



THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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Environmental safeguards and regional employment

I have today included specific protections for species impacted by recent bushfires as part of a strict set of environmental approval conditions for the Pembroke Olive Downs Mine in Queensland.

Included in the environmental conditions accepted by Pembroke is a \$1 million contribution to improving long-term conservation of koalas and greater gliders in the Bowen Basin.

My key focus in finalising this decision has been to consider that the impacts of the bushfires, specifically the impacts on our koala and greater glider populations, were properly addressed.

I fully acknowledge the work of the proponent in recognising the need to take these matters into account and in acknowledging wider regional issues.

Pembroke will contribute \$100,000 a year over ten years to the new regional environmental fund while also ensuring:

- restrictions on the removal of riparian koala and greater glider habitats
- maintenance and restoration of current riparian habitats
- management of environmental offsets, including on a large offset property of 34,000 hectares
- engagement of independent species experts to increase scientific knowledge around the undertakings and to establish a restoration program to revegetate key riparian habitat

This is an example of how a proponent can be prepared to step back and look at environmental outcomes and regional strategies within the context of a development that will provide metallurgical coal of a predicted \$10.1 billion for Queensland and approximately 500 construction jobs and 1,000 operational jobs in North Queensland.

All work is subject to the company meeting its environmental conditions at each step of the process and the principle is one of addressing habitat protection ahead of the work taking place.

As part of this environmental approval, Pembroke must implement a comprehensive monitoring and management program to ensure that the project does not adversely affect the ecological values of groundwater-dependent ecosystems. This includes the collection of robust baseline data, implementation of multiple 'fit-for-purpose' modelling approaches, and undertaking site-specific scientific assessments.

The approval for this project comes after the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment received four referrals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* relating to the Olive Downs Coal Mine:

- a mine site and access road
- a water pipeline
- an electricity transmission line
- a rail spur

The project was assessed by the Queensland Office of the Coordinator-General through a 'bilateral' report that did not provide sufficient detail, and which necessitated further consultation between my department and the proponent before I was in a position to make an informed decision.

The decision to finalise the environmental assessment of the Olive Downs project comes after the water pipeline, electricity transmission line and rail spur components were approved subject to conditions in April this year.

ENDS

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