



Media Release

Thursday 28 October 2004

Bickham Bulk Sample Update

Extraction of a 25,000 tonne coal bulk sample at Bickham is well-past the half-way mark, and while Bickham Coal Company project manager John Richards said the program was a little behind schedule because of weather and other factors, work on the site was expected to be completed within eight weeks.

"Trucking of the bulk sample coal to Rixs Creek, for transport by rail to the Port of Newcastle, should finish in late December", he said.

The Bickham Community Consultative Committee, chaired by Warren Cook of Scone, met yesterday (Wednesday 27 October) and inspected works in the site.

John Richards said that recent heavy rain showed the erosion and sediment controls were all working effectively to protect water quality in the Pages River.

"The groundwater system has also behaved as predicted in the Review of Environmental Factors. It is interesting to note that the water from the two dewatering bores is less saline than the river."

The recent heavy rain also added moisture to the stockpiles at Bickham and Rixs Creek and some heating of coal has been observed at both locations. The coal has been sent for additional testing to ensure safety during transport.

Background work has also begun for the preparation of a comprehensive EIS as part of the application for development of a mine. John Richards explained that while the studies were continuing, the preparation of an EIS does not imply that full -scale mining is inevitable.

"We are still a long way from taking a final decision as to whether or not we make a formal application to the State Government," he said. "Apart from our own feasibility studies the extraction of the bulk sample is helping us to assess the viability of the resource."

More information? Contact Chris Ford at FordComm Consulting on

4929 2063.