

## ROCGLLEN COAL MINE

### Community Newsletter, July 2010

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#### Background

Whitehaven Coal Limited (Whitehaven) operates the Rocglen Coal Mine 25 km north of Gunnedah and 23 km south-east of Boggabri on the Wean Road.

The Rocglen Coal Mine was originally approved by the Minister as a Major Project in April 2008 under Project Approval (PA) 06\_0198. Coal production at Rocglen commenced in late 2008 under Mining Lease (ML) 1620. The mine currently produces approximately 1.5 million tonnes (Mt) of thermal coal annually for domestic and export markets.

Whitehaven issued a community newsletter in March 2010 to provide advice to surrounding landholders as to a proposed extension to the Rocglen operation. This second newsletter is to provide an update as to the current position of the extension application and the process upon submission of the completed Environmental Assessment.

#### Proposal

Following further exploration and definition of the local geological features, as well as additional reviews of the mine plan, Whitehaven has identified an opportunity to maximise resource recovery and allow for improved mine progression. Under the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* a new approval would be required by the Department of Planning in order to facilitate these changes to the Rocglen Coal Mine. The Rocglen extension project represents an expansion to the current mining operation, with the proposal comprising the following key activities:

- **Expansion of Open Cut Pit** – expansion of the open cut pit design limit in order to access up to 5 Mt of coal not previously considered in the life of mine plan. Coal will be extracted from the expanded pit using the current approved open cut mining methods and at the currently approved production rate of 1.5 Mt per annum, with the final year of extraction scheduled being 2020.
- **Expansion of Northern Emplacement** - expansion of the footprint and height of the out-of-pit Northern Emplacement in order to accommodate additional overburden from the current operations and proposed pit expansion.

In the previous newsletter, Whitehaven also identified that the application would include the redirection of a portion of the coal mined from Rocglen to the company's Canyon site to a proposed domestic coal hub. This proposal has now been withdrawn from the application and all coal produced will continue to be transported to the Whitehaven CHPP as per current approval requirements.

**The proposed extension to the mine will not involve any change to the current open cut mining methods, coal production rate, mine operating hours, coal handling and processing techniques, or workforce.**

#### Environmental Assessment

As part of the Environmental Assessment process, a number of specialist studies have been undertaken to assess potential impacts on:

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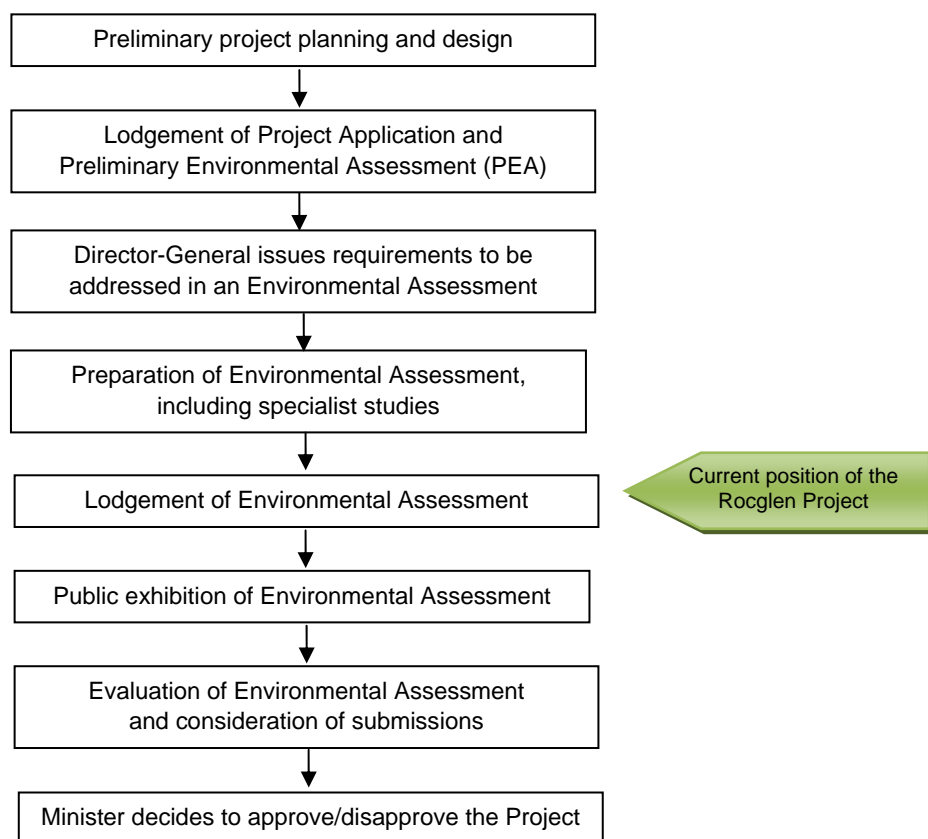
- Soils and land capability;
- Surface water;
- Groundwater;
- Flora and fauna;
- Cultural heritage.
- Noise and vibration;
- Air quality;
- Visual amenity;
- Mine closure and rehabilitation; and

These specialist studies have now been completed and form part of the Environmental Assessment for the extension project. They define the expected impacts of the proposal and the management measures to be adopted to mitigate those impacts.

As part of the draft Environmental Assessment completed to date, a conceptual final landform has been designed for the extension project to provide an indicative view of how the site will look post completion of mining. This draft final landform is attached to this newsletter for your information.

### Approval Process

The Rocglen extension project has been identified as requiring a new Project Approval from the NSW Department of Planning (DoP) under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)*. The flow chart below provides a summary of the process. The project has now moved to the next phase, as identified in the flow chart below, with the Environmental Assessment for the project about to be lodged with the Department of Planning for adequacy review. The process enables the Department of Planning to determine if the assessment prepared addresses the Department's requirements, and allow any required revisions to the assessment to be undertaken prior to the Environmental Assessment being publicly advertised for review and comment.



### Consultation

Appropriate stakeholder and community consultation will be undertaken for the project to ensure that any issues and concerns are identified and addressed in the Environmental Assessment. The following activities will be undertaken to provide an opportunity for comment and input into the process:

- Newsletters, such as this, will be circulated to surrounding residences and relevant stakeholder groups to inform of project status, findings, and outcomes. You will note on the bottom of this page, contact

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details are provided for anyone seeking additional information or wishing to discuss the extension project further.

- Whitehaven has consulted, and will continue to liaise, with relevant local and state government agencies.
- The Department of Planning will exhibit the Environmental Assessment for a minimum of 30 days. An advertisement will be placed in the local newspaper(s), relevant agencies will be notified, and adjacent landholders will be notified if required. The Environmental Assessment will be made available for inspection during the exhibition period and any person is able to make a written submission to the Director-General regarding the project.

**Further Information:**

If you would like additional information or wish to discuss the Rocglen extension project further, please contact Whitehaven's Group Environmental Manager, Danny Young –

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