

ROCGLLEN Community Newsletter

Issue 3, March 2011



Rocglen Coal Mine Extension Project Environmental Assessment Update

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 July 2010 to provide an update on the position of the extension application and the process upon the submission of the completed Environmental Assessment. This third newsletter provides a further update as to the current position of the extension application and the opportunity for public submissions to be made on the Environmental Assessment.

Proposal

Following further exploration and definition of the local geological features, Whitehaven has identified an opportunity to maximise resource recovery and allow for improved mine progression at the Rocglen Coal Mine. Under the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* a new approval would be required by the Department of Planning (DoP) in order to facilitate the proposed changes. 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 for 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.

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

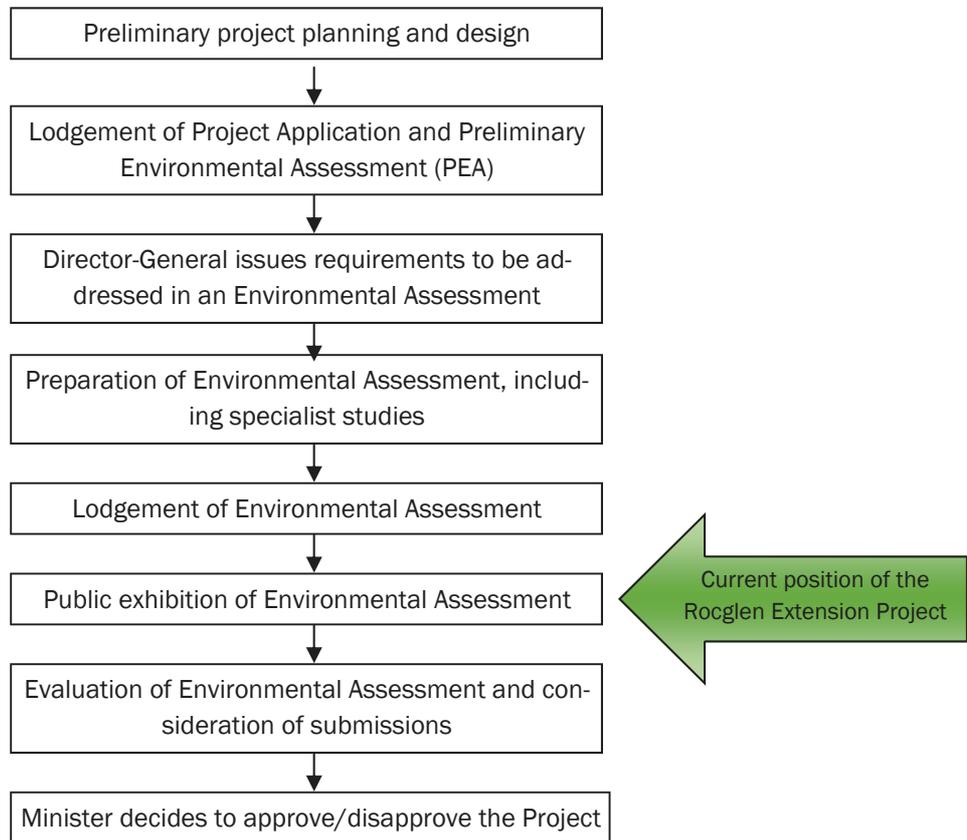
As stated in the previous newsletter, a number of specialist studies were undertaken to assess potential impacts on:

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

On completion of these studies, the Environmental Assessment (EA) was lodged with the DoP for adequacy review. This allowed the Department to determine if the assessment prepared addressed all agency requirements, or, if any revisions needed to be made. DoP advised that the EA was adequate for public exhibition on 23rd February 2011 and placed the EA on exhibition from the 3rd March to the 4th April 2011.

Current Status

The flow chart below provides a summary of the process completed to date and the current position.



As the project has moved to the public exhibition phase, the EA has been advertised in the local paper, with copies forwarded to relevant government agencies and Gunnedah Shire Council. Whitehaven is also distributing copies of the assessment on CD to landholders adjoining the Rocglen Coal Mine site to ensure the surrounding residents have an opportunity to review and provide comment on the assessment. The EA is also made available for inspection during the period through the DoP website (www.planning.nsw.gov.au), the Whitehaven Coal website (www.whitehavencoal.com.au) and through copies provided to Gunnedah Shire Council.

During the exhibition period any person is able to make submissions to the Director-General regarding the project by providing an electronic submission on the DoP website, or written submission to the Department at the following address:

NSW Department of Planning
 Major Project Assessments
 GPO Box 39
 SYDNEY NSW 2001

In your submission you should quote the Project Reference No. MP10_0015.

Further Information: If you would like further information or wish to discuss the Rocglen extension project further, please contact Whitehaven’s Group Environmental Manager, Danny Young –
 Ph – (02) 6741 9316 Email – dyoung@whitehavencoal.com.au