

Shenhua meets with NSW Farmers to discuss Watermark

SHENHUA met with NSW Farmers in Sydney recently to discuss key elements of the Watermark Project and address concerns, following 133 public submissions to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Project Manager, Paul Jackson said the meeting was an important opportunity to establish a dialogue with NSW Farmers and open the lines of communication into the future.

"We were able to use the meeting to address a number of concerns raised in NSW Farmers EIS submission and to outline how any outstanding issues not covered in the EIS would be addressed in the future," Mr Jackson said.

"The meeting was positive and I was pleased there was an acknowledgement of the important role the mining sector plays in the NSW economy.

"Shenhua believes that mining and farming are not mutually exclusive and with the right protections and management measures put in place the two can co-exist, side by side as we are proposing," he said.

Mr Jackson said of the 133 individual submissions about the EIS, almost 20 per cent were from government departments, agencies and special interest groups and more than 100 were received from members of the public.

"Over half the individual submissions received were from landholders living within five kilometres of the project boundary," Mr Jackson said.

"This is an important reminder we need to consult with our neighbours and work hard to ensure their concerns are addressed in our response to submissions.

"As well as the work we have undertaken at the planning stage to mitigate impacts on groundwater and highly productive farmland, there will be significant work required during the 30-year operational phase of the project.

"Most of our neighbours are full-time farmers so it is critical our management plans take into account their concerns," he said.

"Many of those neighbours are also NSW Farmers members and as such I have

extended an invitation to NSW Farmers to provide input to that process in the future."

Mr Jackson said Shenhua Watermark will now begin the process of reviewing all submissions in detail and preparing a formal response to the DPI to address any outstanding issues not addressed in the 3000 page EIS document and the 3000 pages of reports and studies accompanying it.

"We have said from the outset that we welcome feedback and further input in the process and where appropriate, we will take on board relevant additional advice," he said.

"We value the views of the community and we will now begin the process of reviewing all submissions in detail."

Mr Jackson said the project expects to provide its response to the DPI in the last quarter of this year.

The response will then be considered by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC), which will conduct a review of the project and report back to the DPI.

A second PAC hearing will be held to determine the project's development application.