



24 August 2017

## **Boral Statement regarding Berrima Colliery**

In response to concerns raised about the Berrima Colliery and its impact on the Wingecarribee River and Sydney Water Catchment, Boral has said that they are continuing to work with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Department of Planning & Environment (Resources & Geoscience) to progress the Mine Closure Plan.

A Boral spokesman said: "Berrima is a very old coal mine, which had been operating for more than 50 years before Boral acquired it. It was our only underground mine, and our only coal mine.

"Since 2013, it has been on care and maintenance, while we work with relevant State authorities on developing a mine closure plan for it. Prior to ceasing operations some three years ago, it was one of Australia's smallest coal mines if not the smallest, only ever producing about 250,000 tonnes of coal per year when we owned it.

"As soon as we have an agreed mine closure plan that meets the requirements of those authorities, we will implement that plan and close the mine permanently. We have a working group that meets regularly with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Department of Planning & Environment (Resources & Geoscience) to progress this.

"In the meantime we have been undertaking ongoing environmental monitoring including water quality in the Wingecarribee River at long-established monitoring points downstream of the mine's discharge point.

"We have also commissioned external experts to undertake independent assessments of the aquatic ecology and water quality downstream and upstream of the colliery and to review existing data.

"We are aware of the work being undertaken by Dr Wright and have actively and fully cooperated with him in his research for the purposes of providing context to the Berrima Colliery closure plan. In fact, we provided him with all of our water quality and flow data.

"While Dr Wright has not provided Boral with a copy of his draft report, we have obtained a copy from the media, and we are now considering his findings.

"From our initial review, Dr Wright's findings do not appear to support other ecological assessments conducted downstream of his sampling points. Regardless, we are currently studying Dr Wright's report in cooperation with EPA officials to understand his findings, and we will work with the EPA to address the findings as part of the development of the Mine Closure Plan.

"Early indications that may explain the differences between Dr Wright's findings and the results of our own independent testing are that Dr Wright's findings have focused on water samples at the immediate discharge area from the closed mine, whereas our sampling has been taking place at pre-established monitoring points to provide a more representative indication of the impact on the waterways.

"While there are higher concentrations of naturally occurring minerals immediately at the discharge point, as would be expected, where Dr Wright has taken water samples, these levels reduce significantly beyond the mixing zone of the discharge and the Wingecarribee River downstream.

"In fact, the most recent ecological assessment based on ecological indicators (Niche, Environment & Heritage, August 2017) notes that beyond this point at Biloela, 'the community composition observed is indicative of good stream health and near natural condition; having a neutral or beneficial effect at this location.'"

"As we have said, we will continue to work with the EPA and Department of Planning & Environment (Resources & Geoscience) to progress the Mine Closure Plan."

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