

**Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and
Large Coal Mining Development (IESC)
Meeting 52, 23-24 May 2018**

**MINUTES
Canberra**

Attendance and Apologies

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Chris Pigram (Chair)
Dr Andrew Boulton
Dr Wendy Timms
Dr Ian Prosser
Dr Glen Walker
Professor Craig Simmons
Dr Jenny Stauber

APOLOGY

Professor Joan Esterle

SECRETARIAT AND SUPPORT

Emily Grant
Peter Baker
Benjamin Klug

STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Matthew Dadswell (Items 1 & 2) Office of Water Science	Jason Smith (Items 1, 2, 4.1, 4.2 & 4.4) Office of Water Science
Natasha Amerasinghe (Items 1 & 2) Office of Water Science	Regan Hart (Items 1, 2, 3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4) Office of Water Science
Mio Kuhnen (Item 2) Office of Water Science	Mitchell Bouma (Item 2) Office of Water Science
Sarah Taylor (Items 2 & 4.2) Office of Water Science	Carl Zimmerman (Items 2 & 4.6) Office of Water Science
John Higgins (Item 3.1) Bioregional Assessments	Jo Brennan (Items 4.1, 4.3 & 4.4) Office of Water Science
Ann Hartley (Items 4.1, 4.3 & 4.4) Office of Water Science	

INVITED GUESTS

Mr Sanjeev Pandey (Item 4.5) Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment (OGIA)

The meeting commenced at 9.15am on Wednesday 23 May 2018.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Dr Chris Pigram, welcomed members of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC) to the meeting.

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The Chair acknowledged the traditional owners, past and present, on whose land this meeting was held.

1.2 Declaration of interest

Before the meeting commenced, IESC members completed the Meeting Specific Declaration of Interest and an Advice Specific Declaration of Interest for Wallarah 2 Coal Project.

No actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest were recorded for this meeting.

1.3 Confirmation of agenda

The IESC endorsed the agenda for Meeting 52.

1.4 Action items

Ongoing items were noted and an update was provided on the timing of completion.

1.5 Confirmation of out-of-session decisions

The IESC noted minutes of the IESC's fifty-first meeting on 11 April were confirmed and agreed for publication out of session.

1.6 Correspondence

The IESC noted the status of correspondence to 4 May 2018.

1.7 Forward planning agenda

The IESC noted the forward planning agenda. It was agreed the next meeting would be scheduled for 20 June 2018, following the IESC Research Symposium on 19 June 2018.

1.8 Environmental scan

The Office of Water Science provided an update on developments since the April meeting, including:

- lifting of the Northern Territory's Moratorium on Fracking;
- the Australian Government's announcement of a Geological and Bioregional Assessment of the Beetaloo Sub-basin; and
- release of the Santos's Response To Submission Report regarding the Narrabri Gas Project.

Dr Chris Pigram provided an update from his meeting with the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Energy, Mr Finn Pratt on 8 May 2018.

Dr Glen Walker provided an overview of his presentation of the IESC Information Guidelines to the 2018 APPEA Conference and a CSIRO workshop on Environmental Tracers.

2. Advice on projects referred by governments

2.1 Walarah 2 Coal Project – New Development

The IESC was requested by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy to provide advice on the Wallarah 2 Coal Project in NSW.

The project is a new underground coal mine, located approximately 25 km south-west of Newcastle, NSW. The proposed project will cover an area of approximately 3700 ha and extract 5 million tonnes per annum of run of mine coal, over 25 years.

The proposed project's potential impacts would be primarily concentrated in the Jilliby Jilliby Creek Catchment area and would include subsidence related changes to the surface water and groundwater dynamics.

The IESC reviewed and discussed information provided and considered the key potential impacts on water resources as follows:

- changes to surface water and groundwater hydrology and water quality due to subsidence;
- a maximum 300 ML/year reduction in water from the drinking water catchment for the CCWSS, including:
 - 270 ML/year from Jilliby Jilliby Creek;
 - 30 ML/year from the Wyong River;
- impacts to groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) and other water-dependent species, particularly within the Jilliby Jilliby Creek catchment; and,
- cumulative impacts associated with current and future mining within the area.

3. Bioregional Assessments

3.1 Bioregional Assessments Update

Mr John Higgins from the Department of the Environment and Energy provided an update on the Bioregional Assessments Program.

4. Other Business

4.1 IESC Research Symposium Update

An update was provided on the progress of the IESC Research Symposium scheduled for 19 June 2018.

4.2 Explanatory Note - Assessing Groundwater-Dependent Ecosystems

The revised version of the Explanatory Note "Assessing Groundwater-Dependent Ecosystems" was considered with discussions around the feedback received during the public consultation period.

4.3 IESC Field Trip September 2018

The Committee discussed and provided suggestions on proposed locations of the IESC Field Trip. Timing for the field trip will be dependent on member availability.

4.4 Annual Review 2017 – 18

The proposed content of the 2017 – 18 IESC Annual Review was discussed and agreed.

4.5 Mr Sanjeev Pandey, General Manager Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment (OGIA)

Mr Sanjeev Pandey, General Manager OGIA, provided a presentation on the OGIA groundwater model.

4.6 Explanatory Note - Specific Guidelines and Monitoring of Physical and Chemical Parameters

The Committee discussed and provided suggestions on the structure of the Explanatory Note "Specific Guidelines and Monitoring of Physical and Chemical Parameters".

Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 3pm on Thursday 24 May 2018.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 20 June 2018.

Minutes confirmed as true and correct:

Dr Chris Pigram

IESC Chair

05 June 2018