



## Approval

### Meteor Downs South Coal Project, Qld (EPBC 2013/6799)

This decision is made under sections 130(1) and 133 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

#### Proposed action

**person to whom the approval is granted** U&D Mining Industry (Australia) Pty Ltd

**proponent's ACN** 152 892 638

**proposed action** Development and operation of an open cut coal mine, approximately 25 km west of Rolleston in central Queensland  
[See EPBC Act referral 2013/6799].

#### Approval decision

Controlling Provision	Decision
Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 & 18A)	Approve
Listed migratory species (sections 20 & 20A)	Approve
A water resource, in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development (sections 24D & 24E)	Approve

#### conditions of approval

This approval is subject to the conditions specified below.

#### expiry date of approval

This approval has effect until 31 October 2039

#### Decision-maker

**name and position** Deb Callister  
Assistant Secretary  
Queensland and Sea Dumping Assessment Branch

**signature**

**date of decision**

25 November 2014

### Conditions attached to the approval

1. The **approval holder** must not, as a result of exploration, construction, operation or decommissioning of the mine and associated infrastructure within the **project area**, **impact on habitat of EPBC Act listed species or EPBC Act listed communities** specified in Table 1 for the duration of the project approval above the maximum disturbance limits specified in Table 1 (i.e. these are 'whole of project' disturbance limits).

**Table 1: Maximum disturbance limits for EPBC Act listed communities and habitat of EPBC Act listed species**

Threatened species	Maximum disturbance limits (hectares)
Squatter Pigeon ( <i>Geophaps scripta scripta</i> )	240.54
King Blue-grass ( <i>Dichanthium queenslandicum</i> )	426.53
Bluegrass ( <i>Dichanthium setosum</i> )	426.53
Australian Painted Snipe ( <i>Rostratula australis</i> )	6.6
Threatened ecological communities	Maximum disturbance limits (hectares)
Natural Grasslands of the Queensland Central Highlands and the northern Fitzroy Basin	186
Brigalow ( <i>Acacia harpophylla</i> dominant and co-dominant)	2.21

### Matters of National Environmental Significance Management Plan (MNESMP)

2. At least three (3) months prior to **commencement** of the **action**, the **approval holder** must submit to the **Minister** for approval a *Matters of National Environmental Significance Management Plan* (MNESMP) for the management of direct and indirect **impacts** of the **action** on **Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)**, being for the purposes of this approval, the **EPBC Act listed species** and **EPBC Act listed communities** listed in Table 1. The MNESMP must be prepared by, in consultation with, or be reviewed by a **suitably qualified ecologist**.
3. The MNESMP must be consistent with relevant **recovery plans**, **threat abatement plans** and **conservation advices** and must include:
  - a) a description of environmental values for each of the **MNES** addressed in the plan;
  - b) details of potential **impacts** from the **action**, including area of **impact**, on each of the **MNES**;
  - c) measures that will be undertaken to mitigate and manage **impacts** on relevant **MNES** resulting from the **action**. These measures must include but may not be limited to:



- i. measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate **impacts** on **MNES** and their **habitat** located in the **Project Area**, including, but not limited to, road design and road operation procedures;
  - ii. measures to control and reduce the overall occurrence and abundance of, animal, pest and weed species which could **impact** the **MNES** retained in the **Project Area**;
  - iii. measures to minimise and mitigate any **impacts** of the **action** on **MNES** and their **habitat** as a result of changes in hydrology of surface water resources, including at Naroo Dam;
  - iv. measures to ensure no net loss of **habitat** for the Australian Painted Snipe as a result of **impacts** to Naroo Dam catchment or water quality; and,
  - v. measures to rehabilitate areas of habitat **impacted** by the **action**.
- d) goals for **habitat** management for each **MNES**;
  - e) a program, including monitoring locations, parameters and timing, for monitoring the outcomes of mitigation and management measures to minimise direct **impacts** to **MNES** and their **habitat**; a schedule of regular reporting to the **Department** the details and outcomes of the monitoring program, including the actual **impacts** of the project on **MNES** and their **habitat**;
  - f) corrective and contingency measures in the event monitoring reveals **impacts** on **MNES** are not in accordance with predictions in the MNESMP or modelling;
  - g) details of the timeframe for a regular (at least every three years) review and subsequent updates, of the MNESMP; and,
  - h) details of qualifications and experience of persons responsible for undertaking monitoring, review, and implementation of the MNESMP, including those of a **suitably qualified ecologist**.
4. The **approval holder** must not **commence** the **action** until the **MNESMP** has approved the MNESMP in writing. The approved MNESMP must be implemented.

**Note 1:** The **approval holder** may prepare and align the MNESMP with the requirements of the Queensland Government, provided the relevant matters under the conditions of this approval are clearly and adequately addressed.

#### **Offset Management Plan**

5. At least three months (3) prior to the **commencement** of the **action**, the **approval holder** must submit an *Offset Management Plan* (OMP) to the **Minister** for approval. The OMP must be prepared by, in consultation with, or be reviewed by a **suitably qualified ecologist**.
6. The OMP must include:
- a) a detailed offset strategy, consistent with the **EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy**, to compensate for **impacts** to the following **EPBC Act listed species** and **EPBC Act listed communities**:
    - i. Natural Grasslands of the Queensland Central Highlands and Northern Fitzroy Basin;
    - ii. King Blue-grass (*Dichanthium queenslandicum*);
    - iii. Bluegrass (*Dichanthium setosum*); and
    - iv. Squatter Pigeon (Southern) (*Geophaps scripta scripta*).

- b) details of the **offset attributes** (including maps in electronic Geographic Information System (GIS) format with accompanying **shapefiles**), site descriptions and environmental values relevant to **EPBC Act listed species** and **EPBC Act listed communities** specified at condition 6a);
  - c) detailed surveys and descriptions of any proposed offset sites including:
    - i. a baseline description (prior to any management activities) of the current condition of the extant vegetation of each offset area, including the location of survey points (GPS reference);
    - ii. the area (in hectares) of **habitat** for **EPBC Act listed species** and **EPBC Act listed communities**, provided by the offset area;
    - iii. the condition class of **habitat** for **EPBC Act listed species** and **EPBC Act listed communities** found within the offset area;
    - iv. vegetation condition mapping;
    - v. photo reference points; and
    - vi. tree age class representation.
  - d) details of measures to be undertaken to maintain and improve **habitat** within any proposed offset areas, including, but not limited to:
    - i. a map showing areas to be managed;
    - ii. management actions for each area and details of methods to be used;
    - iii. timing of management activities for each area;
    - iv. performance criteria for each area;
    - v. a monitoring plan to assess the success of the management activities measured against the baseline condition. This must include, but not be limited to, control sites and periodic ecological surveys to be undertaken by a **suitably qualified ecologist**;
    - vi. a risk assessment and a description of the contingency measures that would be implemented to mitigate any risks;
    - vii. where revegetation is proposed as part of the OMP, measures to be taken to ensure revegetation is of a similar composition to the local variant of the **EPBC Act listed community** found in or adjacent to the nominated offset area or, if the **EPBC Act listed community** is not applicable, measures to be taken to ensure revegetation is of a similar composition to the local variant of the **Regional Ecosystem**;
    - viii. the use of local provenance plants for rehabilitation; and
    - ix. the process to ensure management actions are undertaken in consultation with the **Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection**.
  - e) how the offset areas provide connectivity with other habitats and biodiversity corridors; and,
  - f) details of qualifications and experience of persons responsible for undertaking monitoring, review, and implementation of the OMP, including the role of the **suitably qualified ecologist** in preparing, reviewing, and implementation of the OMP.
7. The **approval holder** must not **commence** the **action** until the **Minister** has approved the OMP in writing. The approved OMP must be implemented.



8. The **approval holder** must register and legally secure, in accordance with Queensland legislation, offsets for authorised unavoidable **impacts** (defined in Table 1 for **MNES** identified at condition 6a)) within two (2) years of the **commencement** of the **action**.

**Note 2:** The **approval holder** may prepare and align the OMP with the requirements of the Queensland Government, provided the relevant matters under the conditions of this approval are clearly and adequately addressed. An offset area may satisfy offset requirements for more than one of the **MNES** identified at condition 6a).

### **Groundwater Monitoring and Management Plan**

9. Prior to the commencement of **mining activities**, the **approval holder** must submit to the **Minister** for approval a *Groundwater Monitoring and Management Plan* (GMMP) for the management of direct and indirect **impacts** of the **action** on groundwater.
10. The GMMP must include:
- a) monitoring of groundwater levels and surface water-groundwater interactions at locations and frequencies described in the environmental authority issued for the action under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (Qld). Monitoring must provide for the early detection of any changes to groundwater levels, groundwater quality and surface water-groundwater interactions and associated alluvial aquifers and underlying aquifers, as mining progresses;
  - b) risk-based threshold responses and the timeframes in which those actions will be undertaken if triggers and limits are exceeded or likely to be exceeded for:
    - i. groundwater drawdown and groundwater quality; and
    - ii. groundwater dependent ecosystems and species.
  - c) commitments, including timeframes, to periodically review, update and implement the **groundwater model** and the GMMP throughout the life of the mine. The first review must be completed within six (6) months of a two (2) year groundwater monitoring data set becoming available. The **groundwater model** must be prepared in accordance with the latest version of the **Australian Groundwater Modelling Guidelines**;
  - d) discussion of which outcomes of the updated **groundwater model** will be used to update the GMMP;
  - e) provisions to make water monitoring results publicly available on the **approval holder's** website. The results must include:
    - i. the methods used to collect data;
    - ii. the assumptions and uncertainties that were incorporated into the **groundwater model**; and
    - iii. a discussion of the results and how groundwater is being **impacted** locally and regionally.
  - f) provisions whereby the **approval holder** must:
    - i. report exceedances of groundwater drawdown and quality triggers and limits to the **Department** within 10 (ten) business days of the monitored exceedance; and
    - ii. provide written advice to the **Department**, within 3 months of the occurrence of the monitored exceedance, stating the direct cause of, and the actions taken in response to the exceedance.



11. The GMMP must be reviewed by a **suitably qualified expert** prior to the GMMP being submitted to the **Minister** for approval. The **approval holder** must:
- a) make appropriate revisions to the GMMP in light of the peer review; and
  - b) submit evidence that the **suitably qualified expert** is satisfied that any revisions have adequately addressed comments provided by the **suitably qualified expert** as part of the peer review.
  - c) submit the peer review to the **Minister** at the same time the GMMP is submitted to the **Minister** for approval.
12. The **approval holder** must not commence **mining activities** until the GMMP has been approved by the **Minister** in writing. The approved GMMP must be implemented.

***Note 3:** The **approval holder** may prepare and align the GMMP with the requirements of the Queensland Government, provided the relevant matters under the conditions of this approval are clearly and adequately addressed.*

### **General**

13. Within twenty (20) business days after the **commencement** of the **action**, the **approval holder** must advise the **Department** in writing of the actual date of **commencement**.
14. The **approval holder** must notify the **Department** in writing of any contravention with any condition of this approval as soon as practical and within no more than two (2) business days of becoming aware of the contravention. The notification provided to the **Department** under this condition must specify:
- a) the condition which the **approval holder** has contravened;
  - b) the nature of the contravention;
  - c) when and how the **approval holder** became aware of the contravention;
  - d) how the contravention will affect the anticipated **impacts** of the approved **action**, in particular how the contravention will affect the **impacts** on **MNES**;
  - e) the measures the **approval holder** will take to address the impacts of the non-compliance on **MNES** and rectify the contravention; and
  - f) the time by when the **approval holder** will rectify the contravention.
15. The **approval holder** must maintain accurate records substantiating all activities associated with or relevant to the conditions of approval, including measures taken to implement the plans or strategies required by this approval, and make them available upon request to the **Department**. Such records may be subject to audit by the **Department** or an independent auditor in accordance with section 458 of the **EPBC Act**, or used to verify compliance with the conditions of approval. Summaries of audits will be posted on the **Department's** website. The results of audits may also be publicised through the general media.
16. Within three (3) months of every twelve (12) month anniversary of the **commencement** of the **action**, the **approval holder** must publish a report on its website addressing compliance with each of the conditions of this approval, including implementation of any plans or strategies as specified in the conditions. Documentary evidence providing proof of the date of publication must be included in the published compliance report. Any non-compliance with any of the conditions of this approval must be included in the published compliance report. Each compliance report must remain on the website for the duration of the project approval.



17. Upon the direction of the **Minister**, the **approval holder** must ensure that an independent audit of compliance with the conditions of approval is conducted and a report submitted to the **Minister**. The audit must not commence unless and until the **Minister** has approved the independent auditor and audit criteria. The audit report must address the criteria to the satisfaction of the **Minister**.
18. If the **approval holder** wishes to carry out any activity otherwise than in accordance with a plan or strategy as specified in the conditions, the **approval holder** must submit to the **Department** for the **Minister's** written approval a revised version of that plan or strategy. The varied activity must not commence until the **Minister** has approved the varied plan or strategy in writing. The **Minister** will not approve a varied plan or strategy unless the revised plan or strategy would result in an equivalent or improved environmental outcome over time. If the **Minister** approves the revised plan or strategy that plan or strategy must be implemented in place of the plan or strategy originally approved.
19. If the **Minister** believes that it is necessary or convenient for the better protection of **MNES**, the **Minister** may request that the **approval holder** make specified revisions to a plan or strategy required by the conditions and submit the revised plan or strategy for the **Minister's** written approval. The **approval holder** must comply with any such request. The approved plan or strategy must be implemented. Until the **Minister** has approved a revised plan or strategy, the **approval holder** must continue to implement the previously approved plan or strategy, as specified in the conditions.
20. If, at any time after five (5) years from the date of this approval, the **approval holder** has not **substantially commenced the action**, then the **approval holder** must not **substantially commence the action** without the written agreement of the **Minister**.
21. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the **Minister**, the **approval holder** must publish all plans and strategies referred to in these conditions of approval on its website. Each plan or strategy must be published on the website within one (1) month of being approved (unless otherwise specified in these conditions) and remain on the website for the duration of the project approval.

### **Definitions:**

**Action** is the construction and operation of an open cut coal mine 25 km to the west of Rolleston, Queensland within the **project area** designated at Appendix 1. This includes ancillary infrastructure and ancillary operational activities (e.g. coal haulage).

**Approval holder** means the person to whom the approval is granted, or any person acting on their behalf, or to whom the approval is transferred under section 145B of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**Australian Groundwater Modelling Guidelines** means the Australian Groundwater Modelling Guidelines published by the Australian Government National Water Commission.

**Commencement/Commence/d** means any preparatory works required to allow the action to be undertaken, e.g. clearing vegetation, the erection of any onsite temporary structures and the use of machinery for the purpose of breaking the ground for buildings or infrastructure. This does not include:

- any land management procedures, such as fire or weed management, to protect listed threatened species and ecological communities listed under sections 18 and 18A and



listed migratory species under sections 20 & 20A of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; or

- minor physical disturbance necessary to undertake pre-clearance surveys or establish monitoring programs.

**Conservation advice** means any conservation advice approved by the **Minister** under the EPBC Act.

**Department** means the Australian Government Department administering the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**EPBC Act** means the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**EPBC Act listed species** means threatened species listed under sections 18 and 18A of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**EPBC Act listed community/communities** means threatened ecological community or communities listed under sections 18 and 18A of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

**EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy** means the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Environmental Offsets Policy (October 2012)* or subsequent revisions.

**Groundwater model** means any computational method that represents an approximation of a water system that simulates hydraulic heads (and watertable elevations in the case of unconfined aquifers) and groundwater flow rates within and across the boundaries of the system under consideration. The **groundwater model** must include groundwater drawdown and dewatering volumes for each hydrostratigraphic unit for the life of the project or until recovery, whichever is longer.

**Habitat** means areas which a species or community is known to occur or is thought to be likely to occur based on the biophysical conditions prevailing in the area and the ecological requirements of the species or community.

**Impact/s/ed** has the definition assigned to it in section 527E of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**Matters of National Environmental Significance/ MNES** means matters of national environmental significance, being the relevant matters protected under Part 3 of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

**Minister** means the Minister administering the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and includes a delegate of the Minister.

**Mining activities** means activities related to the commercial extraction of coal.

**Offset attributes** means an '.xls' file capturing relevant attributes of the Offset Area, including the EPBC reference ID number, the physical address of the offset site, coordinates of the boundary points in decimal degrees, the EPBC protected matters that the offset compensates for, any additional EPBC protected matters that are benefiting from the offset, and the size of the offset in hectares.

**Project area** is the area designated as the **project area** at Appendix 1.



**Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection** means the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection or any Department that succeeds the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection that is responsible for administering environmental offsets in the Bowen Basin.

**Recovery Plan** means a recovery plan made or adopted by the **Minister** under the **EPBC Act**.

**Regional Ecosystem** means regional ecosystem as gazetted in the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (Queensland).

**Shapefile** means an ESRI Shapefile containing '.shp', '.shx' and '.dbf' files and other files capturing attributes of the Offset Area, including the shape, EPBC reference ID number and EPBC protected matters present at the relevant site.

**Substantially commenced** means the same as **commenced**.

**Suitably Qualified ecologist/expert** means a person who has professional qualifications, training or skills or experience relevant to the nominated subject matters and can give authoritative assessment, advice and analysis about performance relevant to the subject matter using relevant protocols, standards, methods and/or literature.

**Threat Abatement Plan** means a threat abatement plan made or adopted by the **Minister** under the **EPBC Act**.



# Appendix 1: Meteor Downs South Coal Project Area

