

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 116  
**Hearing:** Supplementary Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1  
**Program:** Environment Standards Division (ESD)  
**Topic:** New Acland Mine  
**Hansard Page:** 4-5  
**Question Date:** 21 October 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Chisholm, Anthony asked:**

Senator WATERS: I will move quickly to the New Acland mine in Queensland. I see that it was deferred yet again this week. Why was it deferred yet again?

Mr Cahill: There has been an extension granted so that the company can provide additional information for the minister to consider.

Senator WATERS: So your department has sought additional information?

Mr Cahill: Yes, we have written to them and requested additional information.

Senator WATERS: What was the nature of that information?

Mr Cahill: It was to address advice from the Independent Expert Scientific Committee—IESC advice.

Senator WATERS: About?

Mr Cahill: About the impacts on the water trigger.

Senator WATERS: Can you provide more detail on notice—I am conscious of the time—or, perhaps, if you could even supply that request for further information?

**Answer:**

The Department has attached a copy of the request for further information as requested by Senator WATERS (**Attachment A**).



EPBC Ref: 2007/3423

Ms Kylie Gomez Gane  
Manager Environment, Policy and Approvals  
New Acland Coal Pty Ltd  
PO Box 47  
IPSWICH QLD 4305

Dear Ms Gomez Gane

**Request for additional information**

**Stage 3 Expansion of New Acland Coal Mine, Queensland (EPBC 2007/3423)**

I am writing to you in relation to your proposal to undertake the Stage 3 expansion of an existing coal mine on Mineral Development Lease 244 located on the Darling Downs, approximately 35 km north-north-west of Toowoomba, Queensland.

Under section 132 of the EPBC Act, I am seeking further information as detailed at **Attachment A**. Further, under section 130(5) of the EPBC Act, when further information is sought under section 132, the approval decision clock is stopped pending the provision of this information.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact the Director of the Queensland Major Projects Section and quote the EPBC reference number shown at the beginning of this letter.

Yours sincerely

James Barker  
Assistant Secretary  
Assessments (Qld, Vic, Tas) and Sea Dumping Branch  
20 October 2016

## **Attachment A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

I am seeking the following information to provide a further update of the work undertaken by the Proponent to date which will reduce the uncertainty of the Mine's impacts as raised by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development in their advice of 10 December 2015. This information is in addition to that provided to the Department in March and June 2016.

In addition to the above information I am seeking a description of works proposed and timeframe on when these will be delivered to reduce uncertainty and manage impacts into the future.

The information is to contain the following:

### **1. Fault Investigation Program Report**

This report should contain the following:

- Cross sections developed from New Hope Group drill data showing the confirmed presence and character of the faults of concern
- A description of New Hope Group's current fault hydrogeological investigation program including future plans and timeline
- Results of the fault hydrogeological investigation program to date including groundwater bore drilling data
- Maps of conservative (50<sup>th</sup> percentile plus 1 Standard Deviation at a minimum) groundwater model predictions with and without faults showing the drawdown contours for each aquifer, including a discussion justifying the statistical approach chosen.
- A discussion of the suitability of currently modelled and conservative drawdown contours for predicting impacts to landholders
- A discussion of the difference between the currently modelled and conservative drawdown with regards to impacts to landholders
- A discussion of the difference between the currently modelled and conservative drawdown with regards to impacts to Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems.
- A description of the predictive uncertainty of the modelled and conservative drawdown contours
- A 'plain English' executive summary of the above
- A discussion of the scope and aims of the proposed gravity survey to identify extent of faults, including timelines.

### **2. Groundwater Monitoring Update**

- A summary of the monitoring network updates to date, including new bores added to the network
- How/ why the locations of these bores have been chosen, and how these bores (or additional proposed bores) will improve confidence in quantitative estimates of take from Alluvium and Volcanics.

### 3. Groundwater Model Update Scoping Report

This report should contain the following:

- A description of the New Hope Group's plans to update the existing groundwater model including timeline and progress to date. This should include timeframes for an update to the conceptual model, a peer-review and when the next iteration of the model will be run.
- An outline of the proposed data sources to be used, including the strategy for capturing 3rd party groundwater use and progress to date
- An outline of the proposed spatial extent of data capture
- An outline of the proposed methodology to be employed for designation of boundary conditions
- A discussion on the adequacy of the local aquifer properties used in current modelling and proposed methodology for choosing aquifer parameters in future modelling
- An outline of the proposed calibration methodology including targets, weighting and criteria including a discussion on how the current and proposed future modelling addresses seasonal and yearly variation in recharge and groundwater levels
- A discussion on the use of pit inflows as calibration targets, including the weighting in calibration and method chosen for calculating/estimating pit inflows. Also discuss how pit inflows are proposed to be calculated and used in any future modelling
- An outline of the proposed methodology to be employed for estimating groundwater take from the Basalt and Alluvial aquifers for licensing purposes
- A discussion on the water level calibration and prediction in basalt aquifers, including any methodologies proposed to improve observed-modelled fits in future modelling
- An outline of the proposed methods for simulating final voids including assessment of water quality, source/sink characterisation and assessment of requirements for mitigation
- An outline of the proposed methodology for assessing the robustness of the groundwater monitoring network and the requirement for additional monitoring arising from the updated groundwater model results
- An outline of the proposed methodology for assessing the need to incorporate additional landholders into the New Hope Group's Baseline Assessment Program arising from the updated groundwater model results
- A description of the Peer Review process
- A 'plain English' executive summary of the above

### 4. Landholder Make Good

This document should contain the following:

- An outline of the New Hope Group's Baseline Assessment Program including a description of the methodology employed in determining which landholders are subject to assessment
- An outline of the guidelines and standards used in the BAP
- An outline of the timing of the Baseline Assessment Program implementation with specific reference to the predicted timing of impacts versus the timing of assessments for potentially impacted properties
- A description of the results of the Baseline Assessment Program to date
- A description of the New Hope Group's Make Good Agreements including methodology for determining requirements to Make Good, including how mine-induced impacts are going

to be determined (given monitoring of landowners bores is not generally proposed to be undertaken).

- A description of the Make Good Agreements that have been put in place to date
- A description of the New Hope Group's proposed landholder bore monitoring program in the long term with particular emphasis on landholders that have expressed concern regarding groundwater
- A 'plain English' executive summary of the above

5. Surface Water

- A copy of the Receiving Environment Monitoring Program
- An update of the New Hope Group's monitoring program to assess baseline water quality and determine surface water quality objectives and contaminant trigger levels.

6. Contextualisation

- A summary of the modelled inflows into the proposed mine from each aquifer and summary of groundwater use in the region including the water use, target aquifer and amount of water required.