



IRF18/6077

Professor Mary O'Kane
Chair
Independent Planning Commission
GPO Box 3415
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Professor O'Kane,

**United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project (SSD 7142) and associated modifications
(DA 305-7-2003 MOD 16 and DA 177-8-2004 MOD 3)**

The Department has completed its merit assessment of the United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Project (SSD 7142) and associated modifications to the Wambo Coal Mine development consents (DA 305-7-2003 MOD 16 and DA 177-8-2004 MOD 3). I have enclosed a copy of the Department's final assessment report and recommended conditions of consent for the Commission's consideration.

The Department's report focuses on addressing the Commission's 47 recommendations of its March 2017 review and all residual assessment matters. In preparing the report, the Department has considered the Applicant's response to the Commission's review, advice from key Government agencies and advice from independent experts engaged by the Department.

The Department considers that the proposed project is a logical and strategic brownfield extension of open cut mining operations in the Hunter Valley and that it would facilitate efficient and optimised recovery of a significant coal resource. The Department is satisfied that the proposed management, mitigation and offset measures would appropriately minimise and compensate for any residual adverse social, environmental and economic impacts of the project. The Department is satisfied that the benefits of the Project outweigh its residual costs and considers that the project is in the public interest and is approvable, subject to strict conditions of consent.

The three applications are now being referred to the Commission for determination, as there were more than 25 objections on the project and the Applicant has reportable political donations.

If you have any further questions or would like the Department to brief the Commission about its assessment, please contact Jessie Evans, A/Director Resource Assessments on 9274 6419.

Yours sincerely

Marcus Ray
Deputy Secretary
Planning Services

12/11/2018