



## MOUNT PLEASANT OPTIMISATION PROJECT CONDITIONALLY APPROVED

6 September 2022

The NSW Independent Planning Commission has approved the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project located in the Upper Hunter, with strict conditions.

MACH Mount Pleasant Operations Pty Ltd, as the Applicant and operator, has sought approval to extend the life of Mount Pleasant Operations until December 2048 and deepen part of the open cut mining area, allowing for the extraction of approximately 444 million tonnes (Mt) of run-of-mine coal over the life of the mine. The Project would also increase the existing approved extraction rates from 10.5 to 21 Mt per annum of run-of-mine coal.

The Department of Planning and Environment completed its whole-of-government assessment of the application in May this year and recommended to the Commission that the Project be approved.

A three-member Commission Panel, comprising Professor Alice Clark (Chair), Professor Chris Fell AO and Mr Terry Bailey, met with the Department of Planning and Environment, the Applicant, Muswellbrook Shire Council and Upper Hunter Shire Council. The Panel also conducted an inspection of the site and hosted a two-day Public Hearing in July to hear community views. The Commission received 689 submissions in support of the Application, 251 objections, 20 comments and 80 emailed submissions.

The Commission has today, 6 September 2022, determined to grant conditional development consent to the Project. In coming to this decision, the Commission finds that the application is consistent with the Objects of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*.

In its [Statement of Reasons for Decision](#) the Commission found the application should be approved, subject to strict [conditions of consent](#), for reasons including:

- air quality and noise impacts of the Project are capable of being minimised, managed or at least compensated;
- the greenhouse gas emissions for the Project have been adequately estimated and are permissible in the context of the current climate change policy framework;
- opportunities exist for the Applicant throughout the life of the Project to deploy existing, emerging and future technologies to improve the abatement of greenhouse gas emissions;
- impacts on historic heritage are capable of being managed;
- any harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage can be acceptably managed through conditions of consent;
- biodiversity impacts can be suitably avoided, mitigated and/or offset, including impacts to *Delma vescolineata*;
- the Project can be managed such that it would not result in a significant impact to surface water and groundwater resources;
- visual impacts associated with the Project would be generally similar to those under the existing approval and would reduce over time as a result of progressive rehabilitation;

- the Project would have a net positive economic impact in relation to employment through the provision of up to an average of 447 direct and indirect full time equivalent (FTE) jobs in the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter LGAs, 643 FTE jobs in the wider Hunter Valley region, and 444 FTE jobs elsewhere in NSW.

Documents relating to this decision can be found on the Commission's website:

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2022/05/mt-pleasant-optimisation-project-ssd-10418>

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