Protecting our water

We know how important water is to our community, which is why we’re doing everything we can to protect this precious resource now and into the future.

Our proposed mine plan is based on more than three years of data collected from more than 200 water sources across the proposed project area – this is one of the most robust water studies for a project of this size in NSW.

We know the area we will operate in and have used this information to design a low-impact, underground mine that minimises environmental impact while maximising economic and social benefits.

We understand our complex water system and are planning for its protection

We collect data every 15 minutes from surface water sites and every 6 hours from groundwater sites, at more than 200 sources across the mine site. This real time data provides us a true understanding of the water system so we can make accurate predictions about the impacts.

Our water modelling will meet NSW and Commonwealth Government requirements. The water study commissioned by Southern Highlands Coal Action Group (SHCAG) is a simple model deemed unacceptable for the assessment of coal mines by the NSW Government, the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC), the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) and the Land and Environment Court.

The SHCAG water model was also based on a different mining method to the one we have proposed and as a result, the predictions are incorrect.

This is what SHCAG’s own peer reviewer said about its water model:

"The model therefore highlights a lack of comprehensive groundwater level and aquifer test data in the area of the proposed development, which is required to reasonably assess the environmental impact of a large scale mining operation”  Water Research Laboratory UNSW Dec 2013.

Our mine plan is based on best practice, proven mining methods to deliver a mine that is environmentally sensitive and low-impact. The Hawkesbury Sandstone will not be damaged during the process.

There will be no long term water impacts as a result of our mine

The preliminary investigations carried out by water experts for more than three years have found:

- There will be no long term impacts to groundwater
- If there are any impacts they will only be temporary and only occur during and immediately after mining
- Impacts will be limited to areas immediately surrounding where mining is occurring at that time.

We’re listening to and working with the community

We are working with the community to ensure we hear the matters that are of most importance to them, through engagement with various groups and detailed analysis of perception survey results. Over the coming months we will be conducting assessments on individual bores, so we can put in place measures to ensure water supply at current rates are maintained through the life of the mine. The NSW Aquifer Interference Policy requires that landowners affected are not disadvantaged.

Detailed water studies will be scrutinised and reviewed by government as part of the mine’s approval

We are in the process of developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for our proposed project. The detailed, technical water studies are a requirement of both NSW and Commonwealth Governments and will underpin the EIS. The EIS will be submitted to the NSW Government around mid-2016. We are at the beginning of the process and will continue to work with the community to understand your priorities and keep you informed as the project progresses.

If you have a question or want to find out more, please call us on 02 4869 8200, drop in to our community office at Shop 7, 256 Argyle Street, Moss Vale Tuesday to Thursday or our office at Clarence House, 9 Clarence St, Moss Vale Monday to Friday, or visit our website www.humecoal.com.au.