

Mt Arthur Coal

Independent Environmental Audit October 2020 – October 2023 Response to Audit Recommendations



2 August 2024

1. Introduction

The Mt Arthur Coal (MAC) Independent Environmental Audit 2023 (IEA) was completed in accordance with Schedule 5 Condition 9 of Project Approval 09_0062.

This report satisfies the proponent's requirements in Schedule 5 Condition 10 of Project Approval 09_0062, to provide a response to any recommendations. This response report should be read in conjunction with IEA Report authored by ERM (dated 19 July 2024, Project No. 0696311). MAC notes that Version 1 of the IEA Report was issued to DPHI on 23 December 2023 however a subsequent request for information was received on 31 May 2024. This version (Version 2) addresses all additional requests made by DPHI.

The audit period assessed in this IEA is 7th October 2020 through 5th October 2023 (the date the site visit was completed as part of the audit). The IEA also included a series of specialists including surface water, groundwater, noise/blast, air quality and rehabilitation.

The IEA generally identified a high level of compliance over the three-year reporting period. The assessment determined there were 13 instances of non-compliance with the Project approvals and 5 additional duplicate non-compliances. There were 3 non-compliances related to the implementation and adequacy of management plans with one duplicate. This resulted in a total of 8 recommendations.

2. Breakdown of Non-Compliances and Recommendations

Review	Non Compliances (NC)	Observations (Obs NC)	Observations (Obs C)	Recommendations
Statutory Instruments	13 (+5 duplicates)	Nil	1	7
Implementation of Plans	3 (+1 duplicate)	Nil	Nil	1

3. Response to Non-Compliances and Recommendations

Table 3.2 of the Independent Environmental Audit 2023 report outlines the summary of non-compliances for each of the key approvals assessed within the IEA and audit recommendations relating to the non-compliance. MAC's responses to these non-compliance recommendations are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 - MAC Response to Non-Compliance Recommendations

Schedule and Condition Number	Condition	Compliance Status	Recommendations	MAC Response
Environme	ental Protection Licence 11457			
L1.1	Except as may be expressly provided in any other condition of this licence, the licensee must comply with section 120 of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.	Non-Compliant	Corrective actions have been implemented. No further action is required.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. This included significant expenditure to upgrade the relevant infrastructure (export area dam and mine water pipelines) including the completion of a Pollution Reduction Study and Program via the EPL. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
L5.1	Noise generated at the premises must not exceed the noise limits presented in the table below. Residences referenced in this table are from Project Approval 09_0062 and summarised in EPA Re DOC19/1103289.	Non-Compliant	Implement requirements of the Noise Management Plan to prevent the noise generated by the site exceeding the noise limit.	Response Comments:

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Schedule and Condition Number			Condition	1		Compliance Status	Recommendations	MAC Response
	Location	Day LAeq (15 minute) dBA	Evening LAeq (15 minute) dBA	Night LAeq (15 minute) dBA	Night LA1 (1 minute) dBA			Mt Arthur varied EPL 11457 to remove Condition L5.3 e) in April 2023 thus aligning the requirements in Condition L5.3 to that those listed in Appendix 10 of Project Approval 09_0062 This variation has addressed the
	EPA Point 16	37	40	38	45			inconsistency that caused the non-compliance relevant to L5.1. The noise limits should not have
	EPA Point 17	41	40	39	45			applied given a category G temperature inversion was in place.
	EPA Point 18	39	39	39	45			Mt Arthur proposes that no
	EPA Point 19	41	40	39	45			further action is required. Note that compliance to the Noise
	EPA Point 20	35	35	35	45			Management Plan is captured in subsequent sections of this
	EPA Point 21	37	36	35	45			report.
	EPA Point 22	37	36	35	45			Proposed Action Due Date:
	EPA Point 23	39	38	37	45			Not applicable.
L6.5	The ground vibration peak particle velocity from blasting operations carried out in or on the premises must not exceed: 10 mm/second at any time; at either monitoring point 7, 8, 10 or 25 in Condition P1 .4.					Non-Compliant	Since the monitoring point has been relocated, no further action is recommended.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

Schedule and Condition Number	Condition	Compliance Status	Recommendations	MAC Response
O1.1	Licenced activities must be carried out in a competent manner. This includes: a) the processing, handling, movement and storage of materials and substances used to carry out the activity; and the treatment, storage, processing, reprocessing, transport and disposal of waste generated by the activity.	Non-Compliant	Identify measures to prevent hydrocarbon contamination migrating to stormwater or groundwater based on the Remedial Action Plan. Consider updating the Plan if required. The site should consult with subcontractor Thiess on such measures. Undertake periodic inspections to assess the performance of contamination prevention measures.	Response Comments: A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) established for the Bayswater (Thiess) area as per PA Schedule 3 Condition 35. This RAP will be updated in conjunction with Closure Studies program. PROPOSED ACTION: MAC will consult with Thiess to establish a routine to complete periodic inspections to assess the performance of contamination prevention measures. This inspection routine will be scheduled in 1SAP work management system. Proposed Action Due Date: 31 October 2024
O2.5 O2.6	O2.5 The licensee must record each inspection and any actions required or recommended by the technician including all results of tests performed on the sewage treatment system by the technician as required in Condition O2.4. O2.6 The licensee must prepare a sewage treatment system maintenance program. The program must include: a) Certification from the system provider that the sewage treatment system is operating within its capacity;	Non-Compliant	No further actions required.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

Schedule and Condition Number	Condition	Compliance Status	Recommendations	MAC Response
	b) Date, time and results of all routine maintenance procedures undertaken to the sewage treatment system; andc) Provide written records or an electronic confirmation of each quarterly inspection			
O7.1	All above-ground tanks containing material that is likely to cause environmental harm must be bunded or have an alternative spill containment system in place.	NC (Duplicate with EPL O1.1)	As per O1.1	Response Comments: A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) established for the Bayswater (Thiess) area as per PA Schedule 3 Condition 35. This RAP will be updated in conjunction with Closure Studies program. No particular tanks identified on the day of the inspection. PROPOSED ACTION: MAC will consult with Thiess to establish a routine to complete periodic inspections to assess the performance of contamination prevention measures. This inspection routine will be scheduled in 1SAP work management system. Proposed Action Due Date: 31 October 2024

Schedule and Condition Number	Condition	Compliance Status	Recommendations	MAC Response
M2.2	Air monitoring requirements Point 11, 12, 13, 14 POINT 11,12,13,14 Pollutant Units of measure Frequency Sampling Method PM10 micrograms per cubic metre. Continuous AM-22	Non-Compliant	No further action is required.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
M6.1	The licensee must operate during its operating hours a telephone complaints line for the purpose of receiving any complaints from members of the public in relation to activities conducted at the premises or by the vehicle or mobile plant, unless otherwise specified in the licence.	Non-Compliant	The Warning Letter identifies that measures aimed at preventing a recurrence have already been enacted to the satisfaction of the DPE. Therefore, no further action is recommended.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
M7.1	For each discharge point or utilisation area specified below, the licensee must monitor: a. the volume of liquids discharged to water or applied to the area;	Non-Compliant – Point 6 finding +	NC at Point 6:	Response Comments:

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	c. the mass of	solids applied to the application pollutants emitted to the distribution of the solid using the method and the solid using the so	the air; nd units of measure Sampling Method	9	C (Obs) – Point 15 finding	Since the flow meter was in working order during the discharge in July to November 2022, no further action is required. C (Obs) at Point 15: Auditors noted that the measurement at Point 15 is continuous but the records are not saved automatically. It is recommended that the site investigate a logging system where at least daily measurement is recorded. Alternatively, ensure manual record of reading is logged regularly, at a reasonable frequency.	No further action is required as Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for NC at Point 6. Action outlined below for observation at Point 15. PROPOSED ACTION: MAC will investigate options for a logging system where a more regular measurement of flow rate is recorded at Point 1 and provide an update in FY24 Annual Review. Action Completed
R1.1	in the approved form 1. a Statement 2. a Monitoring 3. a Statement 4. a Statement 5. a Statement Incident Res	t of Compliance, g and Complaints Sum t of Compliance - Lice t of Compliance - Re sponse Management I t of Compliance - Re	nmary, nce Conditions, d based Fee, quirement to Prepar Plan,	e Pollution	Non-Compliant	Complete the Annual Returns as required.	Response Comments: Recommendation noted. MAC will complete comprehensive reviews prior to submitting annual reports. No proposed action. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

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	7. a Statement of Compliance - Environmental Management Systems and Practices. At the end of each reporting period, the EPA will provide to the licensee notification that the Annual Return is due.			
R2.1	R2.1 Notifications must be made by telephoning the Environment Line service on 131 555. R4.3 The Licensee must notify the EPA by telephoning the Environment Line service on 131 555 immediately after the Licensee becomes aware of any contravention or potential contravention of Condition L1 of the Licence.	Non-Compliant	Notify all incidents to the EPA Environment Line as required by this condition.	Response Comments: Please note that the events referred to in Table 3.2 (Page 36) of the ERM Final Report are not relevant to this non-compliance; all three events were reported correctly to the EPA. The relevant non-compliance is referred to in the body of the Report - Section 3.3. This finding is noted with no further action proposed as reporting was completed within a very short period. Mt Arthur has reported correctly on several occasions with one event delayed. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
R4.2	The Licensee must report any exceedance of licence noise limits to the EPA Regulatory Operations Metro North at info@epa.nsw.gov.au as soon as practicable after the exceedance becomes known to the Licensee or to one of the Licensee's employees or agents	Non-Compliant	Since the misalignment between EPL and Project Approval has been resolved, no further action is required.	Response Comments:

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				No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
R5.5	The sewage treatment system maintenance program required by Condition O2.6 must be submitted annually to the EPA with the Annual Return	Non-Compliant	No further action required.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

Schedule and		Condition	Compliance Status	Recommendations	MAC Response
Condition Number					
Minister's	Cond	ditions of Approval PA 11_0047			
Sch 3 - 9	Plan	Proponent shall prepare and implement a Noise Management for the Mt Arthur mine complex to the satisfaction of the etary. This plan must: describe the measures that would be implemented to ensure compliance with the noise criteria and operating conditions in this approval; describe the proposed noise management system in detail; and include a monitoring program that: evaluates and reports on: the effectiveness of the noise management system; compliance against the noise criteria in this approval; and compliance against the noise operating conditions; includes a program to calibrate and validate the real-time noise monitoring results over time (so the real-time noise monitoring program can be used as a better indicator of compliance with the noise criteria in this approval and trigger for further attended monitoring); and defines what constitutes a noise incident, and includes a protocol for identifying and notifying the Department and relevant stakeholders of any noise incidents.	Non-Compliant	MAC has addressed the issue through additional training to the OCE. No further action is required.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. In addition to the OCE training and in line with correspondence with DPE on the 18 October 2021 exceedance, Mt Arthur committed to upgrading the real-time noise monitoring network (to Environmental Noise Compass') to improve the quality of data by which decisions are made. The real time monitoring platform has also been upgraded to improve functionality and accessibility in the field for operational personnel. This work has been completed. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

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Sch 3 - 27	Unless an EPL or the EPA authorises otherwise, the Proponent shall comply with Section 120 of the POEO Act and the Protection of the Environment Operations (Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme) Regulation 2002.	Non-Compliant (Duplicate with EPL L1.1)	Remedial actions have already been undertaken and completed. No further action is recommended.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
Sch 3 - 29	The Proponent shall prepare and implement a Water Management Plan for the Mt Arthur mine complex to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This plan must: (a) be prepared in consultation with NOW and the EPA; and (b) include a: • Site Water Balance; • Erosion and Sediment Control Plan; • Surface Water Monitoring Program; • Groundwater Monitoring Program; and • Surface and Ground Water Response Plan.	Non-Compliant	Implement an inspection and maintenance program so that dam capacities and pipeline infrastructure are maintained.	Response Comments: MAC would like to propose no further action is required as corrective actions in line with recommendation have been implemented. This included the completion of significant expenditure to upgrade the relevant infrastructure (export area dam and site mine water pipelines) including the completion of a Pollution Reduction Study and Program via the EPL. Please also refer to EPL Condition L1.1 response above. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
Sch 5 - 1	The Proponent shall prepare and implement an Environmental Management Strategy for the project to the satisfaction of the Secretary. The strategy must: (a) provide the strategic framework for environmental management of the project;	Non-Compliant	The Warning Letter identifies that measures aimed preventing a recurrence have already been enacted to the satisfaction of the DPE.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions

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	 (b) identify the statutory approvals that apply to the project; (c) describe the role, responsibility, authority and accountability of all key personnel involved in the environmental management of the project; (d) describe the procedures that would be implemented to: keep the local community and relevant agencies informed about the operation and environmental performance of the project; receive, handle, respond to, and record complaints; resolve any disputes that may arise during the course of the project; respond to any non-compliance; respond to emergencies; and (e) include: copies of the various strategies, plans and programs that are required under the conditions of this approval once they have been approved; and a clear plan depicting all the monitoring to be carried out in relation to the project. 		Therefore, no further action is recommended.	have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.
Sch 5 - 5	The Proponent shall establish and operate a CCC for the project to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This CCC must be established by the end of March 2011 and be operated in general accordance with the Guidelines for Establishing and Operating Community Consultative Committees for Mining Projects (Department of Planning, 2007, or its latest version). Notes:	Non-Compliant	MAC uploaded the missing information once notified and have continued to maintain the required information, up to date on the website since the incident. Therefore, no further action is recommended.	Response Comments: No further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

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	 The CCC is an advisory committee. The Department and other relevant agencies are responsible for ensuring that the Proponent complies with this approval. 			
	 In accordance with the Guideline, the Committee should comprise an independent chair and appropriate representation from the Proponent, affected councils and the general community. 			
Sch 5 - 11	From the end of December 2010, the Proponent shall:	Non-Compliant	As per Sch 5 - 5	Response Comments:
	(a) make the following information publicly available on its website:	(Duplicate with Sch 5 – 5)		As per Sch 5-5 response, no further action is required as the Auditor
	 a copy of all current statutory approvals for the project; 			verified that corrective actions have
	 a copy of the current environmental management strategy and associated plans and programs; 			been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date:
	 a summary of the monitoring results of the project, which have been reported in accordance with the various plans and programs approved under the conditions of this approval; 			Not applicable.
	 a complaints register, which is to be updated on a monthly basis; 			
	 a copy of the minutes of CCC meetings; 			
	 a copy of any Annual Reviews (over the last 5 years); 			
	 a copy of any Independent Environmental Audit, and the Proponent's response to the recommendations in any audit; 			
	 any other matter required by the Secretary; and 			
	(b) keep this information up to date, to the satisfaction of the Secretary.			
	(c) place a copy of the document/s on its website; and			
	(d) remove superseded copies of strategies/plans/programs from its website.			

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Consolidated Coal Lease 744, Mining Leases 1358, 1548, 1593, 1655, 1739, 1757, 1487, Mining Purpose Lease 263 (7 October 2020 to 1 July 2022)								
CCL 744 (18) ML 1548 (16) ML 1593 (16)	CCL 744 (18), ML 1548 (16), ML 1593 (16) Operations must be carried out in a manner that does not cause or aggravate air pollution, water pollution (including sedimentation) or soil contamination or erosion, unless otherwise authorised by a relevant approval, and in accordance with an accepted Mining Operations Plan. For the purpose of this condition, water shall be taken to include any watercourse, waterbody or groundwaters. The lease holder must observe and perform any instructions given by the Director-General in this regard.	Non-Compliant (Duplicate with EPL L1.1)	N/A, refer to EPL L1.1	Response Comments: As per previous responses to EPL L1.1, no further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.				
	ML 1655 (12) Prospecting operations must be carried out in a manner that does not cause or aggravate air pollution, water pollution (including sedimentation) or soil contamination or erosion, unless otherwise authorised by a relevant approval, and in accordance with an accepted Mining Operations Plan. ML 1487 (25) The lease holder shall provide and maintain to the satisfaction of the Minister efficient means to prevent contamination,							

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	pollution, erosion or siltation of any river, stream, creek, tributary, lake, dam, reservoir, watercourse, groundwater or catchment area or any undue interference to fish or their environment and shall observe any instruction given or which may be given by the Minister with a view to preventing or minimising the contamination, pollution, erosion or siltation of any river, stream, creek, tributary, lake, dam, reservoir, watercourse, groundwater, or catchment area or any undue interference to fish or their environment.			
ML1487 (33a)	Operations shall be carried out in such a way as not to cause any pollution of the Hunter River Catchment Area.	Non-Compliant (Duplicate NC, EPL L1.1)	N/A, refer to EPL L1.1	Response Comments: As per previous responses to EPL L1.1, no further action is required as the Auditor verified that corrective actions have been implemented for relevant events. Proposed Action Due Date: Not applicable.

Mining Licence 1570, 1693, 1685, 1749 (2 July 2022 to 26 July 2023)

No non-compliances have been identified.

Version 1 Issued 21/12/2023