Protecting the quality of our air

Understandably, we all have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of the air we breathe and live in, for both existing and future generations.

Modern coal mining methods, like Hume Coal’s proposed low-impact mine, are subject to strict government legislation and designed to mitigate the risk of potential impacts from mining. Hume Coal is committed to engaging with the community and providing information about the project as it progresses. Our priority is to ensure the project is undertaken in the most environmentally sensitive way possible.

Coal mining has been a part of industry in the Southern Highlands since the 1850s. Our proposed coal mine is underground (not open cut) limiting the potential for air quality impacts. The region’s air quality is influenced by human activity and natural sources including agricultural dust, road dust, car exhaust smoke, wood fires and liquid droplets that occur naturally in the environment. These particles can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time. Regional events such as dust storms and bushfires periodically contribute to elevated levels of particulate matter (PM) or dust.

Why do we model dust?

Hume Coal models dust dispersion to:

- Understand our contribution to the existing background dust levels
- To analyse the mitigation measures that we can adopt to minimize our potential contribution

Our dust modelling includes data obtained within and surrounding the project area. Hume Coal has commenced and will continue to model all wind speeds, directions and their duration as part of the air quality assessment. Air quality is quantified using Government approved modelling to predict ground-level concentrations of particulate matter (dust) and other air pollutants in the surrounding area. Preliminary modelling undertaken is based on a complete 12 month period of hourly monitoring data points incorporating all recorded wind speeds and directions in the local area.

Modelling has demonstrated that the dust impact contribution from the project is minor, even on the day of the year with the worst weather conditions. This means that impacts on residents in the townships of Medway, New Berrima and Berrima will be negligible. Hume Coal has incorporated the effective management of dust into all aspects of mine and site design.

The following graph visually represents dust modelling results obtained in relation to the project area, local town centres and EPA limit restrictions.

What about the coal stockpile?

Hume Coal has gone to considerable effort to reduce the size of the coal stockpile and ensure that it is carefully concealed into the landscape between tree lines and existing topography. Stockpiles are also designed to not broadside the prevailing winds. Dust mitigation methods such as the use of covered rail wagons, stacker reclaimers and potential veneering of the stockpile are included into the proposed project design, facilitating the most effective management of dust. We know the area we will operate in and have used all data obtained to design a low-impact, underground mine that minimises environmental impact while maximising economic and social benefits.

Here to talk to you

Hume Coal wants to listen to and engage with the local community and we will provide as much information as possible regarding our plans and how we are going about them.

If you have a question or want to find out more, please call us on 02 48698200 or drop into our community office at Shop 7, 256 Argyle Street Moss Vale on Tuesday - Thursday, or visit our website www.humecoal.com.au

We continue to model all wind speeds, directions and their duration as part of our air quality assessment for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is scheduled to be submitted to Government for rigorous assessment in late 2016.