



SUBMISSION- STANWELL CORPORATION LIMITED

Select Committee Inquiry into Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis

Extended Terms of Reference

23 June 2017

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23 June 2017

Dear Committee Secretary

Reference: Submission from Stanwell Corporation to the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis Select Committee

Executive Summary

Stanwell Corporation Limited (Stanwell) welcomes the opportunity to make this written submission to the Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis (CWP) Select Committee.

Ensuring the health and safety of all our people is a core value of Stanwell and we use a holistic approach to health and safety management that is focused on injury and illness prevention. This submission addresses Stanwell's:

- **Dust management system** which provides an overview of what we do to prevent occupational diseases caused by exposure to respirable dusts. There is a continued focus on managing and maintaining plant conditions to minimise potential coal and ash dust leakage and exposure of workers to coal dust.
- **Dust monitoring program** which provides a summary of the monitoring program which has been conducted by accredited third party providers and health and safety team members. Dust monitoring has been undertaken at the coal-fired power stations during normal and peak overhaul periods to measure the effectiveness of controls and inform priority maintenance and cleaning regimes. The program has recently been reviewed and a further targeted monitoring program established for the Stanwell and Tarong power stations.
- **Health surveillance program** which outlines how we monitor the health of our workforce. Stanwell conducts annual health assessments (including spirometry) on all employees at its generation sites with oversight by a specialist Occupational Physician.
- **Employee support program** which includes our response to the re-emergence of CWP and our broader engagement with our workforce, contractors and key stakeholders. Stanwell has implemented a Black Lung Awareness Campaign and a medical advisory program that includes a Voluntary Respiratory Health Assessment with a specialist occupational medical provider.

Preventing and minimising exposure to coal and ash dust remains a focus of our coal fired generation sites. Stanwell is deeply concerned about the diagnosed cases of CWP in the Queensland coal industry and the impact on those people and their families. Stanwell has responded by actively engaging with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and the Queensland Resources Council and monitoring the broader industry and Government responses to adopt best practice control programs appropriate for our risk exposures.

Stanwell is committed to working with the Select Committee and with industry, Government and other key stakeholders to ensure we have a healthy and safe workforce now and for the future.

About Stanwell

Stanwell is a diversified energy business that owns coal, gas and water assets which we use to generate electricity. We sell this electricity directly to business customers and we trade gas, coal and electricity products.

Our coal, gas and hydro power stations are located at eight geographically dispersed sites across Queensland and have the capacity to generate more than 4,000 megawatts (MW), or more than half of Queensland's average daily electricity demand.

The safe and efficient operation of our plant is paramount to Stanwell. Our belief is that our people, contractors and visitors who enter our sites and offices should be able to do so with the knowledge they will return home safely each day.

We operate two of Australia's most efficient coal-fired power stations: Tarong and Tarong North Power Stations (near Kingaroy) and Stanwell Power Station (Rockhampton). The Tarong Power stations receive coal from the nearby Meandu Mine (which we also own) via a conveyor. The coal to fuel Stanwell Power Station comes from Curragh Mine in central Queensland.

Two of our gas fired power station sites were also previously operated as coal fired plants – Swanbank Power Station (A&B stations – now demolished) near Ipswich and Mica Creek Power Station (A station – mothballed) near Mount Isa.

In 2015/16, Stanwell invested a record \$203.3 million in our plant. More than half of this was invested in an unprecedented overhaul of four units at Tarong and Stanwell power stations. The primary objective of these overhauls is to maintain the operating units and associated equipment, to ensure safe, compliant, efficient and reliable operation.

Meandu Mine is operated by Downer Mining who is the Senior Site Executive for the site and they operate under their own safety management system in accordance with the current *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act and Regulation*.

Dust Management

Stanwell has well-developed health and safety systems that are designed to support a program for the identification, risk assessment and control of health and safety risks and hazardous substances (coal dust, Legionnaires disease, crystalline silica, other etc.) These systems are routinely reviewed and audited to ensure they are fit for purpose and continually improved over time.

Stanwell adopts a "hierarchy of controls" approach that focuses on higher level controls to eliminate exposure to the hazard (by removing people from the area, where possible), engineering controls (e.g. water sprays on conveyors) to reduce the risk and then lower order controls such as administrative processes and respiratory personal protective equipment.

In terms of CWP prevention, dust management programs are in place at Stanwell's coal-fired generation sites to ensure:

- a continued focus on managing and maintaining plant conditions to minimise coal and ash dust leakage;
- higher level controls such as dust suppression systems installed on the coal conveyors;

- regular cleaning regimes by dry vacuuming and wet washing are maintained;
- regular plant inspections for dust leaks are performed; and
- appropriate respiratory personal protective equipment is provided to minimise exposure, including higher order respiratory equipment such as full face respirators and air-fed helmets through to half face and disposable respirators.

Stanwell uses a wide range of controls to limit and manage the generation of, and potential exposure of workers and contractors to, coal dust and ash. This includes trialling improved extraction and filtration systems. Stanwell continues to engage with its contracting partners and the wider industry and Government to adopt best practice control programs appropriate for our risk exposures.

Dust Monitoring

Stanwell has an established dust monitoring program that has been continually improved over time. Dust monitoring equipment is available at both Stanwell and Tarong power stations to undertake dust monitoring of work areas (static) and personal exposure monitoring which are then compared against the workplace exposure standards. In peak periods such as overhauls, additional exposure monitoring is conducted by specialist external providers. Dust monitoring results are then used to provide an indication of conditions present, and understand the importance and priority of repairs, maintenance and cleaning regimes.

In response to the identification of CWP in the Queensland coal industry, Stanwell engaged a specialist Occupational Physician to perform an independent review and risk assessment of the health surveillance program. This process occurred in November 2016 whereby two Occupational Hygienists completed a site visit to Tarong Power Station to understand the nature of the exposure and review the existing dust monitoring data and the health surveillance program. The outcomes of this assessment were a refined list of Similar Exposure Groups (SEG)'s and recommendations to implement increased randomised sampling schedules for both Stanwell and Tarong power stations.

Targeted static and personal dust monitoring programs commenced at Tarong in May 2017 to help validate the Similar Exposure Groups (SEG)'s and enable higher level data interpretation and determine health monitoring intervals. Stanwell Power Station is scheduled to commence monitoring in July and both programs will be ongoing over the next two years.

Real-time dust monitors

Stanwell have recently purchased two real time dust monitors to enhance the dust monitoring program and provide instantaneous results for respirable dust and exposure patterns across the shifts and sampling periods. The expected benefits of these devices are immediate feedback on the effectiveness of controls and work environment conditions and increased worker confidence and empowerment for them to manage their own exposure. Once these devices have been delivered, a confirmation trial will be conducted at Tarong before broader implementation to Stanwell Power Station.

Health Surveillance

As part of the health and safety strategy, Stanwell has a number of “core” health initiatives and programs in place to encourage and maintain workforce wellbeing. Stanwell employs Occupational Health Nurses based at Tarong to resource and coordinate these initiatives for all the sites which include health surveillance. Stanwell currently requires the completion of an annual health assessment for all employees exposed to noise and dust hazards at its generation sites. The health assessment comprises of the following components:

- Respiratory health questionnaire,
- General Health status (blood pressure, blood glucose),
- Spirometry lung function test, and
- Audiometric test (hearing).

The results are discussed with the employee during their visit and compared against their baseline pre-employment and historical records to identify any abnormalities. If there are any abnormalities, for example, a decline in lung function, then further testing is conducted under medical supervision by Stanwell’s Specialist Occupational Physician.

All workers who have previously worked at generation sites and are still working for Stanwell are encouraged to participate in the program on a voluntary basis.

All health surveillance records are centrally managed by the Occupational Health Nurses.

The health surveillance program was also reviewed as part of the risk assessment conducted at Tarong in November 2016. This led to the enhancement of the respiratory section of the health assessment and adoption of the validated MRC (UK) Respiratory Questionnaire. Furthermore, it is expected that the ongoing health surveillance program including health assessment screening protocols and intervals (i.e. implementation of chest x-rays) will be risk-based in line with the outcomes of the targeted dust monitoring program and establishment of SEG’s. Stanwell will continue to monitor for regulatory changes and make changes as required.

Employee Support

While we continue with our current dust management and health surveillance programs, we have implemented the following:

- A Black Lung Awareness program to re-iterate the requirements of preventing exposure to coal and ash dust by maintaining plant conditions, reporting adverse conditions, cleaning importance and the need for, and types of, respiratory protective equipment. It also included an update on the Monash review and Coal Mining legislation changes. Further updates will be provided as required.
- Voluntary Respiratory Health Assessment program which offers employees who have had previous coal dust exposure; or are concerned about their health, a voluntary respiratory health assessment with a specialist occupational medical provider. Based on the outcomes of this consultation, the occupational physician may refer the employee for further investigation or management such as a chest x-ray or an appointment with a respiratory specialist.

- Stanwell's approach and its expectations in relation to its contractor company's processes have been communicated and Stanwell's primary contract partner United Group Limited (UGL) has implemented a strengthened awareness, monitoring and surveillance program for its employees.

Summary

Stanwell's primary concern is the health and safety of its workforce and contractors and it has actively responded by taking steps while reviews of CWP have been conducted.

- We have implemented a Black Lung Awareness campaign and provided our workforce with updates on the Queensland Government's response, parliamentary enquiry updates and regulatory changes. Stanwell will continue to provide information and support to its employees.
- Further to our core health surveillance program, we have implemented a Voluntary Respiratory Health Assessment program for workers which offer employees who have had previous coal dust exposure or are concerned about their health, a voluntary Respiratory Health Assessment with a specialist occupational medical provider.
- We have continued with investment and improvements in dust management and mitigation at our coal-fired generation sites as part of our health and safety management system and continuous improvement program.

Stanwell is continuing to engage with key stakeholders, the Queensland Resources Council, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and the broader industry on a range of initiatives responding to Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis.

If you have any questions regarding this submission please contact Michael Joy – Manager Health and Safety, via reception () or direct ().

Yours sincerely

Michael Joy
Manager Health and Safety