas and underground workings – As these areas will not be reached until Y12 of the project; DRE believes there is sufficient time to address this matter. The 1km provides a ‘trigger’ to ensure action has been taken and results can be reviewed in discussion with DRE based on Coalpac’s findings and actions.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank the Planning Assessment Commission members for convening the meeting.

Yours sincerely
G J Cole-Clark
Chief Executive Officer