



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

Eraring Ash Dam - Site Visit Notes

20 November 2019

Attendees:

Representative	Organisation
Peter Duncan	Commissioner
Alice Clark	Commissioner
Lisa Honan	Commission Secretariat
Callum Firth	Commission Secretariat
Kym Statham	Commission Secretariat
Christina Burke	Auscript
Jo Lynch	Hunter Community Environment Centre
Paul Wynn	Hunter Community Environment Centre
Andrew Myors	Centennial Coal
Colin Robinson	NSW Office of Sport
Jo Muller	Community Environment Network
Lauren Barnaby	Origin Energy
Matt Davies	Origin Energy
Gemma Dobson	Origin Energy
Fernanda Maluly Kemeid	Origin Energy



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Part A - Induction and Introductions

The Applicant provided:

- a safety induction;
- an overview of the site and the modification application;
- an overview of the site inspection route;

The Commission Panel Chair provided:

- an introduction of Commission staff;
- thanked the Applicant and welcomed community interest group representatives;
- an introduction to the site inspection stating the Commission's policy for taking part in the site inspection.

Part B - Site Inspection

1) Stop 1 - Stormwater Diversion System

The Panel and observers observed the location of the proposed 'clean water' stormwater dam. Improvements to the dam are proposed in the modification so that stormwater would be diverted away from the dam and the embankment which would be constructed 5 metres higher than the existing embankment sighted (which is approximately at RL140 line). The Applicant advised that the coal stockpile footprint would not be altered by the modification. The Applicant advised that the coal product arrives to the site via a number of means, the panel observed a conveyor system nearby stop 1 which is one of the methods that the operation receives coal. The panel enquired about the potential for rain/runoff to wash coal contamination from underneath the conveyor into the clean water drains which are located down slope from the conveyor. Applicant stated that this would be addressed during detailed planning.

When asked about the division of clean and process water, the Applicant advised that clean water would be directed away from process areas using stormwater channels similar to those already constructed.

When asked about the material required to build the embankment, the Applicant advised that the material would be clean earth material.

2) Stop 2 - RL140 Road

The Panel observed a location near the ash dam along the stormwater diversion corridor. The area where Stop 2 occurred was within the proposed modification application footprint, where the current RL 140 road was located, which would need to be altered as part of the modification application. The Applicant stated that vegetation between the road and the dam would be cleared and the stormwater corridor augmented by the modification. When asked whether any of the vegetation proposed to be removed was part of an existing



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biodiversity offset, the Applicant confirmed that no part of the vegetation proposed for removal was part of a previous offset.

The Panel were told that the ash slurry deposition pipes would be moved to a similar location along the road and that the road and pipeline cross-section would remain similar. When asked what prevention methods for subsidence would be put in place, the Applicant stated that studies were still being undertaken for a mine void remediation plan and that grouting the existing mine voids was proposed. The Applicant also noted that previous subsidence had occurred near the south-western corner of the dam.

When asked whether the dam extension would be lined, the Applicant responded that it wasn't necessary, as the ash material itself would form a suitable lining (particularly as operations had changed to a dense phase placement technique in 2008), and that grouting to seal existing underground mining voids would form a suitable barrier.

The Applicant was also asked about high levels of selenium found around the lake system, and the relationship between the modification and Crooked Creek (past approved discharges into Crooked Creek). They responded by stating that ongoing monitoring would be implemented and that reducing excess stormwater runoff into the dam as proposed (separation of clean and process water) would require less instances of approved discharge to Crooked Creek and was a method for reducing leaching. They also stated that there was insufficient evidence to link the elevated selenium to the current operations of the plant. The Applicant advised that ongoing water monitoring has been occurring, in compliance with approvals and also due diligence monitoring. It was noted that community forums are an area to share monitoring results.

When asked what the stormwater capacity was the Applicant took the question on notice.

While driving to Stop 3 – instances of subsidence were observed and discussed by the Applicant.

While driving to Stop 3 – a question was asked if the clean water dam at Stop 1 was lined.

The Applicant confirmed it was not lined and would be used for clean water.

While driving to Stop 3- a question was asked as to how often the rail conveyor was used (as it was sighted nearby the modification area). The Applicant confirmed that the site receives approximately a couple of trains a week which is when the conveyor is used.

3) Stop 3 - Transmission Yard

The Panel observed the creek line which the stormwater diversion corridor lead to. The Applicant stated that due-diligence monitoring would be continue further downstream. The Applicant confirmed that energy dissipating structure would be used to slow the release of clean water into the creek system. The Applicant also stated that if the extension was approved, new management plans such as groundwater, surface water and land & biodiversity plans would be written and updated in consultation with government agencies such as EPA. The Applicant also confirmed that the Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) issued by the EPA would require an update if the modification application was approved.



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Part C – Closing the site inspection

The Applicant closed the site inspection.

The Commission Panel Chair took questions about the opportunity for a public meeting and advised that the number of submissions received during the public exhibition period did not reach the Commission's threshold in its public meeting policy. In any event the Commission has decided to not hold a public meeting and issued a statement explaining this. The statement also extended the period for written comments until 5pm on Wednesday 27 November 2019. The Panel Chair reiterated that written comments provided to the Panel will be carefully considered as part of its decision-making process and invited community members to make comments to the Commission if they had matters they wished to raise.