

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Integra Open Cut Coal Mine Section 96(1A) Modification (DA 86/2889 MOD 10)

1 BACKGROUND

The Integra mining complex is located approximately 12 kilometres northwest of Singleton in the Upper Hunter Valley. The complex comprises the former Glennies Creek colliery and Camberwell open cut coal mine, which have now been integrated into one mining operation (see Figure 1). The complex is managed by Integra Coal Operations Pty Ltd (Integra).

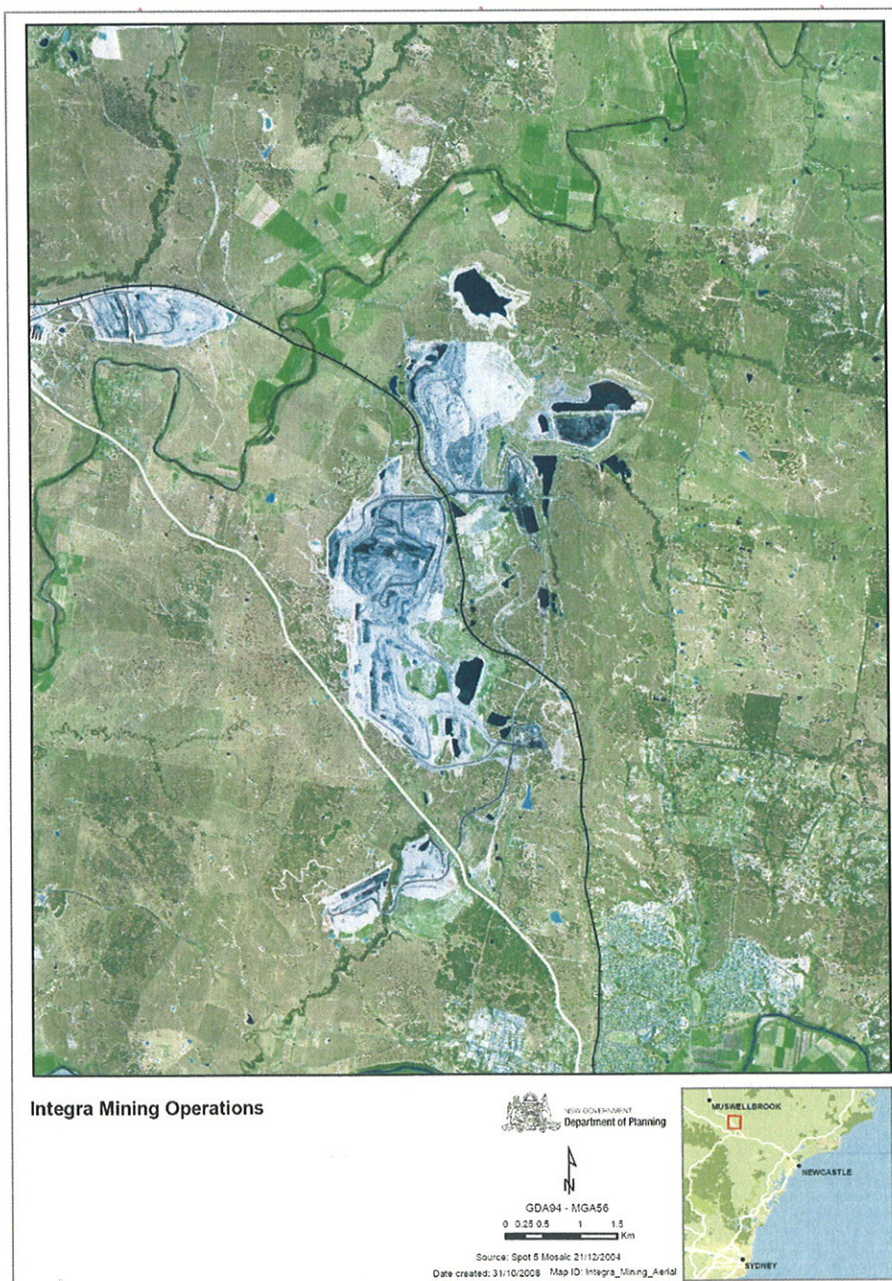


Figure 1: Regional location of the Integra Mining Complex

Mining at the complex is regulated by five consents/approvals:

- DA 86/2889 for the Integra open cut mining operation (formerly known as Camberwell open cut coal mine) and use of associated surface facilities, including a coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP) and coal loader;
- DA 105/90 and MP 06_0213 for the Glennies Creek underground colliery operations;
- MP 06_0057 for the construction and use of additional surface facilities to support the Glennies Creek underground operations; and
- MP 06_0073 for a small open cut coal mine north of the Glennies Creek underground operations.

These consents/approvals together allow Integra to:

- extract up to 6.0 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) from its open cut mining operations;
- extract up to 4.5 Mtpa from 17 longwall panels;
- process up to 1,200 tonnes per hour at the Camberwell CHPP, before loading it onto trains and dispatching it to export and/or domestic markets.

Integra is seeking to modify its development consent for the Integra open cut mining operation (DA 86/2889). This consent was granted by the then Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Planning on 19 March 1990, and has previously been modified 9 times.

The Department is also currently assessing two major project applications from Integra under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) to extend its open cut and underground mining operations and to consolidate its existing consents/approvals.

2 PROPOSED MODIFICATION AND PROJECT NEED

On 23 March 2010, Integra submitted an application and accompanying Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) to modify DA 86/2889 under Section 96(1A) of the EP&A Act.

The proposed modification involves relocating Integra's existing explosives magazine compound and reload facilities (the magazine compound) approximately 450 metres (m) north and 15m upslope of the existing reloading facility, to reduce the risk of flooding during high rainfall events and resultant disruption to mining operations.

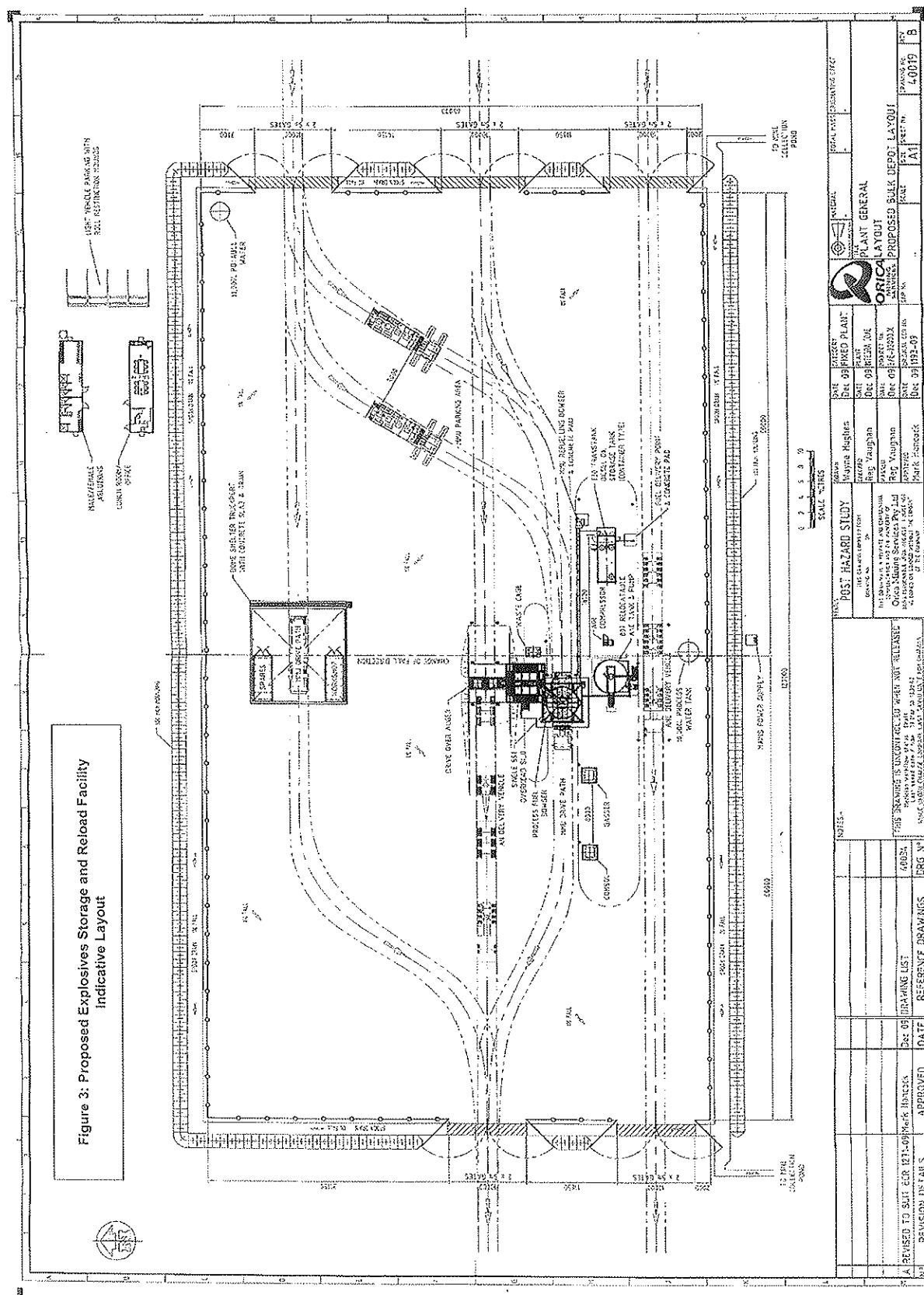
The proposed magazine compound would be located within the mine's existing consent boundary, on a former overburden emplacement area adjacent to the North Open Cut haul road, and would have an elevation of approximately 107m AHD (see Figure 2). The proposed magazine compound would consist of a 120m x 65m pad containing a 55 tonne (t) ammonium nitrate (AN) silo, an 80t AN emulsion silo, a 6m sea container, a demountable office building and a wash down/service bay (see Figure 3). Three additional 6m sea containers, which would function as explosives magazines, would be separate, but adjacent to, the main pad area as required under AS 2187.2 - *Storage of Explosives*.

The proposed modification would not change the currently approved development consent area, mining area, extraction rates, mining methodology or employment at Integra. There would be no significant increases in noise, or emissions affecting air quality or water quality as a result of the proposed modification. Construction would be carried out 24 hours a day 7 days a week and would take approximately 3 months to complete.

The existing magazine compound area would be rehabilitated once the new magazine compound had been constructed.



Figure 2: Location of the existing and proposed explosives magazine compound and reload facilities



3 STATUTORY CONTEXT

Section 96

Under section 96(1A) of the EP&A Act, a consent authority may modify a development consent if it is satisfied that:

- a) *the proposed modification is of minimal environmental impact, and*
- b) *the development to which the consent as modified relates is substantially the same development for which consent was originally granted and before that consent as originally granted was modified (if at all) under this section.*

The Department has assessed the potential impacts of the proposed modification (Section 5) and is satisfied it would be of minimal environmental impact. It is also satisfied that the proposed modification represents a minor change to the originally approved mining operations, and consequently the development (as modified) would remain substantially the same development for which consent was originally granted.

Consent Authority

The Minister was the consent authority for the original development application, and is consequently the consent authority for this application. However, the Director, Mining and Industry Projects may determine the application under the Minister's delegation of 25 January 2010.

4 CONSULTATION

The Department is not required to notify or exhibit applications under section 96(1A) of the EP&A Act. Given the minor nature of the proposed modification and its minimal environmental impact, the Department has not undertaken any consultation for the proposal.

5 ASSESSMENT

The Department's assessment of the key issues is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Assessment of key issues

Issue	Potential Impacts & Consideration	Conclusion
Noise	- The proposed modification has the potential to cause noise impacts during construction and operation. - However, the proposed location of the new magazine compound is within the mine's existing consent boundary and any noise impacts would be insignificant when compared to noise generated from existing operations. - The Department is confident that any noise associated with the proposed modification would be negligible, unlikely to impact any sensitive receiver and able to be managed under Integra's existing Noise Management Plan.	No additional control measures required.
Air Quality	- The proposed modification has the potential to increase dust generation through construction activities and traffic movements. - However, the proposed location of the new magazine compound is within the mine's existing consent boundary and any air quality impacts would be insignificant when compared to air quality impacts generated from existing operations. - The Department is satisfied that potential air quality impacts on surrounding residents would be negligible.	No additional control measures required.
Water Resources	- The proposed modification has the potential to impact on surface water flows during and following construction. - However, the proposed location of the new magazine compound is within an existing dirty water catchment area. All surface water runoff	No additional control measures required.

Issue	Potential Impacts & Consideration	Conclusion
	would be captured by Integra's existing dirty water system for use in dust suppression or the coal washing process. - The assessment determined that the proposed modification would not impact groundwater resources. - The Department is satisfied that any potential impacts to water resources would be negligible and can be managed under Integra's existing Site Water Management Plan.	
Flora and Fauna	- The proposed modification has the potential to impact flora and fauna during the construction of the proposed facilities. - However, the proposed location for the new magazine compound is disturbed and has been rehabilitated with exotic pasture species. No impact to flora or fauna is predicted. - Due to the disturbed nature of the site the Department is satisfied that any potential impact to flora and fauna associated with the proposed modification would be negligible.	No additional control measures required.
Visual	- The proposed modification has the potential to increase the visual impact of the mine due to its higher elevation. - The assessment found that some components of the proposed magazine compound would be partially visible over a 200m length of Bridgman Road. - Integra would paint elevated components of the compound in a colour that blends with the surrounding rehabilitated areas, to minimise potential visual impacts. - The Department is satisfied that visual amenity impacts as a result of the proposed modification would be minimal in the context of the existing mining operations.	No additional control measures required.
Heritage	- The proposed modification has the potential to impact on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage during the construction of the proposed facilities. - However, the proposed location of the new magazine compound area has been highly disturbed and modified by previous development. - The assessment found that the proposed modification would not impact on items of Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal cultural heritage. - The Department is satisfied there would be no impact to Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal heritage sites from the proposed modification.	No additional control measures required.

6 SECTION 79C

Under section 96 of the EP&A Act, a consent authority is required to consider the relevant matters listed under Section 79C of the Act when it determines a modification application.

The Department has assessed the proposal against these matters, and is satisfied that:

- the proposal is consistent with the provisions of the relevant planning instruments;
- the potential environmental impacts are insignificant and can be adequately minimised, mitigated and/or managed;
- the site is suitable for the development;
- the proposal is in the public interest; and
- the proposed modification can be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the objects of the EP&A Act, including the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

7 RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

The Department is satisfied that the existing conditions of consent for the Integra Open Cut coal mine are adequate to manage the development as modified by the application.

8 CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the application in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act. This assessment has found that the proposed modification would be of minimal environmental impact, and could be appropriately managed under existing conditions of consent to ensure an acceptable level of environmental performance.

The proposed modification would reduce the risk of flooding to the existing magazine compound and potential resultant disruption to Integra's mining operations.

The Department is satisfied that the overall benefits outweigh any potential minor impacts, and that the proposed modification is justified, and should be approved.

9 RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Director:

- consider the findings and recommendations of this report;
- determine that the proposed modification is of minimal environmental impact;
- determine that the development to which the consent, as modified, relates is substantially the same development for which consent was originally granted;
- approve the application under section 96(1A) of the EP&A Act; and
- sign the attached notice of modification (Tagged A).

Howard Reed

Howard Reed
Manager
Mining Projects 8-4-10

DKitto 9/4/10

David Kitto
Director
Mining and Industry Projects