



Centennial Coal



AIRLY COAL MINE

**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF 66kV
POWERLINE**

Briefing Paper

March 2009

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Figure 1: Locality

Figure 2: Powerline Route

Figure 3: Land Ownership

1 INTRODUCTION

This Briefing Paper has been prepared to introduce a proposal by Airly Coal Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Centennial Coal Company Limited (Centennial) to construct a new 66kV powerline to connect Airly Coal Mine (Airly) to the existing Integral Energy 66kV line. The proponent is to be referred to as Centennial Airly Coal. The works are required as a result of Centennials intention to re-commence operations at Airly. **Figure 1** (attached) shows the regional setting of Airly and extent of the proposed new 66kV powerline.

Development Consent (No. 162/91) was granted for Airly by the then Minister for Planning on 14 April 1993, for the construction and operation of an underground coal mine for a period of 21 years. A modification was approved in December 1999 to allow up to 500,000 tpa to be transported by road for a period of two years. Airly has been on a care and maintenance program.

It has been determined that the Development Consent (No. 162/91) for Airly does not provide the necessary approvals to construct the proposed new 66kV powerline. A preliminary discussion with the Department of Planning (DoP) undertaken by Centennial Airly indicated that the application for the proposed new 66kV powerline will be assessed under Section 75W of Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act 1979).

GSS Environmental (GSSE) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) on behalf of Centennial, which will be submitted as part of the Section 75W application.

This Briefing Paper will be used for the briefing of sub-consultants, as supporting information for the undertaking of consultation with the relevant internal and external stakeholders, and for consultation with the relevant government approval and referral agencies as required.

2 STUDY AREA

The Study Area is the proposed powerline easement which encapsulates the powerline route and access track.

Airly is situated on the northern fringe of the Western Coalfields, approximately 40km north-northwest of Lithgow and around 4km northeast of Capertee (see **Figure 1**). Road access to Airly is off the Glen Davis Road.

The proposed powerline route will be approximately 3.8km long, within a 15m wide easement. The 15m wide easement will allow for construction of the powerline and associated access track. The proposed powerline route will run from the Airly site to a take off point that will connect to Integral Energy's existing 66kV powerline, running along the Wallerawang-Gwebegar rail line, approximately 1.5km north of the township of Capertee (see **Figure 2**).

The proposed powerline route is to be constructed almost entirely within the land holdings of Centennial (see **Figure 3**). The one exception to this is where the powerline route traverses an unformed Crown road which is under Enclosure Permit 50283 held by Centennial. Centennial have been in consultation with the Department of Lands to obtain the necessary approvals to access the land, and are in the process of applying for Closure and Acquisition of the Crown road.

The proposed 66kV powerline route will predominately utilise existing cleared land and internal access tracks to limit native vegetation clearing.

It should be noted that the Study Area will be more accurately defined once a pending detailed survey of the route is complete.

3 BACKGROUND

Development Consent (No. 162/91) was granted by the then Minister for Planning on 14 April 1993, for the construction and operation of an underground coal mine for a period of 21 years. The Environmental Impact Statement (Novacoal, 1991) for Airly outlined the proposed facilities and services required as part of the project. This included establishing a 66kV powerline to Airly to serve the operation at full scale capacity, but did not specify the powerline route.

In January 1997, some initial site drainage works and water management structures were constructed for Airly.

Centennial purchased Airly from Novacoal Australia Pty Limited on 30 December 1997.

On 26 April 1998, Centennial commenced further works at Airly in preparation for a trial mine. A bulk sample was delivered to Mount Piper Power Station in June 1998. This material was won during the formation of the initial contractor hardstand area. The Trial Mine Phase commenced in early December 1998 with regular transport of product coal to Mount Piper Power Station.

In 1999 Development Approval (DA 162/91) was modified to allow up to 500,000 tpa to be transported by road for a period of two years. This period lapsed on 30 June 2002.

Since 2001 Airly has been on a care and maintenance program. The care and maintenance program includes regular statutory inspections, maintenance of the pollution control system, environmental monitoring and erosion control works.

Centennial are planning to re-commence underground coal mining at Airly in accordance with the Development Consent. To re-commence underground mining, Centennial will require the installation of electrical supply for mining operations at Airly. It has been determined that the Development Consent (No. 162/91) does not provide the necessary approvals to construct the proposed new 66kV powerline from the take-off point to the Airly Project site, which is over land parcels that were not subject to the Development Consent (No. 162/91). As a result of this:

- Centennial is currently in the process of applying to Integral Energy (as the determining authority under Part 5 of the EP&A Act) for approval to construct the take-off point for the 66kV powerline from existing Integral Energy infrastructure. This application is being dealt with separately and does not form part of the application under Section 75W (see below); and
- Centennial is currently preparing an application for the proposed new 66kV powerline under Section 75W of Part 3A of the EP&A Act to cover the proposed powerline route from Airly to the take-off point.

At the feasibility stage of the proposed new 66kV powerline project, six potential powerline routes were subject to field investigations and preliminary assessment to identify the powerline and access track alignment with the least environmental impact. Based on these investigations one option was selected as the preferred

route due to minimal clearing required and the ability to use existing farm access tracks.

4 PROPOSED WORKS SUBJECT TO S75W APPLICATION

The proposed powerline route will be owned and maintained by Centennial and will include the following:

- Establishment of an easement 15 m wide for the full length (approximately 3.8 km) of the proposed powerline route;
- Construction of 66kV powerline within the easement including:
 - Installation of approximately 34 poles in timber, steel or concrete and stays, insulators and fittings;
 - Installation of overhead 66 kV transmission lines;
 - 66kV metering and circuit breaker yard at the take off point end;
 - Construction of barriers at road crossings;
 - Installation of a switchyard at the Airly Project Site end; and
 - Connection to the existing Integral take-off point.
- Construction of access track within the easement with typical track width of 4 m and 6.8 m of clearance, utilising existing farm access tracks where practical. The access to the Integral take-off point will be via an all weather 4WD track. Where the route crosses Airly Creek construction of a vehicle crossing is not required as an existing bridge will be used, located immediately downstream of the powerline crossing; and
- Ground disturbance (for excavation of concrete footings and access track) and clearing of approximately 16 mature trees and one immature tree (for installation of poles and overhead lines).

It should be noted that:

- The switchyard at the take-off point is subject to a separate application to Integral Energy and does not form part of the S75W application; and
- No other aspects of Airly form part of the S75W application as these are approved under the Development Consent (No. 162/91).

5 KEY ISSUES

Preliminary investigations and consultation with government agencies have identified the following key issues to be addressed within the EA that require specialist studies to be completed:

- **Flora & Fauna Assessment** to examine the likelihood of the proposal to have a significant effect on any threatened species, populations or ecological communities listed within the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act 1995).

- **Archaeological Assessment** to examine the likelihood of the proposal to have a significant effect on any Aboriginal sites.

At the feasibility stage of the project six potential powerline routes were considered. During the feasibility stage field investigations and preliminary evaluation was undertaken by archaeological and ecological specialist to identify the powerline alignment and access tracks with the least archaeological and ecological impact to the area.

In addition to the above, the EA will include, but is not limited to, assessment of the following environmental aspects:

- Surface Water (addressing Erosion and Sediment Control);
- Soils (addressing Erosion and Sediment Control);
- Noise and Vibration;
- Air Quality;
- Visual Amenity;
- Traffic and Transport; and
- Waste Management.

Each consultant is encouraged to identify additional issues in their response to this Briefing Paper (as may be appropriate).

6 PLANNING / APPLICATION PROCESS

The application will be made pursuant to Section 75W of the EP&A Act.

The existing approval is under Part 4 of the EP&A Act. Section 75W provides an avenue for Part 4 approved developments, that would otherwise be considered through a Section 96 amendment, to be considered through the Part 3A protocols (refer EP&A Regulations 2000 clause 8J(8)(a)).

It has been identified that there are four land parcels on the transmission line route that are not part of the land description of the approved development. These land parcels are 22//755758, 44//755758, 45//755758 and EP 50283 (Crown road).

The proposed modification will seek to add these four additional parcels of land to the approved development lands and the accompanying environmental assessment will assess the impacts of the construction of the 66kV infrastructure over these lands.

The following key milestones have been identified:

1. Development of a Planning Approvals Strategy (completed);
2. Community and Government Consultation (in progress);
3. Letter, 75W Modification Application and Briefing Paper (forming Preliminary Environmental Assessment) submitted to DoP seeking confirmation of S75W status and Environmental Assessment Requirements (EAR);
4. DoP issues EARs;
5. Sub-consultants to finalise specialists reports;

6. GSSE to finalise Environmental Assessment;
7. Submission of Environmental Assessment;
8. DoP Adequacy Review of Environmental Assessment;
9. Re-submit revised final Environmental Assessment (if required by DoP);
10. DoP Acceptance of Environmental Assessment; and
11. DoP issues Project Approval.

7 TIMING OF PROPOSED APPLICATION

Centennial are aiming to submit the application and associated documentation under Part 3, Section 75W of the EP&A Act by May 2009. In order to meet this timeframe the following preliminary key milestones have been set for discussion:

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| • Letter, 75W Application and Briefing Paper to DoP | March 2009 |
| • DoP Issues EARs | April 2009 |
| • Completion of Specialist reports | April 2009 |
| • Completion Environmental Assessment | May 2009 |
| • Submission of the Environmental Assessment | May 2009 |
| • DoP Adequacy Review | May 2009 |
| • Approval by DoP | June 2009 |

DoP have advised Centennial that the application will not be placed on exhibition as the powerline will not dramatically alter the already approved development and due to the predicted low environmental impact.

8 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Centennial will undertake any consultation necessary as part of the application. Stakeholder consultation has commenced and will continue during the preparation of the application. Centennial have currently undertaken consultation with the following stakeholders:

- NSW Department of Planning (in relation to determining appropriate planning path and assessment requirements);
- Integral Energy (in relation to connection to the existing Integral Energy infrastructure and supply of power);
- Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority (in relation to impact on native vegetation);
- NSW Department of Lands (in relation to access of Crown road); and
- Landowners of a neighboring property (Lot 82 DP 755758) (in relation to land access to the Integral take-off point);
- Capertee Progress Association (as part of a briefing on the reopening of the mine).

In addition to the above, Centennial will be undertaking consultation with the following stakeholders:

- NSW Department of Water and Energy (primarily in relation to works in proximity to Airly Creek);
- Lithgow City Council;
- NSW Department of Primary Industries - Mineral Resources; and
- Capertee Progress Association (primarily to address any issues relevant to the general community).

9 CONTACTS

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