

## NEW SOUTH WALES MINERALS COUNCIL LTD

MININGENUITY™

LEVEL 12, 59 GOULBURN STREET, SYDNEY NSW 2000  
PO BOX A244, SOUTH SYDNEY NSW 1235  
• T: 61 2 8202 7200 • F: 61 2 8202 7255

14 December 2007

Mrs Cheryl Samuels  
Standing Committee on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change)  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Email: [cheryl.samuels@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cheryl.samuels@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mrs Samuels

### Inquiry on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change)

The NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the Inquiry on Natural Resource Management (Climate Change) (the Inquiry). NSWMC applauds the NSW Government for the strategic consideration of the impacts of climate change on natural resource management in NSW.

Assessing the impacts of climate change on natural resource management in NSW is vital to ensure the sustainability of our primary industries. In 2005-06 the NSW minerals industry (mining and minerals processing) directly accounted for 2 per cent of Gross State Product, importantly contributing \$1.5 billion to the NSW economy through taxes and royalty payments. The NSW minerals industry also manages large areas of land across NSW and is dependent on the sustainable management of natural resources. This combination of factors makes the NSW minerals industry an important stakeholder in natural resource management in NSW, one that is well placed to contribute to the Inquiry.

NSWMC believes that climate change is a risk management issue. It requires timely research and information, agile policies, and in the case of the Australian industry, significant investment in technological solutions. These will maximise the industry's ability to adapt to the changing climate and its impacts on natural resources. NSWMC has identified key issues for each of the Inquiry's terms of reference as follows:

- a) *The likely consequences of human-induced climate change on land (including salinity), water and other natural resources;*
  - Access to and availability of water is essential for a sustainable minerals industry in NSW.
- b) *Options for ensuring ecologically sustainable natural resource use, taking into particular account the impacts of climate change;*
  - Options for improving access to and availability of water include:
    - The prolonged drought across much of NSW has highlighted the need for a more effective water management framework to ensure the efficient allocation of scarce water resources. This includes the need for strategic planning mechanisms over the short, medium and long term.
    - Development of innovative and effective market mechanisms for managing all water resources will be increasingly important as competition for scarce water resources increases. There needs to be greater identification of all natural resources and, where appropriate, consistent markets developed. This is particular the case for water trading across a range of our water resources such as surface water, groundwater, mine dewatering water, waste water and treated effluent.
    - Efficient and effective water management infrastructure. The need for investment in strategic infrastructure to ensure efficient and effective use of water resources across NSW. For example, replacing open water channels for water distribution with pipelines where significant losses are experienced to enable ongoing access to basic water rights and water allocations.



- Researching the potential impacts of climate change on our natural resources to enable strategic planning for sustainable natural resource use. Particularly in relation to biodiversity opportunities, such as biobanking, and specifically for the NSW minerals industry, lease relinquishment. This could incorporate greater use of regional synoptic planning to prioritise actions for natural resource management.
  - Improving access to information and data that can assist natural resource managers address climate risks in the short to medium term.
  - Improving integrated and strategic planning processes across government departments that manage the State's natural resources.
- c) *Approaches to land and water use management practices on farms and other natural resource management practices, having regard in particular to the role of such practices in contributing to climate change or as a tool in helping to tackle climate change;*
- Promote leading practice processes and technologies that ensure the efficient use of natural resources, including energy efficient practices and life cycle assessment of management practices. For example, the former Australian Government Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources developed a program which promotes leading practice in sustainable development for the mining industry. The program is being employed both nationally and internationally.
  - Improve the uptake of sustainable practices through educational programs for natural resource managers.
  - Improve access to information and data that can assist natural resource managers address climate risks in the short to long term. For example, the Department of Water and Energy's Outlook diagrams in the NSW Murray Valley which provide indicative figures and probability allowing water users to plan ahead.
  - Develop programs and standards that encourage NSW natural resource managers to participate in opportunities under climate change policies, such as biosequestration and geosequestration.
- d) *The effectiveness of management systems for ensuring that sustainability measures for the management of natural resources in New South Wales are achieved, having particular regard to climate change;*
- Recognise the interdependence of various government departments and their programs and ensure integrated planning processes are in place to cater for this interdependence. This should help to reduce duplication; align natural resource priorities and ensure consistent and streamlined systems are freely accessible to all natural resource managers.
- e) *The likely consequences of national and international policies on climate change on natural resource management in New South Wales.*
- Some national and international policies will impact existing programs established by the NSW Government. The transition of existing schemes that abate greenhouse gas, such as the NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme, is critical in the consideration of national policies on climate change. The NSW minerals industry is associated with a number of projects that abate coal seam methane under the Scheme. It is crucial that these existing projects are still viable under an Emissions Trading Scheme.
  - Some national and international policies will create opportunities for natural resource management, such as biosequestration and geosequestration. Appropriate NSW Government policies, legislation and standards will be necessary to ensure NSW's readiness for greater use of natural resources in tackling climate change.

Governments around Australia are investing significant time and resources into Australia's response to climate change. NSWMC urges the NSW Government to avoid duplication and optimise opportunities for collaboration in relation to the Inquiry's finding.



We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry and look forward to being kept up to date with the Inquiry's progress. Should you wish to discuss any of the information above, please contact Rachelle Benbow, Manager Environment Operations directly on (02) 8202 7223 or [rbenbow@nswmin.com.au](mailto:rbenbow@nswmin.com.au).

Yours sincerely



**Dr Nikki B. Williams**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

