



**Austar Coal Mine Pty Ltd**  
A.B.N. 67 111 910 822

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18 April 2012

Director - General  
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

**Attention:** Howard Reed  
Acting Manager – Mining & Extractive Industries

Dear Sir,

**RE: INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT**

Austar Coal Mine Pty Ltd (Austar) commissioned an Independent Environmental Audit of the development prior to 31 December 2011 in accordance with Condition 6, Schedule 5 of DA 29/95 and Condition 7, Schedule 7 of Project Approval 08\_0111.

The Independent Environmental Audit for Austar was led by Trevor Brown & Associates during November 2011 to January 2012, with final audit report completed 4 April 2012 (the Audit Report). The Independent Environmental Audit indicates Austar Coal operations have generally demonstrated a high degree of compliance with DA29/95 and Project Approval 08\_0111.

In accordance with Condition 7, Schedule 5 of DA 29/95 and Condition 8, Schedule 7 of Project Approval 08\_0111, please find **enclosed** a copy of the Audit Report and also Austar's responses to recommendations in the Audit Report (**Attachment 1**).

In accordance with Condition 12, Schedule 5 of DA29/95 and Condition 9, Schedule 7 of Project Approval 08\_0111, a copy of the Audit Report and the responses to recommendations in the Audit Report will also be forwarded to relevant agencies, our Community Consultative Committee, and a copy placed on the Austar Coal Mine website ([www.austarcoalmine.com.au](http://www.austarcoalmine.com.au)).

Please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 4993 7334 if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Gary Mulhearn  
Environment & Community Manager  
**AUSTAR COAL MINE**

Encl: *Independent Environmental Audit, Austar Coal Mine, November 2011 (Trevor Brown & Associates, 4 April 2012)*  
*Attachment 1 - Austar Responses to Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations*

# Attachment 1

## Austar Responses to 2011 Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations

No	Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations	Austar Coal Mine Responses
1	The Site Water Management Plan (SWMP, March 2009) provides generic details and concepts to control erosion and prevent sediment loss. Any sediment control basins should be designed to the requirements of "Managing Urban Stormwater – Soils and Construction Volume 1" Landcom 2004 and its companion document "Managing Urban Stormwater – Soils and Construction Volumes 2e" DECC 2008	<p>Austar will review the SWMP in accordance with Project Approval 08_0111. The preparation and submission for approval of the revised SWMP will be before commencement of second workings in Stage 3 or construction of buildings at the Kitchener surface infrastructure site.</p> <p>The review of the SWMP will included a review of Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) within the SWMP. The ESCP review will specify that all new sediment control basins shall be designed to the requirements of "Managing Urban Stormwater – Soils and Construction Volume 1" Landcom 2004 and its companion document "Managing Urban Stormwater – Soils and Construction Volumes 2e" DECC 2008.</p> <p>It is noted that since approval of the March 2009 SWMP, new disturbance areas requiring sediment control basins have been specifically designed in accordance with the above guidelines in line with the recommendation of the audit (i.e. Kitchener Surface Infrastructure Site, Aberdare Extended Emplacement Area).</p>
2	Stabilise disturbed lands in the small catchment to the existing drain south of the Aberdare Emplacement Area.	<p>Austar have prepared an erosion and sediment control plan for rehabilitation works at the Aberdare Emplacement Area in accordance with its Mining Operations Plan (MOP) and Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) commitments. The surface drainage enhancement program includes stabilisation of all drainage lines and catchment areas where final landform is achieved at the Aberdare Emplacement Area.</p> <p>The revegetation program will include the small catchment to the existing drain south of the Aberdare Emplacement Area as identified in the audit.</p>
3	It is recommended that the piezometers be installed as far in advance of the Stage 3 mining as practicable, and at least 1 year in advance, to allow establishment of baseline data.	Austar's current approved SWMP identifies proposed monitoring bores for Stage 3 (Figure 16 of the SWMP). The installation of the proposed groundwater monitoring bores will be undertaken at least one year in advance of secondary workings to allow sufficient baseline data to be recorded ahead of mining.
4	It is recommended that a system be implemented so that groundwater levels are formally reviewed on a 3 month basis, as recommended by the SWMP.	This is already implemented. Groundwater monitoring levels are downloaded and reviewed on a quarterly basis by our groundwater consultant Aurecon under a formal work order and purchase order system. This commission includes a review of groundwater levels and quality trends against rainfall data and provide a briefing note with comments. Results are further reviewed on an annual basis in the Annual Review / Annual Environmental Management Report.

No	Independent Environmental Audit Recommendations	Austar Coal Mine Responses
5	Although some trigger levels have now been set for the alluvial aquifer, the verification process should also continue to consider the results of monitoring on the fractured rock aquifer piezometers.	Austar's SWMP specifies a groundwater verification program which is intended to confirm that groundwater outcomes of underground mining are as predicted. In accordance with the program, the next verification is due to commence at completion of Longwall A5 (this is now triggered as Longwall A5 was completed at end of March 2012). The results of monitoring within the fractured rock aquifer will be included in this verification review.
6	It is noted that impacts can still occur following mining and its recommended that in the future, if piezometers fail, that they are replaced.	<p>Austar will review the SWMP in accordance with Project Approval 08_0111. The preparation and submission for approval of the revised SWMP will be before commencement of second workings in Stage 3 or construction of buildings at the Kitchener surface infrastructure site.</p> <p>The review of the SWMP will include a review of the Ground Water Monitoring Program (GWMP) within the SWMP. The GWMP review will address the procedure in the event of future failure of piezometers.</p>