

**Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and
Large Coal Mining Development (IESC)
Meeting 56, 3-4 October 2018**

**MINUTES
Brisbane**

Attendance and Apologies

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Chris Pigram (Chair)
Professor Wendy Timms
Dr Jenny Stauber
Dr Andrew Boulton
Associate Professor Rory Nathan
Professor Jennifer Davis
Professor Craig Simmons
Professor Joan Esterle

SECRETARIAT AND SUPPORT

Emily Grant
Peter Baker
Jo Brennan
Benjamin Klug

STAFF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Carl Zimmermann Office of Water Science	Les Betland Office of Water Science
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The meeting commenced at 9.00am on Tuesday 3 October 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 Disclosure of interest

Before the meeting commenced, Committee members completed the Meeting Declaration of Interests and an advice specific declaration of interest for the Olive Downs Project, Pembroke Olive Downs Pty Ltd.

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

Members also completed a bi-annual private circumstances declaration.

1.3 Confirmation of agenda

The Committee endorsed the agenda for Meeting 56.

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 that:

- advice on the South Walker Creek MRA2C Project was finalised consistent with the IESC's deliberations and provided to the decision makers;
- the minutes of the IESC's fifty-fifth meeting on 30 – 31 August 2018 were agreed out of session and published; and
- the IESC 2017-2018 Annual Review of Activities was endorsed by the Chair out of session.

1.6 Correspondence

The Committee noted the status of correspondence to 19 September 2018.

1.7 Forward planning agenda

The Committee noted the forward planning agenda. It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled for 6 – 8 November 2018 in Canberra.

1.8 Environmental scan

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

- conclusion of the Independent Scientific Panel Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracture Stimulation in Western Australia; and
- release of the Resources 2030 Taskforce Report.

2. Advice on projects referred by governments

2.1 Olive Downs Project, Pembroke Olive Downs Pty Ltd.

The Olive Downs Project is a proposal to develop a new coking coal mine and associated infrastructure approximately 40 km south-east of Moranbah, Queensland. The proposed project is located in the Bowen Basin, within the catchment of the Isaac River, in the Fitzroy River Basin. The disturbance footprint of the project is approximately 16 300 ha, within a referral area of 25 300 ha. The project will produce up to 20 Mtpa of run-of-mine coal for a planned operational life of 79 years.

The IESC reviewed and discussed the information provided, and considered the key potential impacts of the proposed project to be:

- loss of 120 ha of wetlands through direct removal, including removal or modification of seven wetlands in the project area defined in Queensland as being of High Ecological Significance;
- increased erosion potential and reduced floodplain habitat from constriction of the floodplain as a result of placement of two final voids on the (existing) floodplain;
- impacts to the flow regime and water quality in the Isaac River from untreated discharges and groundwater drawdown;
- impacts to groundwater-dependent wetlands and terrestrial vegetation from groundwater drawdown;
- removal of aquatic and riparian habitat (40–60 m) at three places along the Isaac River, disrupting movement corridors for State and Commonwealth-listed species (e.g. Greater Gliders *Petauroides volans*) and other biota;
- loss of habitat connectivity, and potentially downstream impacts to water quality, during and for some time after the diversion of Ripstone Creek;
- impacts to groundwater users from lowered water levels; and
- cumulative impacts on surface water, groundwater and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems from mining in the region.

Consistent with the EPBC Regulations, advice will be published on the IESC's website within 10 business days of being provided to the regulators.

3. Other Business

3.1 IESC fact sheet on the use of environmental tracers

The Committee discussed and agreed to a revised scope for a fact sheet on the use of environmental tracers.

3.2 Workshop on the use of faults in groundwater modelling explanatory note

The Committee discussed the proposed attendees for the use of faults in groundwater modelling explanatory note stakeholder workshop.

The Committee noted the workshop will be held in February 2019.

Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.00pm on Thursday 4 October 2018.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 6 – 8 November 2018.

Minutes confirmed as true and correct:

Dr Chris Pigram

IESC Chair

10 October 2018