

Mt Piper Power Station Extension

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 4 – ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

■ September 2009



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4. Issues Identification

The Director-General's requirements:

Undertake an appropriate and justified level of consultation during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment must clearly describe the consultation process and indicate the issues raised by stakeholders during consultation and how these matters have been addressed.

4.1 Agency Consultation

4.1.1 Environmental Assessment Requirements

A Planning Focus Meeting was held on 19 June 2009 and attended by representatives from Department of Planning, Department of Water and Energy and Department of Environment and Climate Change (now the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water). The requirements for the content of the Environmental Assessment were issued by Department of Planning on 4 July 2009 and a copy is attached in **Appendix A**.

The requirements are summarised in **Table 4-1**, along with an indication of where in the document the requirements are addressed.

■ **Table 4-1 Director-General's requirements for the Environmental Assessment**

Summary of Requirements	Chapter of the EA
General Requirements	
The Environmental Assessment must include:	
■ An executive summary.	Executive Summary
■ A description of the proposal including project details under both coal fired and gas generation scenarios, existing infrastructure used for the project, fuel source options and siting of the project in the context of the existing environment.	Chapter 3
■ Consideration of any statutory provisions.	Chapter 1
■ An assessment of the key issues outlined below, during construction, operation and decommissioning (as relevant).	Chapter 5 to 13
■ A draft Statement of Commitments detailing measures for environmental mitigation, management and monitoring for the project.	Chapter 16
■ A conclusion justifying the project taking into consideration the environmental, social and economic impacts of the project; the suitability of the site; and the public interest.	Chapter 15
■ Certification by the author of the Environmental Assessment that the information contained in the assessment is neither false nor misleading.	Front of document
Key Assessment Requirements	
The Environmental Assessment must include assessment of the following key issues:	

Summary of Requirements	Chapter of the EA
▪ Strategic Planning and Justification – strategic assessment of the need, scale, scope and location for the project, analysis of the site suitability with potential land use conflicts, consideration of alternatives for the project including technology and configuration and provide justification for the project in comparison to alternatives considered.	Chapter 2
▪ Greenhouse Gases – comprehensive greenhouse gas assessment including quantification of emissions, evaluation of availability and feasibility of measures to reduce and/or offset greenhouse emissions, and evaluation of the project under the proposed Commonwealth Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.	Chapter 10 Appendix F
▪ Air Quality Impacts – comprehensive air quality impact assessment including air quality impacts, potential impacts of emissions on photochemical smog formation in the Sydney basin and demonstrate that the project has been designed to include Best Available Control Technology (BACT).	Chapter 9 Appendix E
▪ Water Cycle Management – integrated water balance for the operation of the project, demonstrate availability of viable sustainable water sources and design for zero water discharge from the site.	Chapter 5
▪ Noise Impacts – comprehensive operation noise impact assessment of the project including cumulative impacts, low frequency noise generation and peak noise, and also construction noise impacts, vibration impacts and traffic generated noise during construction and operation.	Chapter 8 Appendix D
▪ Ecological Impacts – assessment of the impacts on native vegetation, threatened species, populations, ecological communities and their habitats (both terrestrial and aquatic as relevant).	Chapter 6 Appendix B
▪ Heritage Impacts – likely impacts on Aboriginal heritage values/items (archaeological and cultural) including effective consultation with Aboriginal communities.	Chapter 7 Appendix C Chapter 4
▪ Visual Impacts – assessment of visual impact of the project from representative viewing points including residential receivers, settlements and significant public view points.	Chapter 11
▪ Hazards and Risk Impacts – screening of potential hazards on site to determine the potential for off-site impacts and any requirement for a Preliminary Hazard Analysis, and potential risks to aviation safety associated with the exhaust plumes.	Chapter 12 Appendix G Appendix E
▪ Waste Management – identification of the major waste streams to be generated by the proposal, including water treatment and coal ash and measures for management, disposal and recycling/reuse..	Chapter 13
▪ General Environmental Risk Analysis – an environmental risk analysis to identify potential environmental impacts associated with the project (construction and operation), proposed mitigation measures and potentially significant residual environmental impacts after the application of proposed mitigation measures.	Chapter 14
Consultation Requirements	
You must undertake an appropriate and justified level of consultation with the following parties during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment.	Chapter 4 Appendix A
▪ Commonwealth Department of Climate Change.	Chapter 4
▪ NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change.	Chapter 4
▪ NSW Department of Water and Energy.	Chapter 4

Summary of Requirements	Chapter of the EA
■ NSW Department of Primary Industries.	Chapter 4
■ Sydney Catchment Authority.	Chapter 4
■ Lithgow City Council.	Chapter 4
■ The local community.	Chapter 4
The Environmental Assessment must clearly describe the consultation process and indicate the issues raised by stakeholders during consultation and how these matters have been addressed.	Chapter 4

4.1.2 Consultation with Agencies

Correspondence was received from NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (previously Department of Environment and Climate Change) and NSW Department of Water and Energy through the Department of Planning. Copies of these letters are provided in **Appendix A**.

Separate letters were sent to the following agencies in early August 2009:

- Sydney Catchment Authority;
- Lithgow City Council;
- NSW Department of Primary Industries; and
- Commonwealth Department of Climate Change.

Responses were received from the Sydney Catchment Authority and Lithgow Council and copies of the responses are shown in **Appendix A**.

The issues raised in the received correspondence are summarised in **Table 4-2**.

Additional consultation was undertaken with Lithgow City Council. Shortly after the announcement of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment, stakeholder briefings were held with the Member of Parliament for Bathurst and the Lithgow Mayor. Offers were also made to meet with Lithgow Council Officers and Councillors as required.

■ **Table 4-2 Issues raised from consultation with agencies**

Issue raised	Chapter of the EA
Department of Environment and Climate Change	
■ The Proposal – The objective of the proposal should be clearly stated and refer to size and type of operation, level of performance, staging and timing of the proposal and the relationship to any other industry or facility.	Chapter 1 Chapter 3
■ The Premises – The EA should fully identify all of the processes and activities intended for the site over the life of the development including location, proposed layout, zoning, ownership, equipment and chemicals used, waste generation and methods to mitigate any expected environmental impacts.	Chapter 3
■ Air – The EA should include a comprehensive air quality impact assessment prepared in accordance with the <i>Approved Methods for the Modelling and Assessment of Air Pollutants in New South Wales</i> (the <i>Approved Methods</i>) for each operating scenario.	Chapter 9 Appendix E
■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions – The EA should comprehensively assess and report on the project's predicted greenhouse gas emissions in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO ₂ -e) undertaken in accordance with the <i>National Greenhouse Accounts (NGA) Factors</i> (DECC, 2008).	Chapter 10 Appendix F
■ Noise – The EA should include a comprehensive noise impact assessment for each operating scenario including construction noise, operational noise, operational vibration, noise from increased traffic	Chapter 8 Appendix D
■ Water – The EA should include a comprehensive assessment of both construction site water management and operational site water management which includes process water and stormwater.	Chapter 5
■ Waste and Chemicals – The EA should include an assessment of all likely waste streams associated with the project both during construction and operation, and how waste would be managed by the project in line with the principles of waste avoidance, reuse and recycling.	Chapter 13
■ Contaminated Land – The mechanisms for the management of any known, or discovered, contaminated land on the site should be detailed in the EA.	Chapter 14
■ Threatened Species and their Habitat – The EA should consider any threatened species which may be impacted by the proposed Mt Piper Power Station Extension and the development of any associated infrastructure offsite.	Chapter 6 Appendix B
■ Aboriginal Cultural Heritage – The EA should identify the nature and extent of any impacts on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values across the project area and the strategies proposed to avoid/minimise these impacts.	Chapter 7 Appendix C
Department of Water and Energy	
■ The EA should demonstrate that the proposed operation will achieve compliance with rules, limitations and operational constraints set within Part 9 licence under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> .	Chapter 5
■ The EA should demonstrate that the proposed operation will achieve no impact on adjacent licensed water users, basic landholder rights, or minimum base flows in the Cocks River, or surface or ground water-dependent ecosystems.	Chapter 5
Sydney Catchment Authority	
■ Description of the Project – the description of the project needs to clearly identify the relationship between the project and the existing power station.	Chapter 5

Issue raised	Chapter of the EA
■ Cumulative Impacts – the cumulative impact assessment should consider cumulative impacts associated with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable land uses in the catchment of Neubecks Creek.	Chapter 5
■ Water Cycle Management – the water cycle management assessment should address potential implications of the project on the quality and quantity of groundwater, neutral or beneficial effect on water quality and any anticipated changes to the Environment Protection Licence and Water Management Licence.	Chapter 5
Lithgow Council	
Gas Powered ■ Can the extension of gas to Mt Piper be routed to also pick up nearby villages, particularly Portland, and the off take facility installed? ■ Impact on housing and services of construction workforce. ■ Impact on infrastructure, community facilities and services of upgraded power station. ■ Water requirements for cooling (if any), sources and resultant impacts.	Not part of the application Chapter 14 Chapter 14 Chapters 3 and 5
Coal Powered ■ Coal transportation to site. Council's strong preferences would be off road transportation with supply from collieries within the Lithgow Local Government Area. (If coal supply is proposed to be sourced from outside the LGA then the economic, employment and social impact on the Lithgow LGA would need to be considered) ■ Ash disposal strategy in a manner that mitigates visual, environmental, dust and amenity impacts. This would require special consideration if disposal is continued in proximity of nearby villages. ■ Possibilities of utilising ash as a resource (eg construction material) rather than a waste product. ■ Water requirements for cooling (if any), sources and resultant impacts. ■ Impact on housing and services of construction workforce. ■ Environmental impacts of emissions.	Chapter 3 Chapter 3 Chapters 3 and 13 Chapters 3 and 5 Chapter 14 Chapter 9, Appendix E

4.2 Community Consultation

The Director-General's requirements requested consultation with the local community during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment. A comprehensive community consultation program was developed targeting the local community, in support of Delta Electricity's application to the Minister for Planning under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for the Mt Piper Power Station Extension project. The aim of the community consultation program was to provide accurate and timely information to the community and to facilitate community engagement in the approval planning process.

A range of local information activities was undertaken as well as some communications activities coordinated centrally. Prior to the announcement a dedicated free-call 1800 number was established, as well as a special purpose email address. There have been no relevant responses to either forum. Approximately 2,500 newsletters were distributed to the townships or areas of Portland, Wallerawang, Pipers Flat, Lidsdale and Blackmans Flat between the 9 and 12 July 2009.

At the time of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) announcement, Delta Electricity's website (www.de.com.au) was provided with the PEA and Director-General's requirements with a summary and links to the Department of Planning website. Delta's newsletter was also placed on the website.

A review of web traffic on the website shows a slight increase on Monday 13 July 2009, following the letter box drop of the community newsletter but there have been no other discernable trends.

An advertisement was placed in the Lithgow Mercury on 9 July 2009, providing information on the project and contact details for the free-call number and the email address.

A briefing meeting was held with Delta Electricity's Mt Piper Community Reference Group on 15 July 2009.

Issues raised at the Community Reference Group meeting included the process of approval, water, ash placement, noise and fuel sources. **Table 4-3** outlines where these issues have been addressed.

■ **Table 4-3 Issues raised at the Community Reference Group**

Issue	How addressed
Noise	Chapter 8, Appendix D
Approval process	Chapter 1
Water	Chapter 5
Ash placement	Chapter 3
Noise and fuel sources	Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 Appendix D

No other issues have been raised through any of the forums listed above.

4.3 Consultation with Indigenous Communities

Following the requirements of the Department of Environment and Climate Change's *Interim Guidelines for Aboriginal Community Consultation*, the proponent sought to identify

stakeholder groups or people wishing to be consulted about the project and invited them to register their interest in the project. Notification about the project was sent to:

- Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council (BLALC);
- Office of the Registrar, Aboriginal land Rights Act;
- Native Title Services;
- Lithgow Council; and
- NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW).

The response from DECCW provided a list of potentially interested parties and letters were also sent to them. Responses were also received from the Office of the Registrar advising that there were no known Registered Aboriginal Owners and from Lithgow Council advising interest in the project.

An advertisement was placed in the Lithgow Mercury on 18 July 2009 inviting registrations from interested groups or individuals. A response was received from BLALC.

Further details addressed in the Heritage Assessment in **Appendix C** and **Chapter 7**.