

**Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and  
Large Coal Mining Development (IESC)  
Meeting 62, 18 and 20 June 2019**

**MINUTES  
Sydney, NSW**

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**Attendance and Apologies**

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Chris Pigram (Chair)  
Professor Craig Simmons  
Professor Wendy Timms  
Dr Andrew Boulton  
Professor Jenny Davis  
Associate Professor Rory Nathan  
Professor Joan Esterle (Day 1 only – by telephone)

APOLOGIES

Dr Jenny Stauber

SECRETARIAT AND SUPPORT

Tia Stevens  
Peter Baker  
Jason Smith  
Carol Nelson

OTHER SUPPORT

Kelly Strike  
Sarah Taylor  
Elesha Curran (Item 3.1, 3.4 on Day 1 and Day 2 inclusive)  
Benjamin Klug (Day 2)

INVITED GUESTS

Sanjeev Pandey, Queensland Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment (OGIA) (Item 3.1)  
Steven Flook, OGIA (Item 3.1)  
Gerhard Schoning, OGIA (Item 3.1)  
Daan Herkenrath, OGIA (Item 3.1)  
Bernie Kirsch, Environmental Specialist (Item 3.3)

The meeting commenced at 9.15am on Tuesday 18 June 2019.

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed members of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC) to the meeting and thanked Jenny Stauber and Craig Simmons for presiding over IESC Meetings 60 and 61 during his absence.

### **1.1 Acknowledgement of Country**

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners, past and present, on whose land this meeting was held.

### **1.2 Disclosure of interest**

Before the meeting commenced, Committee members completed a Declaration of Interests for the meeting and a project advice specific declaration for the Glendell Continued Operations - Gateway Application.

No actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest were recorded.

### **1.3 Confirmation of agenda**

The Committee endorsed the agenda for Meeting 62.

### **1.4 Action items**

Ongoing items were noted and an update was provided on the timing of completion.

### **1.5 Confirmation of out-of-session decisions**

The Committee noted that:

- advice on the Jellinbah Coal Mine Extension project was finalised consistent with the Committee's deliberations. The advice was provided to the decision makers and published within statutory timelines;
- minutes of the Committee's sixty-first meeting on 22-23 May 2019 were agreed out of session and published; and
- the explanatory note and summary guide on *Deriving site-specific guideline values for physico-chemical parameters and toxicants* were published on the IESC website on 7 June 2019. There are now a total of three explanatory notes on the IESC website.

### **1.6 Correspondence**

The Committee noted the status of correspondence to 10 June 2019.

### **1.7 Forward planning agenda**

The Committee noted the forward planning agenda. As no Requests for Advice were received by the deadline of 12 June 2019, it was agreed the meeting scheduled for 24-25 July would not take place.

It was agreed the next meeting be scheduled for 28-29 August 2019 in Sydney in conjunction with a NSW Regulator Workshop on 28 August 2019.

### **1.8 Environmental scan**

Committee members and secretariat reported back on developments in recent months, including:

- appointment of the Hon Sussan Ley as Minister for the Environment on 29 May 2019; and
- APPEA Conference held in Brisbane in June.

### **1.9 Responses to IESC Advice**

The Committee noted the item.

## **2. Advice on projects referred by governments**

### **2.1 Glendell Continued Operations Project – Gateway Project - Expansion**

The Glendell Continued Operations Project is a proposed expansion of the existing Glendell Mine located approximately 20 km northwest of Singleton in the New South Wales Hunter Valley. The expansion would include extending the current open cut Glendell Pit to the northwest to allow mining of approximately 135 Mt run-of-mine (ROM) coal. The project will increase the mine disturbance area, divert Yorks Creek, increase groundwater drawdown in the alluvium, contribute to cumulative impacts, alter catchment areas and flows of several creeks, and require the demolition of the existing Glendell mine infrastructure area (MIA) and construction of a new one. Existing coal handling facilities, including the coal handling and preparation plant and train loadout areas, will be used. The proposal would extend the life of the mine through to 2044.

Key potential impacts from this project are:

- diversion of Yorks Creek into Bowmans Creek which will disconnect Yorks Creek from its alluvium and riparian corridor, and potentially alter sediment and flow regimes, bed structure and in-stream habitat availability in both Yorks and Bowmans Creeks;
- changes to catchment areas and runoff patterns that could impact sediment and flow regimes and aquatic ecosystems within York's, Betty's, Bowman's, Swamp and Main Creeks;
- groundwater drawdown within the alluvial aquifers, with potential impacts on groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) such as saturated alluvial sediments (including stygofauna) and groundwater-dependent vegetation;
- the presence of a final void in the rehabilitated landscape which could impact long-term surface water and groundwater quality (particularly salinity); and
- the further contribution to cumulative impacts on groundwater (possibly until 2200), surface water and native flora and fauna in the wider Hunter Region.

Consistent with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*, advice will be published on the IESC's website within 10 business days of being provided to the regulators.

## **3. Other Business**

### **3.1 Draft 2019 Surat Underground Water Impact Report**

Mr Sanjeev Pandey, General Manger Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment (OGIA), together with Steven Flook, Gerhard Schoning and Dann Herkenrath, presented the Committee with an overview of the draft 2019 Surat Underground Water Impact Report (UWIR) and discussed strategies for managing the impacts.

### **3.2 Fact Sheet on Environmental Tracers**

The Committee discussed the content of the fact sheet and provided guidance on potential additions prior to peer review.

Discussion also took place as to whether a fact sheet is the most appropriate mechanism or an introductory webpage with links to a number of case studies would be more suitable.

### **3.3 ACARP Coal Mine Rehabilitation**

Dr Bernie Kirsch, Environmental Specialist, engaged in discussion and feedback with the Committee on rehabilitation and restoration of coal mines.

### 3.4 IESC Industry Workshop Briefing

The Committee was briefed on the scope and expected outcomes of the IESC Industry Workshop and instructed on their role in leading the breakout discussions on each table.

The Committee provided feedback following the Workshop. Key comments included

- the high quality of Facilitator,
- well organised room logistics and seating arrangements,
- good timing of agenda items,
- logical and answerable questions which stimulated discussion and enabled interaction between industry as well as with the IESC,
- attendees provided positive feedback and expressed a better understanding of the role of the IESC.

### 3.5 New South Wales Regulator Workshop

The Committee discussed planning for the upcoming NSW Regulator Workshop to be held in Sydney in conjunction with the Committee meeting on 28-29 August 2019.

It was agreed the workshop be similar to the Commonwealth Regulator Workshop held in January 2019 and along the format of the Industry Workshop held on 19 June 2019.

#### **Close of Meeting**

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting, in particular Elesha Curran for her organisation of the highly successful Industry Workshop.

Tia Stevens thanked Jason Smith for leading the Secretariat and Engagement Section since April.

The meeting closed at 1.10pm on Thursday 20 June 2019.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 28-29 August 2019 in conjunction with a NSW Regulator Workshop in Sydney, NSW.

Minutes confirmed as true and correct:

Dr Chris Pigram AM

IESC Chair

2 July 2019