WHITEHAVEN COAL

MAULES CREEK COAL MINE

BEST PRACTICE DUST MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING STUDY

A best practice benchmarking study of dust management at the Maules Creek Coal Mine (MCCM) was undertaken by Katestone Environmental in 2016. Katestone found that the dust control at MCCM is generally in accordance with best practice measures. MCCM remains committed to best practice management and continues to investigate methodologies for more efficient and innovative solutions to managing dust.

The study was engaged by NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and NSW Department Planning and Environment (DP&E), and included inspections of the mine over consecutive days, interviews with local landholders, and reviews of monitoring systems, data and management tools. During the inspection, current operational practices and emission controls were identified and associated management and control measures reviewed.

Katestone found that MCCM is generally operating in accordance with best practices for bulldozing, drilling, blasting, managing stockpiles, cleared areas, conveyors, transfer stations, stacking, reclaiming and train loading. Katestone also found that MCCM is conducting truck loading, hauling and dumping activities, and managing rail wagon emissions using some best practice measures. MCCM are currently investigating if additional best practice measures can be implemented in these areas.

Katestone reviewed the methodologies used to calculate emissions of particulate matter for the Project Air Quality Impact Assessment and determined these were consistent with the requirements of the Approved Methods for Modelling.

The report also found that strong winds, generally from the west, lead to higher average concentrations of particulate matter in the air at both of MCCMs real time monitoring sites. At the northwest monitoring site, the highest concentrations of dust are associated with 2–5 m/s winds coming from the northwest. These winds are carrying concentrations of dust from sources other than the mine.

MCCM are considering the findings of the study and the company continues to work with regulatory agencies to address the small number of recommendations contained in the report. Many of the actions proposed to address these recommendations were successfully implemented prior to finalisation of the study. For example, MCCM is already applying additional dust suppressant to haul roads and is trialling a predictive air quality dispersion modelling tool.

MCCM are currently investigating the installation of additional air quality monitoring equipment in the community which will add to the already comprehensive air quality monitoring network in place. This equipment will give the community further assurance that any potential air quality impacts are being measured and managed effectively.

For more information, feedback and complaints please call the 1800 Maules (1800 628 537) Community Hotline number