



Royal Commission on the Pike River Coal Mine Tragedy
Te Komihana a te Karauna mō te Parekura Ana Waro o te Awa o Pike

Chronology Two - Pike River Coal: Permits, Access Arrangement and Resource Consents

Date	Topic	Doc ref
21 Dec 1979	Otter Minerals Exploration Ltd (Otter Minerals) was granted coal prospecting licences 35-083 and 35-084 in relation to the Pike River coal field.	MED0000010001/100
1981	Otter Minerals undertook a geological mapping programme.	MED0000010001/100
1982	Otter Minerals transferred licences 35-083 and 35-084 to Pike River Coal Co Ltd (PRC).	MED0000010001/100
1983	PRC undertook the first drilling programme resulting in Pike River drill holes (PRDH) 1–7.	MED0000010001/100
1988-1989	PRC obtained reports as to the extent of the coal resources and reserves, mining options and costs.	MED0000010001/101
25 March 1993	PRC applied for an exploration permit.	MED0000010001/101
8 July 1993	An exploration permit 40-131 was granted to PRC, for four years over approximately 1782 hectares.	MED0000010001/101
Oct -Nov 1993	PRC in association with Mitsui Mining Co Limited undertook further drilling (drill holes M 1 – 7).	MED0000010001/101
21 March 1996	PRC applied to the Ministry of Commerce for a coal mining permit.	MED0000010001/101
17 June 1996	PRC applied to extend the land area of the mining permit.	MED0000010001/101
30 Sept 1997	Mining permit 41-453 was granted for 40 years over 1611 hectares.	DAO.001.0003 55
30 Apr 1998	An extension of the area covered by mining permit 41-453 was approved (an additional 333 hectares).	DAO.012.03587
25 June 1998	PRC applied to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for an access arrangement for an underground mine.	DOC0000010001/44 173
June - July 1998	PRC applies for various resource consents from the West Coast Regional Council (WCRC), Grey District Council (GDC) and Buller District Council (BDC).	DOC0000010001/44 173
1 Feb 1999	A joint hearing of the WCRC and GDC resource consent applications was held. PRC needed to apply for new and additional consents as a result of material changes to the 1998 application. The hearing was adjourned.	WCRC0001/23 65

24 May 1999	The joint hearing was reconvened. DOC considered further information should be provided so a complete assessment of the potential effects of the proposal was possible.	DOC0000010001/58 234
June 1999	The decisions to grant all consents sought from the West Coast Regional Council and the Grey District Council were released.	WCRC0001/23 68
July 1999	DOC (and others) lodged appeals to the Environment Court against the resource consent decisions.	DOC0000010001/58 235
27 Oct 2000	PRC made a new application to DOC for a mining access arrangement (as the area of the mining permit had been enlarged to include the area over which the road would be built).	DOC0000010001/47 184
14 Sept 2001	The Crown and PRC signed a deed of easement authorising an access road, a coal slurry pipeline and a power line on land "commonly known as Paparoa Forest" until the expiration of mining permit 41-453.	DAO.001.0003/21 127 NZOG0067/25 5.4
15 Nov 2001	Van der Geest access agreement and right of way agreement for 40 year term.	DAO.001.0003/23 134
March 2002	URS New Zealand Ltd (URS) undertook a risk assessment process for the access arrangement on behalf of PRC on the potential environmental impacts and financial safeguards for identified risks.	NZOG0067/27 5.10
May 2002	PRC apply for an additional set of resource consents for the mine following changes to its proposal.	WCRC0001/25 76
3 May 2002	URS completed an Assessment of Environmental Effects Report for the new resource consent applications. URS relied on numerous technical reports already commissioned by PRC. URS stated PRC's intention to construct a ventilation shaft and fan house at surface, providing for return ventilation. Also permits the Mine to be ventilated "even if the Mine atmosphere is in the explosive range". URS stated that over the life of the mine, PRC proposed to construct up to 4 emergency exits along the escarpment and at the location of the adit.	NZOG0067/28 5.14-5.23 NZOG0015 DAO.012.00064
18 June 2002	DOC supplied PRC with a draft Conservancy Mining Report stating that PRC's proposed operations did not fully safeguard against adverse environmental effects.	NZOG0067/27 5.10
4 July 2002	A risk assessment report by URS concluded that PRC's proposals to avoid, remedy or eliminate risk adequately safeguards DOC against potential adverse environmental effects.	NZOG0067/27 5.11-5.13 NZOG0016
25 Nov 2002	PRC applied to the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) to amend mining permit 41-453 to allow mining to commence within seven years (previously 5 years).	MED0000010001/103
3 Dec 2002	MED granted the amendment.	MED0000010001/103

13 Feb 2003	PRC applied to MED for a petroleum exploration permit to test for coal seam gas.	MED0000010001/104 333
13 Aug 2003	PRC granted petroleum exploration permit (PEP) for 5 years.	NZOG0067/25 5.3
23 Dec 2003	DOC completed the Conservancy Mining Report and an associated briefing which was forwarded to the Minister of Conservation.	DOC0000010001/51 198
12 Mar 2004	Minister of Conservation approved PRC access arrangement to conduct mining operations subject to the negotiation of conditions by DOC.	DOC0000010001/51 199
4 Aug 2004	Environment Court appeals resolved by a consent order which approved numerous resource consents, including: a) Land use consent to undertake construction of mine ventilation shaft, water supply pipeline, fan house and fan, standby diesel generator and diesel tank (LUMN 886/02). b) Land use consent to undertake underground coal mining, including stone drive, ventilation shaft, and emergency exits (RC02020/5). c) Land use consent to undertake earthworks and land disturbance required for construction of amenities area, including rock disposal (RC02020/6).	DAO.001.0003/26 146i DAO.001.0003/26 146c
21 Oct 2004	DOC access arrangement granting PRC the right to access land administered by DOC to conduct mining operations for a 25 year term is signed. PRC is required to pay bonds, have adequate insurances and carry out measures to prevent/mitigate adverse environmental impacts. PRC also to submit annual work and rehabilitation plans, and a trial mining management plan. Schedule 3 of Access Agreement notes four emergency exits from the Mine to the Western escarpment, ventilation shaft and fan house.	NZOG0067/26 5.4, 5.5, 5.8, 5.9 NZOG0018 DAO.001.0003 138
2005	Fortnightly liaison meetings instituted between PRC and DOC.	DOC0000010001/62 251
Dec 2005	Transportation Services Agreement with West Coast Coal Company Limited (later replaced with transport agreement with Solid Energy in Nov 2007), and Road Contribution Agreement with Buller District Council.	NZOG0067/57 6.96(c), (d),
Dec 2005	Authority to Enter and Operate granted and access arrangement variations issued allowing construction within the DOC estate to commence.	DAO.001.0003 166
8 Aug 2006	Pipeline concession granted.	NZOG0067/25 5.4
31 Aug 2006	Memorandum of Consent with Grey District Council for PRC's contribution to upgrade of an intersection.	NZOG0067/59 6.101(e)

13 Nov 2006	DOC access agreement (exploration) granting access to public conservation land for 19 years. The exploration agreements allowed for flexibility when drilling new exploratory holes within the wider minerals permit area.	DAO.001.0003 143 NZOG0067/25 5.4 DOC0000010001/56 220
May 2007	Environment Court gave final resource consent to truck up to 1.3 million tonnes of coal by road to Greymouth.	DAO.001.0003 147
Apr 2009	MED extended petroleum exploration permit 38-517 by five years.	MED0000010001/106