

News Release



Attention News Editors
For immediate release
8 February 2008

Illawarra Coal Holdings Pty Ltd
BHP Billiton Illawarra Coal Administration Centre
Old Port Road Port Kembla
New South Wales 2505 Australia
PO Box 514 Unanderra
New South Wales 2526 Australia
Tel: +61 2 4255 3200 Fax: +61 2 4255 3201
bhpbilliton.com

Illawarra Coal responds to Total Environment Centre

Illawarra Coal has responded to the latest claims by the Total Environment Centre today with concern that information being distributed is confusing and misleading.

Approval of the Appin Area 7 operations which are an extension of the Appin Mine workings, was granted in 2006 and longwall production began in October 2007.

General Manager Sustainable Development and External Affairs, John Brannon said that it was important to clarify the facts in relation to the Area 7 operations.

"In seeking approval to mine the first four longwalls at Appin Area 7 Illawarra Coal made the responsible decision to move our longwalls away from the river in order to significantly minimise impacts to the river," he said.

"In doing so, some 12 million tonnes of coal was sterilised – the equivalent of approximately four years of production."

Mr Brannon added that impacts reported by our people to government and stakeholders are well within predictions outlined in the approved Subsidence Management Plan.

"The impacts observed are in the form of small gas bubbles on the surface of the river. These small bubbles will not sustain a flame, and there is no evidence of impact to the quantity of water in the River, aquatic life, fauna or riverbank vegetation. This area of the River is not part of the catchment for Sydney's water supply.

Illawarra Coal has a long and proud history of working in the Wollondilly and Illawarra regions to provide highly valued coking coal for the local steel industry, and an economic contribution to the region which is second to none in terms of employment flow-on effects.

Mr Brannon said that because the Company was aware of the sensitive environments in which it operates, and that mining does have impacts to the surface environment, its people are committed to pursuing sustainable operations for the future.

"As a business we make our decisions based on fact," he said.

"Our applications to mine are comprehensive in nature and include predictions of impacts based on years of scientific data collected by experts."

Mr Brannon added that Illawarra Coal was committed to the long term sustainable future of mining in the region, and the responsible management of any impacts on the environment.

Media enquiries:

Rosanne Moore, Communication and Consultation Manager, Illawarra Coal

02 42 553336

Rosanne.moore@bhpbilliton.com

Illawarra Coal Holdings Pty Ltd
ABN 69 093 857 286

A member of the BHP Billiton Group which is headquartered in Australia
Registered Office: 180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia
ABN 49 004 028 077
Registered in Australia