



Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project

Social Impact Assessment

Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd

19 August 2024

→ **The Power of Commitment**



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Glossary

Term	Definition
Amenity and character	The noise, air quality, and visual amenity of the area provide for the enjoyment of residents and create a recognisable and distinctive character (Wood, 2008).
Community infrastructure	Community infrastructure refers to public places and spaces that accommodate community facilities and services and support individuals, families and groups to meet their social needs, maximise their potential and enhance community wellbeing. Community infrastructure can also have a broader role in shaping the physical layout and look of a new development/renewal area, helping to define its identity and character. Examples of what may be considered community infrastructure include: – community meeting spaces, recreation centres and community arts and activity spaces – childcare, primary and secondary schools, youth spaces and libraries – community gardens, volunteer emergency services, health centres, disability and aged services (City of Melbourne, 2014).
Community values	Community values, or a sense of community, are the social ties established within a community, in part based around the features and qualities of the built environment that encourage these social ties and contribute to quality of life and wellbeing. A project may impact on these aspects of a community for example through changes in noise and air quality, visual amenity, traffic and access, barriers to movement across the community, and use of enjoyable community spaces (Maller & Nicholls 2014, p.17–32).
Decile Score (in relation to SEIFA – see below)	Deciles divide a distribution into ten equal groups. In the case of SEIFA, the distribution of scores is divided into ten equal groups. The lowest scoring 10% of areas are given a decile number of 1, the second-lowest 10% of areas are given a decile number of 2 and so on, up to the highest 10% of areas which are given a decile number of 10 (ABS, 2013).
Local Government Area (LGA)	LGAs are an approximation of gazetted local government boundaries as defined by each State and Territory. LGAs cover incorporated areas of Australia (ABS, 2022a).
Operational area	The area that would be occupied by the of the mine’s permanent operational infrastructure, both underground and surface-level, and directly disturbed during operation.
Rental Affordability Index (RAI)	A score above 120 is considered acceptable, above 150 is considered affordable, and below 100 is considered unaffordable.
Suburbs and Localities (SAL)	SALs are an approximation of the officially recognised boundaries of suburbs (in cities and larger towns) and localities (outside cities and larger towns) (ABS, 2022a).
Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)	The ABS produces four socio-economic indices for areas (SEIFA) based on Census data, which identify areas of relative advantage and disadvantage. Socio-economic advantage and disadvantage are defined broadly by the IRSAD in terms of people’s access to material and social resources and their ability to participate in society (ABS, 2022a). To capture this broad definition, the IRSAD includes a range of data points, including income, education, employment, occupation, and housing. IRSAD scores are presented in declines and state rankings, with 1 being the lowest socioeconomic decile and the most disadvantaged and 10 being least disadvantaged.
Stakeholder	Person or group affected by or concerned with an issue.
Vulnerable Group	The inability of people to withstand or adapt to change due to characteristics of the group they are a part of. This report considers the following groups: socio-economically disadvantaged persons as identified by the index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage, the elderly and very young, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people who need assistance with core activities such as self-care, movement and communication due to severe or profound disability.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACHAM	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Methodology
ACHAR	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
ACHCRs	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents
Bloomfield	Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd
Bloomfield CCC	Bloomfield Community Consultative Committee
CCC	Cessnock City Council
CBC	Cessnock Business Chamber
CHPP	Coal Handling and Preparation Plant
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
DPHI	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
EIANZ	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (NSW)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPL	Environment Protection License
GHD	GHD Pty Ltd
GRP	Gross Regional Product
GSP	Gross State Product
IAIA	International Association for Impact Assessment
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
IRSAD	Index for Relative Social Advantage/ Disadvantage
km	Kilometre
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local Government Area
LPD	Legal Point of Discharge
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
MCC	Maitland City Council
m	Metres
MIC	Maximum Instantaneous Charge
ML	Mining Lease
Mtpa	Million tonnes per annum
NSW	New South Wales
PA	Project Approval
RAI	Rental Affordability Index
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Parties
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
ROM	Run of Mine

Term	Definition
SAL	Suburb and Locality
SEIFA	Socio-economic Indexes for Areas
SIA	Social Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

The Bloomfield Colliery (the Colliery) is an existing open cut mining operation located approximately 20 kilometres (km) north-west of Newcastle (the site), as shown by Figure 1.1. The Colliery is operated by Bloomfield Collieries Pty Limited (Bloomfield), part of the Bloomfield Group of companies. Bloomfield currently operate the Colliery in accordance with Project Approval (PA) 07_0087 (the Project Approval) and subsequent modifications, with approved production levels of a maximum of 1.3 millions of tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of Run of Mine (ROM) Coal. Mining operations under the existing approval may take place until 31 December 2030.

Based on current annual mining rates and estimated remaining coal reserves, Bloomfield proposes to continue mining operations further north of the existing approved project area within Mining Lease (ML) 1738 including to deeper seams within the existing disturbed areas where mining to the Buttai Seams has previously occurred and an additional area known as the Workshop Cut (the proposed modification). Existing mining methods would continue to be employed with production levels to be reduced below the currently approved 1.3 Mtpa of ROM Coal to 0.9 Mtpa. This continuation would extend the life of the operation until 31 December 2035. The proposed extension is to occur in two individual areas known as:

- Creek Cut Area
- Workshop Cut

The proposed modification also seeks to include the infrastructure currently approved under the Abel consent PA 05_0136 (the Abel consent) in the Project Approval. This will allow Bloomfield to continue to make use of the existing infrastructure to align with the proposed life of the Colliery (extension to 31 December 2035).

1.1 Project overview

1.1.1 Project site

The Colliery is centrally located between the suburbs of Kurri Kurri, East Maitland and Beresfield. The Colliery is situated north of John Renshaw Drive, Buttai and east of Buchanan Road, Buchanan.

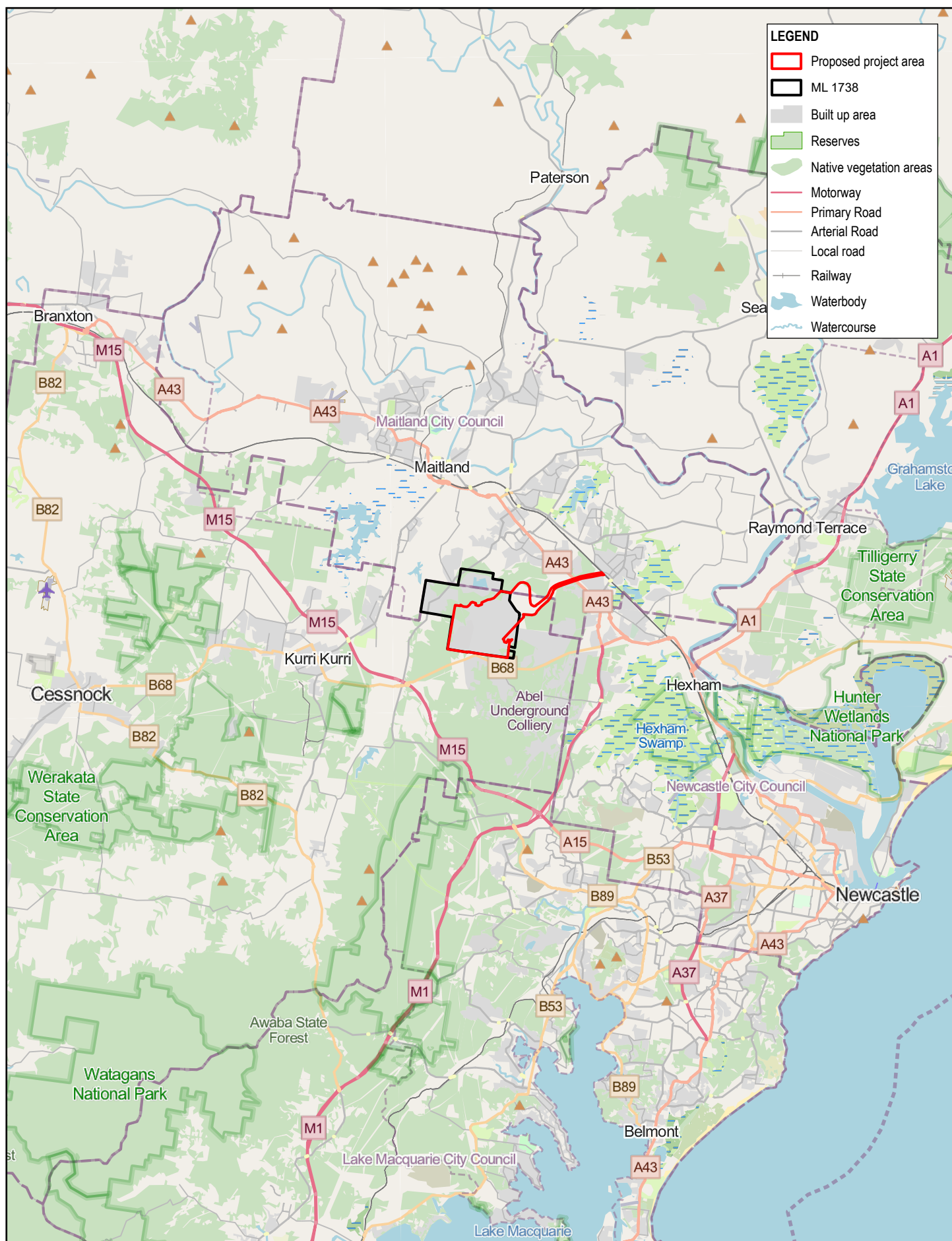
Land use in the surrounding locality is a mixture of:

- North – rehabilitated grazing land post mining.
- South – rural residential properties, John Renshaw Drive.
- East – rehabilitated grazing land post mining.
- West – open forest and residential properties located adjacent to Buchanan Road and to the northwest at Louth Park.

The nearest urban residential area is Ashtonfield, approximately 2.25 km north-east of the Workshop Area. The nearest residence to the approved project area that is not owned by Bloomfield is located approximately 600 metres south of the southern boundary of the currently approved project area.

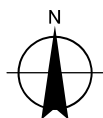
Mining operations in the vicinity of the approved project area include:

- Abel Underground Mine, located to the south-east of the Colliery (in care and maintenance since June 2016).
- Donaldson Open Cut Mine, located to the east of the Colliery (in care and maintenance since June 2016).
- Tasman Underground Mine, located to the south of the Colliery (closed, rehabilitation completed in 2014).
- Bloomfield Coal Handling and Preparation Plant (CHPP) and rail loading facility approved as part of the Abel Project Approval (PA) 05_0136.



Paper Size ISO A4
0 2 4 6 8
Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56



Bloomfield Collieries Pty Limited
Bloomfield Colliery Mine Continuation
Surface Water Impact Statement

Project No. 12597478
Revision No. 0
Date 24/05/2024

Regional context

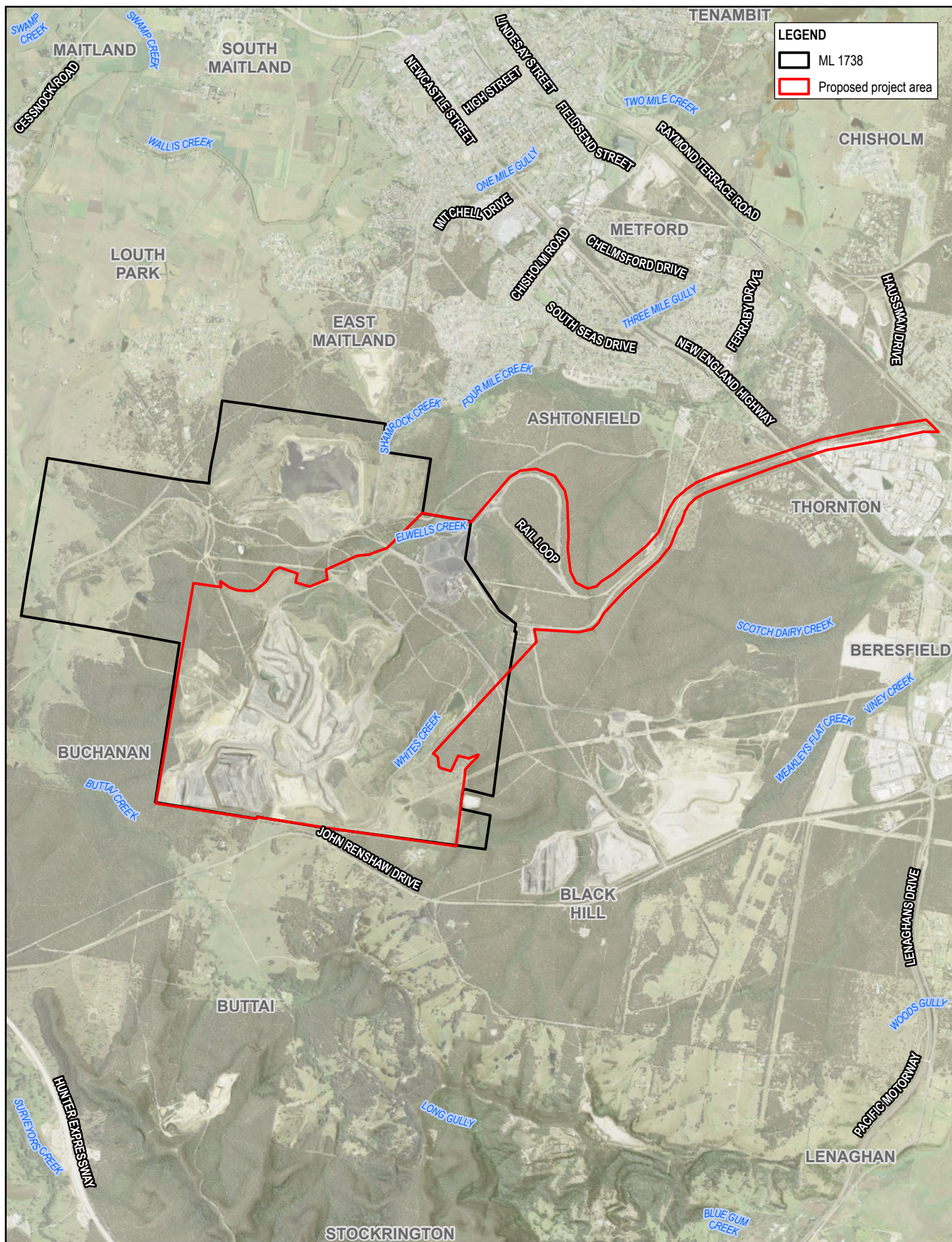
FIGURE 1.1

1.1.2 Project objectives

The key objectives of the project are to:

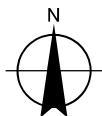
- Expand the project area to include the use of the CHPP, train load out, rail loop and water management structures currently approved under the “Bloomfield Site” in the Abel project approval PA 05_0136.
- Continue mining recoverable, saleable coal in the Creek Cut and Workshop Cut areas at Bloomfield.
- Provide continued employment and economic benefits for both the local community and the state of NSW.
- Provide tangible social and economic benefits to the local community and positive flow-on effects to regional and State economies through additional wages and royalties.
- Improve long term stability benefits from mining the shallow underground workings in the Workshop Area which would remove the potential for continuing sink hole issues caused by mine subsidence.
- Design, construct and operate the project in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- Minimise the project’s impacts on sensitive built and natural environmental features.
- Optimise resource recovery. The coal resource is a public asset owned by the State of NSW and it is therefore in the public interest to optimise resource recovery.
- Provide for the continuation of mining at the Colliery beyond 31 December 2030, the date at which mining operations under Project Approval Modification, MP07_0087-Mod-4 lapse.

The proposed project area is shown in Figure 1.2.



Paper Size ISO A4
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Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56



Bloomfield Collieries Pty Limited
Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project
Social Impact Assessment

Project No. 12597478
Revision No. 0
Date 24/05/2024

Site location

FIGURE 1.2

1.1.3 Project history and current operations

Coal has been mined at the Colliery for approximately 170 years. The open cut, which has been operating since 1966, is approved to produce a maximum of 1.3 Mtpa of ROM coal. Product coal is predominantly thermal coal with some semi-soft coking coal for the Asian export market. Currently the site is operated under Project Approval (PA) 07_0087, with open cut mining operations currently located in the southern portion of the approved project area within the S-Cut and Creek Cut open cut pits. Underground mining operations ceased in 1992.

The Colliery is a multi-seam, multi bench system, mining up to 13 seams or splits. Coal is extracted from coal seams within the Tomago Coal Measures, including the Buttai, A, B and C, Whites Creek, Elwells Creek, Donaldson and Big Ben seams. Heavy earth moving equipment delivers the ROM coal to the onsite CHPP via internal haul roads. ROM coal is processed at the CHPP including size reduction, washing and screening. Product coal is stockpiled adjacent to the CHPP before being loaded into rail wagons at the Bloomfield rail loading facility and transported by rail to the Port of Newcastle or to other domestic customers.

The Colliery has approval to operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and employs 93 personnel over 15 shifts a week across its operations, including the mining, administration and maintenance areas. A range of real time and predictive monitoring is undertaken at the Colliery with the results regularly reviewed and reported annually to ensure the effective and transparent operation of management controls.

The following land uses are located within the approved project area:

- Current active open cut coal mining areas
- Unshaped and shaped overburden dump areas
- Progressively rehabilitated areas some of which are actively grazed by cattle
- Workshop and surrounding area used for maintenance and fuel storage
- Road linking the current coal mining areas with the ROM coal stockpiles adjacent to the CHPP
- Road linking the current and proposed coal mining areas to the workshop
- Areas of completed Rehabilitation which are actively grazed by cattle

1.2 Purpose and scope of this report

The purpose of this report is to assess the potential social impacts from the project. The report:

- Has been prepared in line with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's (DPE) *Social Impact Assessment Guideline: State Significant Projects* (2023) (hereafter referred to as 'the SIA Guideline') (DPE, 2023a)
- Describes the existing social environment of local and regional communities
- Assesses the potential impacts of the project on communities
- Recommends measures to mitigate and manage the impacts identified

1.3 Structure of this report

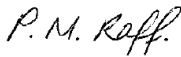
The structure of this Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is outlined below:

- **Section 1:** introduces the project background and purpose of the SIA.
- **Section 2:** details the study methodology.
- **Section 3:** provides an overview of current Colliery operations.
- **Section 4:** provides a review of policy relevant to this assessment.
- **Section 5:** summaries the stakeholder engagement activities and key findings.
- **Section 6:** details the current operations and social baseline for surrounding communities and the region.
- **Section 7:** details the assessment of potential social impacts.
- **Section 8:** identifies the social impact management and enhancement measures.
- **Section 9:** summaries the key findings from the assessment and provides a conclusion.
- **Section 10:** provides a list of references used throughout this assessment.

1.4 Authors of this report

The SIA Guideline requires a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner/s to be involved in the preparation of the SIA report (DPE, 2023a). The personnel involved in the preparation of this SIA and their respective qualifications are provided in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 SIA author declaration

SIA Author declaration		
Name	Phoebe Raff	Lauren Harding
Position	Social Consultant	Technical Director –Social Sustainability and Engagement
Project role	Author	Technical reviewer
Qualifications	Master of Environment (Biodiversity Conservation and Management), 2018 Bachelor of Arts (Archaeology and Biological Anthropology), 2015	Master of Social Science, 2007 Bachelor of Arts (Anthropology), 2005
Memberships		EIANZ IAP2
Declaration	I declare that this SIA contains all available information that is relevant to the social impact assessment and that the information is not false or misleading.	I declare that this SIA contains all available information that is relevant to the social impact assessment and that the information is not false or misleading.
Signature		
Name	Phoebe Raff	Lauren Harding
Date	19/08/2024	19/08/2024

1.5 Scope and limitations

This report: has been prepared by GHD for Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd and may only be used and relied on by Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd for the purpose agreed between GHD and Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd as set out in Section 1.1.3 of this report.

GHD otherwise disclaims responsibility to any person other than Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd arising in connection with this report. GHD also excludes implied warranties and conditions, to the extent legally permissible.

The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report and are subject to the scope limitations set out in the report.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the date of preparation of the report. GHD has no responsibility or obligation to update this report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the report was prepared.

The methodology is subject to the following limitations:

- It is assumed all information and data provided by Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd is accurate.
- Stakeholder consultation is limited by stakeholder availability during from February and March 2024 as well as the willingness of stakeholders to participate in the consultation process and in the community survey.

2. Methodology

This section describes the methodology followed to prepare this SIA, which has been guided by the following guidelines:

- *Social Impact Assessment Guideline: State Significant Projects (2023)* (hereafter referred to as ‘the SIA Guideline’) (DPE, 2023a)
- *Technical Supplement – Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* – hereafter referred to as the ‘SIA Technical Supplement’ (DPE, 2023b)
- International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) *International Principles for Social Impact Assessment* (Vanclay, *International Principles For Social Impact*, 2003) and *Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects* (Vanclay et al., 2015)

The SIA Guideline (DPE, 2023a) has established a set of review questions to confirm that the requirements of the guideline have been met when considering the social impacts of a project. A response to the review questions is provided in Appendix A.

In the context of this SIA, social impacts are understood as the consequences that people and communities experience as a result of project-induced changes that affect the way they ‘live, work, play, relate to one another, organise to meet their needs and generally cope as members of society’ (Burdge & Vanclay, 1996).

As outlined in the SIA Guideline (DPE, 2023a), social impacts involve changes to one or more of the following social values:

- **Way of life**, including how people live, how they get around, how they work, how they play, and how they interact each day
- **Community**, including composition, cohesion, character, how the community functions, resilience, and people’s sense of place
- **Accessibility**, including how people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities, whether provided by a public, private or not-for-profit organisation
- **Culture**, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including shared beliefs, customs, practices, obligations, values and stories, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings
- **Health and wellbeing**, including physical and mental health especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress resulting from financial or other pressures, access to open space and effects on public health
- **Surroundings**, including ecosystem services such as shade, pollution control, erosion control, public safety and security, access to and use of the natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity
- **Livelihoods**, including people’s capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business
- **Decision-making systems**, including the extent to which people can have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms

A social impact can be direct, indirect or cumulative, and negative or positive. It can also vary according to the individual, community, or segment of a community by whom it is experienced. The term ‘community’ refers to a network of people and/or organisations who are linked together by a web of personal relationships; cultural and political connections, shared identities and traditions, similar socioeconomic conditions, or common understandings and interests (Vanclay et al., 2015). In the context of this SIA, the term ‘community’ is used to refer to people residing in a shared discrete geographic location - for example, a rural town or regional centre. However, in select cases, it may also be used to describe a ‘community of identity’ or a ‘community of interest’.

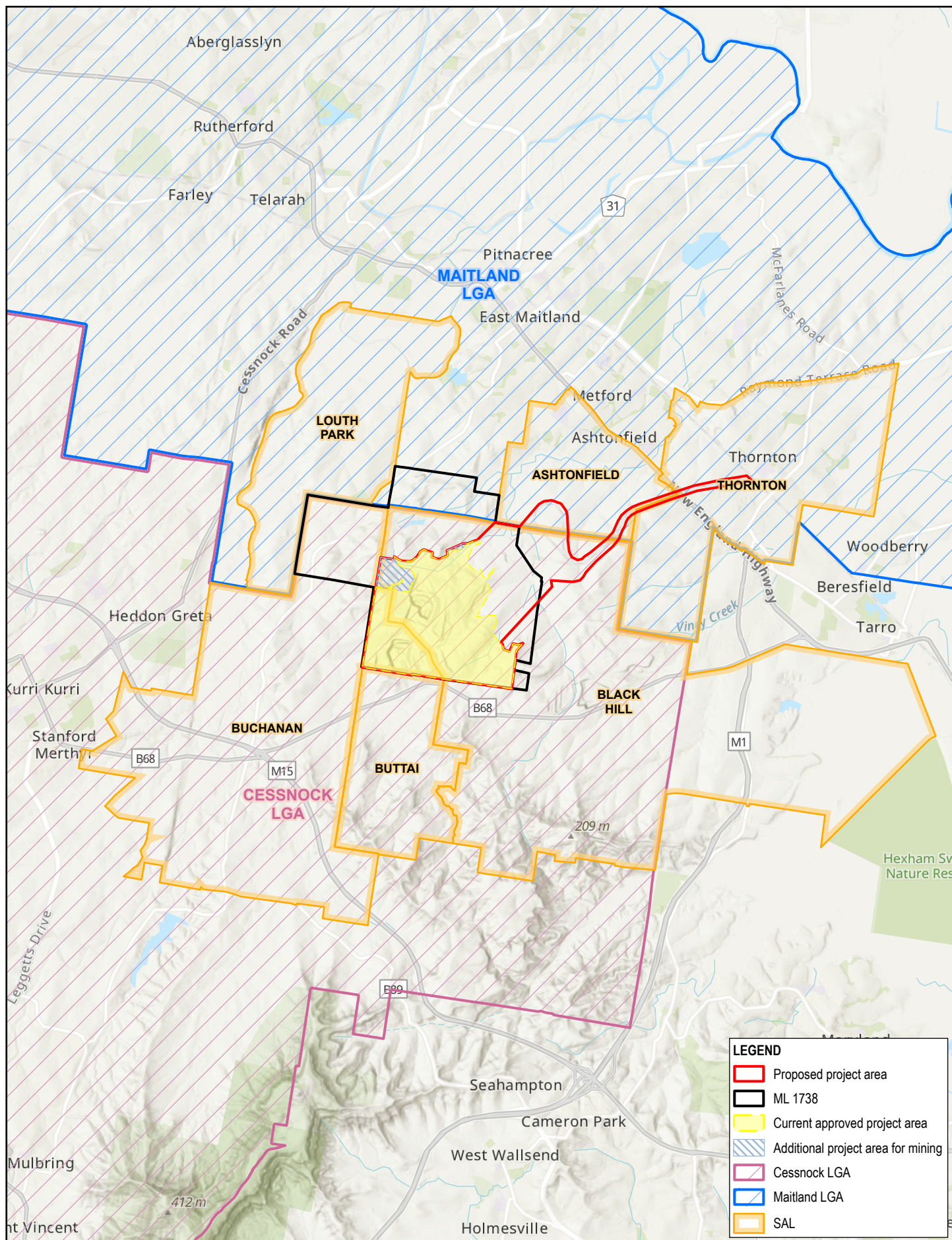
2.1 Determining the social locality

The social locality is the geographical area of social influence of an existing operation or a proposed development. For the purpose of this study, the social locality includes the people and communities most likely to experience changes to existing socio-economic conditions resulting from the proposed modification. The social locality includes a local and regional study area, as outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Social study area

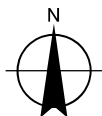
Social locality study area	Description	Statistical area
Project footprint	ML1738 and Colliery operations are currently located across the suburbs of Black Hill and Buchanan. The proposed modification will seek to include existing infrastructure, primarily the rail loop, in the suburbs of Ashtonfield and Thornton in the approved project area. The Colliery is accessed via the New England Highway and Four Mile Creek Road to the northeast of the project area. Primary access to the Colliery is from northeast on Four Mile Creek Road which passes via the Heritage Gardens Nursery, continues through the remnant bushland, and crosses the existing rail corridor. The bushland which surrounds the operational area is maintained along the north, east and western boundaries of the property. Sections of bushland are thinner on the southern boundary of the property. Above ground infrastructure of the current project area includes workshop, hardstand, fuel and oil storage, water tanks, explosive storage, offices, CHPP, coal wash emplacement area, and tailing dams. There is an existing rail corridor and rail loop which are operated by Bloomfield. The rail corridor enters and exits the area from the northeast via the suburb of Thornton. The rail loop sits partially within the suburbs of Ashtonfield and Black Hill. The rail loop is connected to the CHPP to transport coal to the Port of Newcastle. John Renshaw Drive follows the southern boundary of the mining lease and Buchanan/Mount Vincent Road is situated to the western side of the Colliery. Four Mile Creek passes through the area from north to south on the eastern side of the property. The proposed modification seeks to extend current operations into the Creek Cut and Workshop Cut areas of the existing mining lease to 31 December 2035, and include other existing infrastructure (rail loop) in the project approval (refer Figure 1.2 and Figure 3.1).	Black Hill SAL Buchanan SAL Thornton SAL Ashtonfield SAL
Local study area	The current approved project area is located within the suburbs of Black Hill and Buchanan (Figure 2.1): – The Colliery sits primarily within the suburb of Black Hill. John Renshaw Drive and the Pacific Motorway transects Black Hill. Aerial imagery indicates that the closest residential property within Black Hill to the Colliery is approximately 900 m south. This property is approximately 2.6 km south of the proposed modification in the Creek Cut area. – Buchanan is located to the southwest of the Colliery and the S-Cut (South) and adjacent operations sit partially within this suburb. The closest residential property to the proposed modification is approximately 2 km southwest of the Creek Cut area. This property is 1.6 km west of the S-Cut (South) and adjacent operations. Four other suburbs and localities are adjacent to the mining lease and operational area, and may be impacted by the proposed modification – Ashtonfield, Thornton, Louth Park and Buttai. – Buttai is a small suburb located directly to the south of the Colliery. The nearest residence to the approved project area that is not owned by Bloomfield is located within Buttai approximately 600 metres south of the southern boundary of the currently approved project area. Operations at the Colliery may be visible from some areas within Buttai. – Louth Park is located to the northwest of the Colliery and the proposed modifications. Louth Park represents one of the closest residential communities to the proposed modifications in the Workshop and Creek Cut Areas. The residences and businesses adjacent to Buchanan/Mount Vincent Road on the boundary of Louth Park are approximately 1.2 km north of the Creek Cut Area and 1.9 km northwest of the Workshop area. – The proposed modifications in the Workshop Cut and Creek Cut Areas are respectively located 1.7 km and 2.8 km southwest of the closest residences of Ashtonfield. The rail loop used by Bloomfield is partially located within the bushland in the southern portion of Ashtonfield.	Black Hill SAL Buchanan SAL Buttai SAL Louth Park SAL Ashtonfield SAL Thornton SAL

Social locality study area	Description	Statistical area
	– Thornton's southwest border, which is dominated by bushland, is closest to Bloomfield's operations. The Workshop area is located 3.6 km west of the nearest residence, and the Creek Cut area is located 4.8km west of the nearest residence. The rail corridor enters and exits the area via Thornton. Residents of the above listed SALs may experience social impacts and benefits resulting from the continuation of operations at the Colliery.	
Regional study area	The regional study area comprises of Cessnock Shire which is the Local Government Area (LGA) within which the Colliery and the suburbs of Black Hill, Buchanan, and Buttai are located. Maitland is the closest urban centre to the Colliery. The nearby suburbs of Ashtonfield, Louth Park, and Thornton are also located in Maitland LGA (detailed above). The Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle) and NSW have also been used as a regional benchmark, where relevant.	Maitland LGA Cessnock LGA Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle) SAL4 NSW (State)



Paper Size ISO A4
0 0.65 1.3 1.95 2.6 3.25
Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56



Bloomfield Collieries Pty Limited
Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project
Social Impact Assessment

Proposed project area in relation
to nearby communities

Project No. 12597478
Revision No. A
Date 14/06/2024

FIGURE 2.1

2.2 Scoping potential impacts

As per the SIA Guidelines (DPE, 2023a) a social impact scoping exercise was undertaken to inform the social indicators to inform the social baseline, GHD's approach to stakeholder consultation, and to inform the issues to be explored in the impact assessment. The scoping exercise was informed by:

- A review of background information provided by Bloomfield, including a description of current operations.
- Outcomes from Bloomfield community consultation activities.
- Understanding of the social baseline for the social locality (described further in Section 5.2.3).
- Experience of the GHD team.

The key themes and socio-economic impacts (positive and negative) considered through the scoping exercise are detailed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Themes from social impact scoping

Social theme	Description
Property and land use	Impacts on land use and property associated with current mining operations.
Local Amenity	Impacts on the visual and environmental landscape, noise and vibration, dust and air quality, and traffic and access due to current mining operations.
Economy and employment	Impacts associated with changes in existing economic processes, employment opportunities and opportunities for businesses.
Community investment	Potential opportunities and benefits from Bloomfield investment into community groups and organisations.
Community wellbeing and cohesion	Potential and perceived impacts on social cohesion and safety, community concerns about current and future operations, impacts on existing services and infrastructure, and impacts on current recreational activities.

2.3 Establishing the social baseline

The social baseline establishes the current social characteristics within the study area. The baseline is used to inform the prediction of the potential social impacts and opportunities resulting from Colliery operations. A social baseline has been prepared for the local study area and regional study area.

The local study area baseline describes:

- Key features, local amenity and character of the project area and immediate surrounds
- Select demographic and economic indicators for the suburbs of Ashtonfield, Louth Park, Thornton, Buchanan, Buttai, and Black Hill (refer Section 2.1)

The regional study area baseline focusses on the Maitland and Cessnock LGAs and describes:

- Relevant demographic and socio-economic indicators
- Economic profile
- Community investment
- Community values

Data to inform the social baseline has been gathered from the following sources:

- Publications and reports provided by Bloomfield
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census 2021, 2016 and 2011
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment 2022 population projections
- Economic data
- Maitland City Council website and publications
- Cessnock City Council website and publications
- NSW State Government websites and publications
- Google Maps/Google Earth

- Outcomes from stakeholder consultation activities
- Community survey
- Various other online sources

A complete list of sources used to inform this SIA is provided in Section 10.

2.4 Stakeholder consultation

The SIA has been informed by outcomes from community and stakeholder engagement activities. Activities included:

- Stakeholder interviews undertaken by the SIA team with local stakeholders
- A community newsletter, including a survey distributed to residents of the local study area and employees of the Colliery
- Stakeholder consultation activities undertaken by Bloomfield, including information updates and briefings with local stakeholders, along with a two-day presence at 'Steamfest', a large local community festival held 13-14 April 2024 where newsletters were available and a copy of the project map was prominently placed for viewing and discussion with Bloomfield representatives
- Other stakeholder consultation activities conducted by technical specialists inform the EIS

The purpose of SIA consultation was to confirm and gather additional information to inform the social baseline, identify potential social impacts and benefits, and develop proposed mitigation and management measures. Participation in the consultation process for key stakeholders was voluntary and confidential.

Stakeholders interviewed for the SIA were identified because they represent communities or groups who would potentially experience impacts and benefits as a result of the proposal. Bloomfield contacted stakeholders via email to seek their interest in participating in an interview with GHD to inform the SIA. SIA stakeholder consultation took place in Maitland during the week commencing 19 February 2024. In cases where stakeholders were not available to meet in person in Maitland, meetings took place via teleconference facilities in February and March 2024.

The community newsletter and survey was available online and distributed via a letterbox drop to over 3,600 residences in surrounding suburbs between 22 January 2024 and 25 January 2024.

A summary of the themes and findings from the community survey and stakeholder interviews is provided in Chapter 5.

2.5 Description and assessment of social impacts and benefits

Following the scoping of social issues described in Section 2.2, social impacts were confirmed using a data triangulation method, whereby multiple sources of information were assessed to confirm social impacts. These data sources are summarised below:

- The project description for the EIS to understand the proposed activities that would influence social aspects
- Baseline conditions against which the social changes / impacts were measured
- Outcomes of the stakeholder consultation undertaken for the SIA and the project as a whole to understand the existing environment and stakeholder views on potential social changes brought about by the project
- Relevant literature for similar projects or for other projects in NSW and more broadly, reports about other similar facilities in Australia and overseas, community and regional plans applicable to the study area, and relevant information and documents shared by stakeholders
- Relevant draft and final technical studies prepared for the EIS to gather technically sound evidence to identify and assess the social changes resulting from the project

The evaluation of the identified social impacts was undertaken using a likelihood and magnitude significance rating, based on the significance criteria outlined in the SIA Guideline and Technical Supplement, and shown in Table 2.3, Table 2.4, Table 2.5, and Table 2.6.

Table 2.3 *Defining the likelihood levels of social impacts*

Likelihood level	Meaning
Almost certain	Definite or almost definitely expected (e.g., has happened on similar projects)
Likely	High probability
Possible	Medium probability
Unlikely	Low probability
Very unlikely	Improbable or remote probability

Table 2.4 *Dimensions of social impact magnitude*

Dimensions		Details needed to enable assessment
Magnitude	Extent	Who specifically is expected to be affected (directly, indirectly, and/or cumulatively), including any vulnerable people? Which location(s) and people are affected? (e.g. near neighbours, local, regional, future generations).
	Duration	When is the social impact expected to occur? Will it be time-limited (e.g. over particular project phases) or permanent?
	Severity or scale	What is the likely scale or degree of change? (e.g. mild, moderate, severe).
	Intensity or importance	How sensitive/vulnerable (or how adaptable/resilient) are affected people to the impact, or (for positive impacts) how important is it to them? This might depend on the value they attach to the matter; whether it is rare/unique or replaceable; the extent to which it is tied to their identity; and their capacity to cope with or adapt to change
	Level of concern / interest	How concerned/interested are people? Sometimes, concerns may be disproportionate to findings from technical assessments of likelihood, duration and/or intensity.

Table 2.5 *Defining magnitude levels for social impact*

Magnitude level	Meaning
Transformational	Substantial change experienced in community wellbeing, livelihood, infrastructure, services, health, and/or heritage values; permanent displacement or addition of at least 20 percent of a community.
Major	Substantial deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an indefinite time, or affecting many people in a widespread area.
Moderate	Noticeable deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an extensive time, or affecting a group of people
Minor	Mild deterioration/improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an extensive time, or affecting a group of people.
Minimal	Little noticeable change experienced by people in the locality.

Table 2.6 Social impact significance matrix

			Magnitude Level				
			1	2	3	4	5
			Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
Likelihood level	A	Almost certain	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Very high
	B	Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Very high
	C	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
	D	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	E	Very unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

The risk rating then determines if mitigation or management actions are required to address the social impact. Negative social impacts with a risk rating of medium, high or very high require mitigation or management actions.

2.6 Management and mitigation measures

The recommended social impact mitigation and management strategies provided in this report seek to both enhance the benefits for stakeholders and communities, and manage or mitigate negative impacts from the project. The SIA also references various EIS specialist studies for mitigation/management of specific impacts.

The recommended mitigation and management strategies were developed using adaptive management principles, recognising that impacts may change over time, and that ongoing monitoring of impacts would provide the flexibility to accommodate such changes. Section 8 presents the recommended mitigation measures for each social impact and benefit identified in Section 7, and re-assesses the likelihood and consequence of the impact assuming implementation of the mitigation measures.

It should be noted that the degree to which community members would experience social impacts would vary based on factors such as perceptions and individual values, sensitivity to change, distance from the project, and the duration that people experience the impacts over. While the assessment of residual risks takes this into consideration, a risk rating for the majority of stakeholders affected by the identified potential impact has been applied. The risk rating would however be higher or lower for some stakeholders given the subjective nature of social impacts which varies based on a stakeholder's ability to adapt to impacts.

3. Project description

This section provides a description of the proposed project and the operations which are relevant to this SIA.

3.1 Description of the project

3.1.1 Project site

The proposed modification includes:

- Continue mining of the Creek Cut and mining of the Workshop Cut (an additional project area for mining of 39 ha).
- Extraction of seams from below the Buttai seam in part of the Creek Cut area.
- Extraction of an additional 5.8 Mt ROM coal.
- Reducing the annual maximum production level to 0.9 Mt ROM.
- Extending the date of the Project Approval to allow mining operations to continue till 31 December 2035.
- Proposed changes to rehabilitation and final landform including a decreased size of the final void and the slope angles of the rehabilitated landform will be reduced, improving post mining land use options including agricultural grazing.
- Continued use of infrastructure approved as part of the “Bloomfield Site” in the Abel project approval PA 05_0136 including the CHPP, train load out, rail loop and water management structures until 31 December 2035.
- Continued use of the tailings storage facilities at U-Cut and S-Cut South Void, as approved by Abel project approval PA 05_0136.

3.1.1.1 Mining area

The proposed modification would include mining the seams below the Buttai seam to and including the Big Ben seam, within the existing blocks of the Creek Cut area, and extending this area to the northwest of the currently approved project area. Mining is also proposed at the existing Workshop Area. The proposed mining areas are shown in Figure 3.1.

3.1.1.2 Mining method

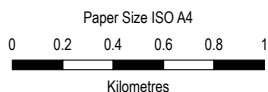
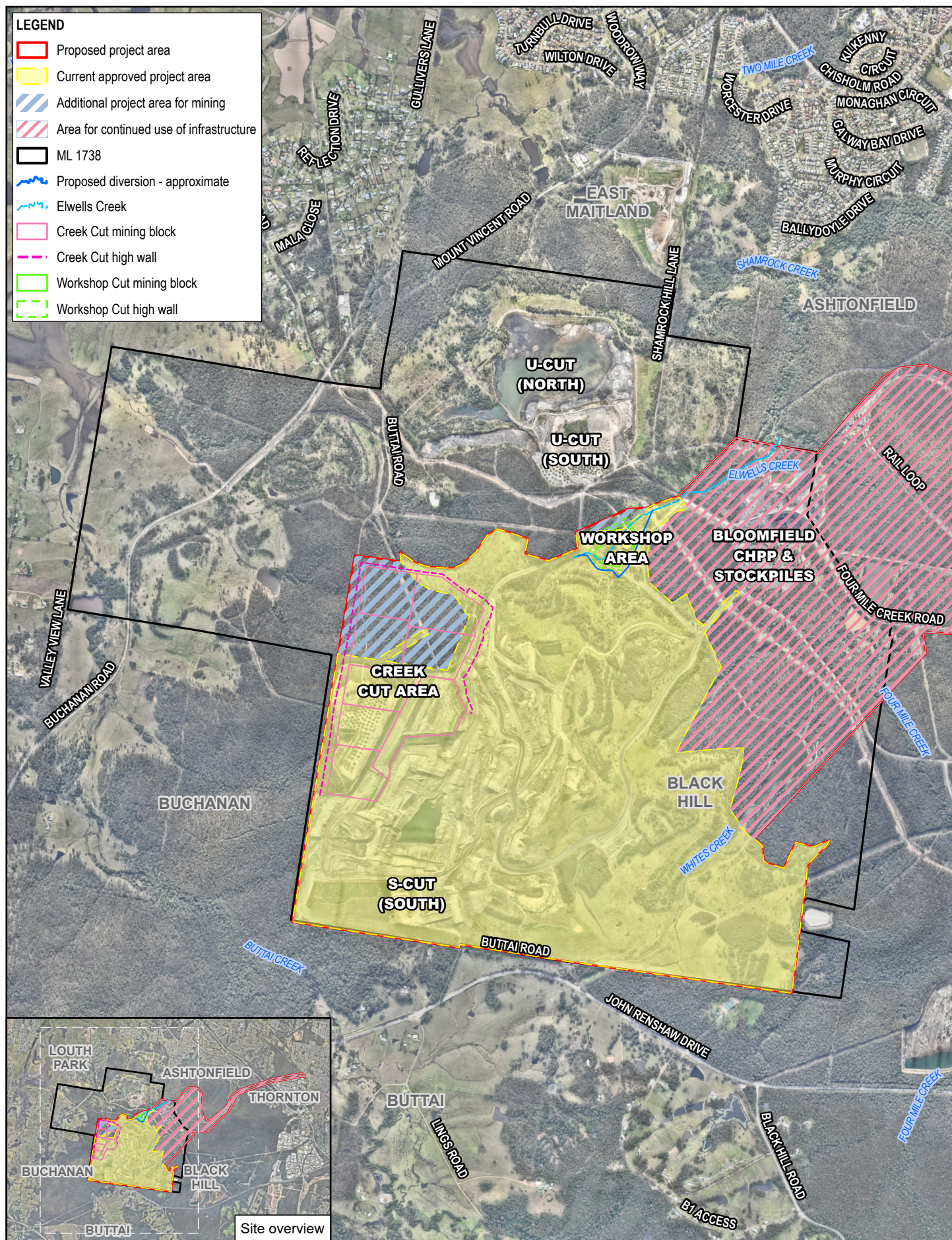
There are no changes proposed to the mining method currently used at the site.

The Colliery would continue to use existing mining methods, both within the currently approved project area and into the proposed project area. The Colliery currently uses multi-seam bench open cut techniques to extract coal from a variety of seams within the Tomago Coal Measures. The mining process at the Colliery generally comprises vegetation stripping, topsoil removal and stockpiling, drilling and blasting of overburden, removal and emplacement of overburden, and extraction of coal. Coal is transported by truck to the ROM coal stockpile via internal haul roads and overburden emplacement areas are reshaped and rehabilitated to create the final landform.

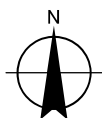
No changes to equipment, mining or blasting method, rejects and approved tailings disposal methods are proposed as a result of the modification. Once the U-Cut tailings disposal area is exhausted, the tailings will be disposed at S-Cut as approved by Modification 3 of the Abel project approval PA 05_0136.

No changes are proposed to the site access or water management.

No change is proposed to operational workforce, hours of operation or the management of mining waste.



Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56



Bloomfield Collieries Pty Limited
Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project
Social Impact Assessment

**Aerial of the Additional
Project Areas for Mining**

Project No. 12597478
Revision No. A
Date 14/06/2024

FIGURE 3.1

3.2 Description of operations

3.2.1 Coal handling, processing and transportation

No change is proposed to coal handling, processing or transportation methodology currently used at the site. The following existing activities are proposed to continue for coal handling, processing and transportation as part of the modification until 2035:

- Use of existing CHPP and coal stockpiles
- Coal transport from the site by rail to the Port of Newcastle

Although handling, processing and transportation methodology at the site would be unchanged by the proposed modification, change is proposed to the project approval in order to align the time period of the modification, being 2035, with the continued use of infrastructure at the site.

3.2.2 Surface infrastructure

Surface infrastructure at the site is comprised of administration, office buildings, the workshop and CHPP complex owned by Bloomfield. This infrastructure is inclusive of infrastructure approved under Abel PA 05_0136 which consists of:

- The Bloomfield CHPP.
- The Bloomfield Rail Loading Facility, Rail Loop and Rail Spur.
- Colliery open-cut pits which are used to emplace coal reject and tailings from the Bloomfield Open Cut Project as well as the Abel Project.
- Water management structures.

The term of the Abel project approval is to December 2030.

This proposed modification therefore seeks the continued use of the “Bloomfield Site” infrastructure for the processing, handling and railing of coal and water management until the end of the mine life of the modification, being 31 December 2035.

When mining occurs in the Workshop Cut, the existing workshop would require demolition. The workshop activities would be moved to existing facilities in the CHPP area. Current office buildings are relocatable and will be removed from site and re-used at the CHPP or relocated offsite. No other changes are proposed to surface infrastructure.

3.2.3 Utilities and services

Service infrastructure and utilities at the Colliery have adequate capacity to accommodate the proposed modification. No additional servicing or utility infrastructure connections would be required.

Demolition and disconnection of utilities at the workshop would be required towards the end of the modification period prior to mining the workshop area.

3.2.4 Water management

The current mine water management system is part of an integrated system involving the management of all surface runoff and groundwater sources associated with the Colliery and neighbouring Abel and Donaldson mines. This ensures a continuous supply of water to the Bloomfield CHPP and minimises impacts to the surrounding waterways including Four Mile Creek, Buttai Creek and associated tributaries.

The Colliery's water management system includes removal of water from active pits, storage of water in dams and voids, controlled discharge into Four Mile Creek in accordance with EPL 396 (Environmental Protection License) and control of storm water pollution from overburden emplacement areas, stockpile areas and the Workshop Area.

No significant changes to the Colliery's surface water management system are proposed. The current system integrates water management approved for the site under the site's project approval as well as water management approvals for infrastructure managed under the Abel project approval PA 05_0136. Infrastructure approved under Abel project approval PA 05_0136 includes the CHPP, train load out, rail loop and water management structures. As noted previously, this modification seeks to have this infrastructure included in PA 07_0087.

The current Water Management Plan for the Colliery incorporates the water management structures for the "Bloomfield Site" approved under the Abel project approval. The modification would continue to operate under the current Water Management Plan which includes:

- A site water balance
- An erosion and sediment control plan
- Surface water monitoring plan
- Groundwater monitoring
- Surface and groundwater response plan

Elwells Creek, an ephemeral creek line which runs through the current workshop area, will require temporary realignment during mining of the Workshop Cut. Following completion of mining in the Workshop Cut, Elwells creek will be relocated back to its original location. The relocation of Elwells Creek during and post mining is provided in the Surface Water Impact Assessment (GHD, 2024b).

3.2.5 Site access and parking

Access to the site would remain via Four Mile Creek Road with secondary access available via Buchannan Road.

Saleable coal would continue to be transported to Newcastle via rail.

No changes to existing traffic and transport arrangements are proposed as part of the proposed modification.

Existing infrastructure, including the workshop, fuel storage area, offices, bathhouse, internal access roads and water management structures, are considered sufficient for the proposed remaining life of mine. No new infrastructure is proposed to be constructed or brought onto the site.

3.2.6 Workforce

The proposed modification would not change the operation workforce. Currently, the site employs 93 people. The Colliery would continue to operate with a reduction of the approved annual ROM tonnage from 1.3 Mt to 0.9MT.

The current workforce is in place and would continue to operate the Colliery. The turnover in the current workforce is extremely low and it is expected that any vacancies would be able to be sourced from the local and regional labour market. Project-specific accommodation facilities are not expected to be required for the workforce.

3.2.7 Timeframe and operating hours

It is proposed to continue mining at the Colliery beyond 31 December 2030, the date at which mining operations under Project Approval Modification, MP07_0087-Mod-4 and the Abel project approval PA 05_0136 lapse. This modification seeks to extend mining operations under MP 07_0087 till 31 December 2035 to provide additional time to extract additional resources in the Creek Cut and Workshop areas.

Mining would commence in the Creek Cut area in conjunction with the currently approved mining areas. Once the Creek Cut resource is exhausted, mining would occur in the Workshop area, which is anticipated to be in 2034. Mining of the Workshop area is anticipated to take less than 12 months.

Operation activities would occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no change proposed from current operational hours. Although the site has approval to operate 24 hours a day, seven days per week, the site typically operates an eight-hour shift roster five days per week, with additional production during the weekend using overtime.

3.2.8 Waste management

As the proposed modification does not involve any changes to mining method, there would be no changes in the type of waste generated by the proposed modification. The day-to-day waste volumes are likely to decrease due to the reduced annual extraction rate but there would be an increased volume of waste generated by the proposed modification overall, due to the increased period of operations. Existing waste management processes in place at the site are expected to be able to accommodate this increase in waste. Waste would be managed in accordance with the existing Bloomfield Group Waste Management System. The modification does not propose any changes to waste management.

Waste stream sources are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Waste stream sources and management strategies

Waste stream	Source and management strategy
General waste and routine maintenance consumables	All general wastes and routine maintenance consumables from the daily servicing of equipment would be collected on a regular basis from site by an appropriately licensed contractor for either recycling or off-site disposal within a waste facility approved to accept such waste. The waste contractor is charged with sorting comingled general waste in a designated waste sortation facility on-site in order to remove any recyclable items, such as oil filters, cartridges and scrap metal.
Waste oil and grease	The generation of waste oils and grease would be primarily limited to the routine maintenance of plant and equipment. Waste oils and greases stored at the site, along with parts and packaging (for example, filters and waste oil drums), would be collected by a licensed waste contractor on a regular basis for recycling and/or off-site disposal within a waste facility approved to accept such waste.
Effluent	Sewage effluent generated by on-site staff amenities at the site would continue to be managed in accordance with the approved operations for the site under Project Approval Modification, MP07_0087-Mod-4.
Contaminated waste	Contamination has been identified within the Workshop area. This will be remediated and validated prior to mining in this area commencing. The remediation will consist of landfarming materials on site and/or offsite disposal at a suitably licenced facility.
Demolition waste	Demolition waste would be generated by proposed demolition of the workshop. The Bloomfield Group has a total waste management system across all sites which incorporates the recycling of steel and timber and other materials. Building waste as part of the workshop demolition unable to be recycled will be managed in accordance with the current total waste management system and be disposed to a licenced facility, excluding concrete and bricks which will be separated and placed in the pit. To demonstrate the concrete and bricks are suitable for placement within the pit, they will be sampled and assessed in accordance with <i>The recovered aggregate order 2014 (RA Order)</i>. It is also proposed to place the concrete and bricks in a location that is at least 2 m above the groundwater and 2 m below the finished surface level.

3.2.9 Rehabilitation and closure

This modification would allow for the rehabilitation of the areas disturbed by mining activities in addition to current rehabilitation commitments at the site under the relevant regulatory requirements and planning considerations. Ongoing liaison with local landholders and community would continue to address community concerns resulting from the proposed modification where practicable in the design and operation of mining activities.

The proposed modification does not include any changes to the proposed final land use. The proposed modification would, however, result in changes to the final landform, which are expected to have a beneficial impact through a reduction in the size and depth of the final void, reduction of final rehabilitated slope angles supportive of the final land use and removal of shallow underground workings where surface potholing is known to occur.

Rehabilitation works are currently closely integrated with mine production and are undertaken progressively as mining proceeds in accordance with the approved Rehabilitation Management Plan and Forward Program. Bloomfield has demonstrated, through its progressive rehabilitation efforts, a successful rate of vegetation growth on existing rehabilitation with areas of active cattle grazing. The 2022-2023 Bloomfield Annual Review Report states a total of 500 hectares have been rehabilitated within the project area. Under the proposed modification this process would continue to be implemented.

3.2.9.1 Subsidence monitoring, management and remediation

The proposed modification includes improved long term stability benefits from mining the shallow underground workings in the Workshop Area which would remove the potential for continuing sink hole issues caused by underground mine subsidence.

Subsidence monitoring, management and remediation would be undertaken throughout the life of the project in consultation with the relevant authorities, land and infrastructure owners, and other relevant stakeholders.

3.3 Relationship of the modification to existing approved operations

The modification would represent no change from how the site currently interacts with existing approved operations, and instead represents a continuation of the use of infrastructure approved under Abel project approval PA 05_0136.

The Abel project approval PA 05_0136 ceases in 2030. This approval currently provides for the use of infrastructure such as the CHPP, train load out, rail loop and water management structures. This infrastructure is part of the “Bloomfield Site” but does not currently form part of the Bloomfield project approval. The proposed modification would allow for this infrastructure to continue to be used past 2030 by including the use and area of this infrastructure in the Bloomfield project approval.

4. Legislative and policy context

This section provides an overview of the legislation and strategies relevant to this SIA, as described in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Legislative and policy context

Title	Description and relevance to this SIA
State Government	
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) (NSW Government, 1979)	The project is State significant development under Part 4, Division 4.7 of the EP&A Act. The objects of the EP&A Act relevant to this SIA are (clause 1.3): a) <i>to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment by the proper management, development and conservation of the State's natural and other resources,</i> b) <i>to facilitate ecologically sustainable development by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment,</i> c) <i>to promote the orderly and economic use and development of land,</i> d) <i>to promote good design and amenity of the built environment,</i> e) <i>to promote the proper construction and maintenance of buildings, including the protection of the health and safety of their occupants,</i> f) <i>to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning and assessment between the different levels of government in the State,</i> g) <i>to provide the opportunity for community participation in environmental planning and assessment.</i> The outcomes of this SIA will contribute to these objects
NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) (2022), <i>Hunter Regional Plan 2041</i>	The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 (DPE 2022) (the Plan) is the NSW government's plan to guide land use planning and infrastructure priorities and decisions over the next 20 years. The Plan identifies regionally important natural resources, transport networks and social infrastructure and provides a framework to guide more detailed land use plans, development project and infrastructure funding decisions. The plan includes overarching directions, goals and actions as well as specific priorities for each local government area in the Hunter region. The main goal of the Plan is to establish the Hunter region as the leading regional economy in Australia. A key objective of the Plan is to diversify the Hunter's mining, energy and industrial capacity into the future. The Plan also identifies the importance of these sectors in contributing to the region's economy and generating employment which sustains communities. The SIA considers how the modification contributes to the regional economy and community values associated with the mining industry and employment.
NSW DPE (2018), <i>Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036</i>	The Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 (DPE, 2018) positions Greater Newcastle as being an emerging hub for lifestyle and environmental resilience. Transitioning to a service, creative and knowledge city would better equip Greater Newcastle to be able to adapt to changing global environmental priorities and needs. The strategy notes the history of mining in Greater Newcastle and how it has shaped the area. The strategy notes the importance of land use planning to respond to the lifecycle of mining operations, and to manage impacts of mining on rural and urban areas in accordance with actions in the Hunter Regional Plan 2041. The modification aligns with this strategy's position on mining by supporting ongoing mining employment and income in the region.
Local Government	
Cessnock City Council (2022), <i>Cessnock Community Strategic Plan 2036</i>	The Cessnock Community Strategic Plan (CSP) identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future. Development of the CSP involved extensive community engagement and together residents, visitors, property owners, business owners, community organisations and government committed to the desired outcomes and strategic directions of the CSP. The project aligns with the 'sustainable and prosperous economy' strategic theme, as it will continue to contribute to Cessnock's economy. Other strategic themes relevant to this SIA include: – A connected, safe and creative community – A sustainable and healthy environment

Title	Description and relevance to this SIA
	This SIA will consider how the project impacts local and regional communities with consideration to these strategic themes.
Maitland City Council (2020) <i>Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040+</i>	The Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets out a 20 year land use vision for the Maitland LGA and outlines how this growth and change will be sustainably managed into the future. The Maitland LSPS is consistent with the NSW Government's Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 and Hunter Regional Plan 2036. Following community and stakeholder engagement, Council identified the communities key priorities. Those priorities relevant to this SIA are: – Infrastructure which supports the growth of the community and allows people to stay connected with multiple options available. – Living sustainability with urban development options which address climate change, recognise the value of open space and recreation, and which support water security and biodiversity. – Economic growth by creating employment opportunities in agriculture and heritage and tourism, and creating opportunities for nightlife and retail.
Maitland City Council (2022), <i>Maitland +10</i>	Maitland +10 is the community strategic plan prepared by the Maitland City Council on behalf of the community. Maitland +10 presents themes and corresponding statements on what the community would like to achieve and work towards over the next 10 years. Key themes of the Maitland +10 plan which are relevant to this SIA include: – A connected community with spaces, activities and programs that foster a friendly, happy, and proud city. – Creating opportunities and growth which allows the community to shop and work locally. – Living sustainably by looking after and enjoying areas of bushland, protecting native plants and animals, and improving the quality of waterways.

5. Stakeholder consultation outcomes

This section presents a summary of issues relevant to this SIA raised by stakeholders and community members during consultation activities.

5.1 EIS consultation

Bloomfield Colliery has well-established local community networks, and relationships with landholders and other stakeholders.

Bloomfield has consulted with a number of community members, Aboriginal groups, and government agencies to present the proposed modification and, where relevant, seek feedback on key proposed modification design considerations and areas for investigation.

Key stakeholders include:

- Government (Federal, State and Local)
- Industry
- Local community
- Aboriginal groups
- Bloomfield Colliery employees

Details about the consultation activities are summarised in Chapter 5 of the EIS.

5.2 SIA consultation

5.2.1 Stakeholder interviews

Stakeholder interviews were undertaken to facilitate a detailed exploration of social issues and opportunities with key local stakeholders by the SIA team. Interviews were undertaken face to face or via teleconference facilities. Face to face interviews were conducted between 22 February 2024 and 23 February 2024, and teleconference interviews were undertaken over February and March 2024.

The discussions were semi-structured in nature and a flexible interview protocol was prepared to guide the conversation. All meetings focused on the following broad discussion topics such as:

- Understanding each stakeholder's organisation and existing relationship with Bloomfield
- Current baseline conditions of local communities
- Existing impacts and benefits of Bloomfield operations
- Potential concerns, impacts or benefits that may result from the extension of Bloomfield operations
- Opportunities for Bloomfield regarding the ongoing management of impacts and enhancement of benefits for communities

A total of 12 stakeholders/organisations, were contacted via email and telephone to invite them to participate in an interview. A total of nine interviews were conducted during the consultation period. The list of stakeholders who participated in an interview is provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Stakeholder interviews conducted

Stakeholder group	Organisation name	Date
Local business / industry	Cessnock Business Chamber	11 April 2024
Local residents and community members	Local resident	23 March 2024
	Bloomfield Community Consultative Committee (Bloomfield CCC)	22 March 2024
Sponsorship and/or donation recipients	Youth off the Streets	22 March 2024

Stakeholder group	Organisation name	Date
	Carrie's Place	22 March 2024
	Lifeline	22 March 2024
	Hunter Valley Boutique Winemakers Show	22 March 2024
	Maitland Show and Cattle Clinic	19 March 2024
	Maitland Rugby Blacks Netball Club	13 March 2024

This section presents a summary of key issues and opportunities raised by stakeholders during interviews. These have been categorised into key themes and summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Key issues and opportunities raised during stakeholder interviews

Theme	Key findings	Where considered in this SIA
Community characteristics and values	– There is a strong sense of community among Maitland and Cessnock residents. Agriculture and mining are traditional industries and contribute to the area's character, however there are also diverse views about the benefits and impacts of mining, with some non-mining families/communities concerned about its impacts on the environment and climate change. – There has also been a shift in the demography of the community as the region is growing and diversifying, with lots of young families moving to the area. Cost of living and population growth in bigger centres is causing people/families to look to nearby rural areas for housing. Some stakeholders commented on the increase in commuter traffic in the morning and afternoon from Maitland to Newcastle. – Some stakeholders noted that the community has a mix of people from low and high socio-economic backgrounds. – The local community have strong ties to Maitland and seek to preserve the natural environment and rural landscape. – Cost of living was highlighted as a challenge for some residents and families in the region. – Domestic violence and youth engagement and participation were raised as issues in the community.	Section 7.1
Infrastructure and service provision	– The influx of new residents due to increased housing development and regional population movement over recent years has put a strain on existing social infrastructure (e.g. allied health services, youth services, childcare and education, and domestic violence services). – Infrequent and low provision of public transport options (including buses, trains and taxi services) was raised as a key challenge in accessing social infrastructure and employment across the region. – Some stakeholders noted that there is currently a lack of services and facilities across the region to assist people who experience mental health issues and financial hardship.	Section 6.3 Section 7.2.2
Economy and businesses	– Many people living in Maitland and the surrounding communities work in and commute to Newcastle. – Mining is considered an important industry for the region as it provides employment and income to local residents. – There is a desire to develop and continue relationships between local businesses and Bloomfield (i.e. procurement and employment opportunities). – There is a desire to develop industry and businesses that generate long term sustainable employment and procurement opportunities for the region.	Section 6.3.3 Section 7.3 Section 7.5
Amenity impacts	Some stakeholders raised concerns about existing impacts from Bloomfield operations including: – Noise impacts at night time for residents who live close to the mine, which is more noticeable than daytime noise and vibration. – Dust due to mine operations which was noted as a frustration by some stakeholders who live close to the mine.	Section 7.2 Section 7.5

Theme	Key findings	Where considered in this SIA
	- The time required by stakeholders and/or landholders to engage with Bloomfield for reporting issues associated with noise, dust and vibration was highlighted as a key concern leading to some residents feeling increased stress and anxiety. Some stakeholders also felt that noise complaints were not always taken seriously by Bloomfield. Some stakeholders raised concerns about the proposed continuation including: - Ongoing noise and light impacts from continued operation of the mine. - Noise impacts from establishment of the new pit as the noise travels across the landscape more easily.	
Land use and property impacts	- Some stakeholders noted that the continuation of the mine operations may conflict with/or decrease desirability for areas marked for future growth and housing developments. - Stakeholders raised concerns about use of the land following the mine's closure, and the need for a future use that supports the community in the future. In addition to rehabilitating the land, some stakeholders identified possible future uses could include community recreational uses.	Section 7.1
Environmental impacts	Some stakeholders raised concerns about environmental impacts of the mine, such as: - The mine's operations contributing to climate change. - Potential impacts to and pollution of waterways (i.e. Four Mile Creek) and the water table from continued mining operations which could impact wildlife and overall health of the river and creek systems. - Some stakeholders raised concerns about impacts to the green spaces, habitat and species population (environmental impact) from extension of the mine. Other issues raised included: - Some stakeholders noted that they would like to see land dedicated to conservation following the closure of the mine. Some stakeholders expressed a desire to use this area as a green space for recreational use. - There is a perception amongst some stakeholders that mine rehabilitation and offsetting isn't managed as well as it could be.	Section 7.2 Section 7.5
Community investment	- Bloomfield's long-term commitment and involvement in the local community was noted to be a benefit by some stakeholders. - Stakeholders highlighted that the application process to receive community funding from Bloomfield was straightforward. There was a shared sentiment among stakeholders that they would like to see more engagement from Bloomfield representatives beyond receiving funding, and that they should get involved with and see the projects and programs they are supporting. - Some stakeholders noted that people in the community may be unaware of the grant and funding opportunities available through Bloomfield. - Some stakeholders would like to see Bloomfield invest in smaller infrastructure projects (i.e. improving roads to reduce dust).	Section 7.4
Consultation	Some stakeholders have noted a lack of consistent communication from Bloomfield about current and future mining operations (i.e. announcements about mine closure being followed by intentions to extend operations for 5 years). Some stakeholders expressed frustration about a perceived inconsistency in messaging.	Section 6 Section 7

5.2.2 Community survey

A survey was developed by Bloomfield to provide an opportunity for community stakeholders across the local and regional study area to provide input to the SIA.

The survey was available online on Bloomfield's website in January and February of 2024 and was accessible via Survey Monkey. A link and QR code to access the survey was included in a letter which was distributed by Bloomfield and Australia Post to residents in Ashtonfield, Louth Park, Buchanan, Buttai, Black Hill and Avalon Drive in Thornton. A summary of the letterbox drop is shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Letterbox drop – suburbs

Suburb	Number of letters delivered
Ashtonfield	2,089
Louth Park	771
Buchanan	54
Buttai	14
Black Hill	695
Thornton	72 – delivered to residences on Avalon Drive which is the closest area to the Colliery in Thornton (approximately 4.8 km east of the Creek Cut Area and 3.6 km east of the Work Shop Area).
Total letters distributed	3,695

By the end of the survey period, 145 stakeholders had completed the survey. This represents a targeted stakeholder response rate of 3.92% (i.e. those who received a link to the survey via letterbox drop). Table 5.4 presents a summary of key findings and issues raised in responses to the community survey. Further analysis and figures to support findings from the community survey are provided in Appendix B.

Table 5.4 Summary of community survey key findings

Topic	Description
Sentiment about the proposal	– The majority of survey respondents (79.3% or 116) were 'supportive' (4.1%) or 'strongly supportive' (75.2%) of continued mining at the Colliery. – 17.3% (25) of survey respondents 'opposed' (7.6% or 11) or 'strongly opposed' (9.7% or 14) continued mining at the Colliery. – A further 3.4% (6) of survey respondents were 'neutral'. – Of the 122 comments for this question, 97 (79.5%) contained positive sentiment regarding their support of the continued operation, while 25 (20.5%) were negative.
Community characteristics and values	– Over half (74 respondents or 51.8%) of survey respondents live in Ashtonfield or Maitland / Louth Park, which are the suburbs closest to the Colliery operational site. – The majority of survey respondents were local residents (80 respondents or 56.7%), or employees at the Colliery (56 respondents or 39.7%). – Over two thirds of survey respondents (122 respondents or 86.5%) were over the age of 35, with the 55-64 age group accounting for the highest proportion of respondents (44 people or 31.2%) – Those opposed to the continuation of the mine expressed concerns regarding adverse impacts to vegetation and wildlife, impacts to amenity (i.e. noise, dust, light pollution, and vibration from blasting), as well as broader contributions to and impacts on climate change. – Those supportive of the continuation of the mine primarily perceived continued operations as being good for employment and jobs, providing stability for livelihoods and income, ensures that industry remains in the area, and that Bloomfield are supportive of the community.
Relationship/communication with the Colliery	– Over half of survey respondents (56.6% or 81 respondents) stated that they have not had prior communication with Bloomfield Collieries. – The majority of survey respondents (79.3% or 116 respondents) were supportive or strongly supportive of continued mining at the Colliery, while 17.3% (25 respondents) opposed or strongly opposed continued mining.

Topic	Description
Challenges / issues	Challenges and issues raised by respondents include: – Respondents raised concerns about potential impacts to the immediate environment and natural landscape (impacts to wildlife and vegetation). – Some residents raised concerns regarding continued and ongoing impacts to amenity and wellbeing. – Dust ('black dust') and noise and the resulting wellbeing implications were commonly noted as an ongoing concern of some respondents. Some noted that 24/7 operations are heard in neighbouring Ashtonfield and other localities at night and cause light pollution. – Property damage associated with vibrations from mine blasting was raised as an issue amongst respondents in relation to continued operations. – Respondents raised concerns regarding climate change and the place of coal mining in the community moving forward. – Some respondents raised concerns that continued operations would devalue nearby houses.
Strengths	Strengths raised by respondents include: – Respondents noted Bloomfield's contribution to and support of the local community and recognised the support given to the community through funding (community grants program). – The Colliery provides employment for locals and procurement opportunities for local businesses, ensuring stability of livelihood and wages. – Some respondents noted that the continued presence of industry would have positive economic benefits for the region.

5.2.3 Aboriginal stakeholder consultation

Aboriginal stakeholder consultation for this proposed modification occurred as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) which was conducted by OzArk (2024). The primary aim of the ACHAR was to identify any cultural values within the landscape in which the proposed modification is located so that those values can be recognised and incorporated into management recommendations for the proposed modification.

As part of their assessment, OzArk undertook their consultation with Aboriginal community stakeholders in line with ACHCR. This included:

- ACHCR Stage 1: Identify the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) who wish to be consulted about the proposed modification - On 1 December 2023 an advertisement was placed in the Maitland Mercury requesting expressions of interest in being consulted about the proposed modification. 18 individuals/groups registered to be consulted and these individuals/groups constitute the RAPs for the proposed modification.
- ACHCR Stage 2: Provide information about the project to RAPs - Detailed project information was provided in the assessment methodology that was issued to all RAPs for their correspondence on 18 January 2024. The closing date for comment was 16 February 2024. Four responses were received advising that these RAPs had reviewed and supported the methodology. The field survey as per Stage 3 of the ACHCRs was undertaken with the assistance of RAPs.
- ACHCR Stage 3: Acquire information regarding Aboriginal cultural values associated with the proposed modification through RAP consultation and field work - The field survey as per Stage 3 of the ACHCRs was undertaken with the assistance of RAP representatives on 27 February 2024.
- ACHCR Stage 4: the production of a draft ACHAR that is issued to all RAPs for their consideration - The draft ACHAR was distributed to the RAPs for the project on 16 April 2024 requesting feedback on the report before 15 May 2024. One response was received supporting the draft report.

The ACHAR found there were no specific cultural values identified by the RAPs regarding the proposed modification for mining. However, consultation with the RAPs identified the strong cultural values of Aboriginal communities regarding landscapes and cultural heritage sites.

Outcomes from the consultation conducted by OzArk have informed the impact assessment and recommended management measures identified in this SIA.

6. Social baseline

The following section describes the existing Colliery footprint, and a profile of the local and regional study areas.

6.1 Bloomfield operational footprint

The Colliery is an existing open cut mining operation, and the current approved project area is located in Black Hill and Buchanan.

Coal has been mined on the site for approximately 170 years. The early mining on the property was by underground methods, with the pits being small and situated predominantly around the outcrops of various coal seams (GHD, 2024a). Bloomfield commenced mining at the site after taking over the mining lease in 1937 and mining in the underground seams ceased in 1992 (GHD, 2024a). Open cut mining operations have been undertaken by the Colliery since 1964 and produces approximately 0.8 to 1.3 million tonnes of ROM coal per year.

Prior to European settlement, the Awabakal people are described as occupying land between Wyong, Maitland, Kurri Kurri, and Newcastle, while the Wonnarua occupied an extensive territory from west of Maitland to the Dividing Range (OzArk, 2024). The proposed modification areas are close to the boundary of these groups, although it should be noted that such boundaries were fluid (OzArk, 2024). The ACHAR (Ozark, 2024) found that the area was chiefly occupied by members of the Pambalong clan.

Currently, the site employs 93 people and the proposed modification would not change the operation workforce. The Colliery would continue to operate within the currently approved limits with a reduction of the approved annual ROM tonnage limit from 1.3 Mt to 0.9MT.

The following land uses are located within the approved project area:

- Current active open cut coal mining areas
- Unshaped and shaped overburden dump areas
- Progressively rehabilitated areas some of which are actively grazed by cattle
- Workshop and surrounding area used for maintenance and fuel storage
- Road linking the current coal mining areas with the ROM coal stockpiles adjacent to the CHPP
- Road linking the current and proposed coal mining areas to the workshop
- Areas of completed rehabilitation which are actively grazed by cattle

The current approved project area and the proposed modification are located within the suburbs of Black Hill and Buchanan. Four other suburbs and localities are adjacent to the mining lease and operational area – Ashtonfield, Thornton, Louth Park and Buttai.

The communities located in the local study area are outlined and described further in Section 2.3 above Section 6.2 below.

6.2 Local study area

This section provides a high-level summary of the communities that are located close to the Colliery, as described in Section 2.1. The sections below present an overview of each community, with detailed demographic data presented in Appendix C.

6.2.1 Ashtonfield

The suburb of Ashtonfield, located within the City of Maitland LGA, is the closest residential community to the Colliery's operational area. The closest residential community within the suburb to the proposed modification is approximately 1.7 km south west of the Workshop Area and 2.8 km south west of the Creek Cut Area.

Ashtonfield is a small, residential neighbourhood bounded by Four Mile Creek to the south and the New England Highway to the northeast. It is accessed via Chisholm Road and South Seas Drive. While there is no village centre, the Stockland Green Hills shopping centre is located approximately 600 metres northwest of the suburb and provides a variety of shops and services to residents. The rail loop used by the Colliery partially sits within Ashtonfield.

There are two schools located in Ashtonfield, Hunter Valley Grammar School, a non-government combined school, and Ashtonfield Public School, a government primary school. Other key infrastructure in the area includes Maitland Private Hospital, two parks, two playgrounds, a football field, multi-purpose centre, coffee stand and cake shop.

In 2021, Ashtonfield had a population of 4,589 people. The population decreased by 1.2% (56 people) over the last five years from 2016 to 2021, compared to a 16.7% increase in the Maitland LGA. The suburb is characterised by an aging population with a high proportion of the population aged over 50 years (34.5%) and a median age of 39 years, which was higher compared to Maitland LGA (36 years).

The highest proportion of family types in Ashtonfield were couple families with children (50.3%), which was higher than Maitland LGA (44.0%). There was a total of 1,616 private dwellings in Ashtonfield in 2021, of which 96.8% were occupied. The most common type of dwelling in Ashtonfield was separate house (93.9%) which was higher compared to Maitland LGA (87.3%). Most people in Ashtonfield owned their own home (either fully or with a mortgage) (77.6%), which was higher than Maitland LGA (67.0%).

Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment in 2021, employing 16.7% of the labour force (compared to 16.2% in Maitland LGA). There were low rates of unemployment in Ashtonfield (3.5%) in 2021, compared to Maitland LGA (4.7%), as well as higher labour force participation rate (68.4% compared to 64.0%). The median individual income in Ashtonfield was \$891 per week which was higher than Maitland LGA (\$802 per week) (ABS, 2022).

According to the 2021 ABS's Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD), Ashtonfield had a decile score of 7 within NSW, indicating a moderate level of advantage (ABS, 2023a).

Overall, Ashtonfield is characterised by:

- An ageing population with a high proportion of the population over 50 years (34.5%), which was higher than Maitland LGA (32.6%).
- Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment, employing 16.7% of residents in Ashtonfield and 16.2% of residents in Maitland LGA.
- Lower unemployment (3.5%) compared to Maitland LGA (4.7%).

6.2.2 Louth Park

Louth Park is a suburb within Maitland LGA and represents one of the closest residential communities to the proposed modification. The closest residences and businesses within the suburb are approximately 1.2 km north of the Creek Cut Area and 1.9 km north west of the Workshop area. The suburb is accessed via Buchanan/Mount Vincent Road and Louth Park Road.

Louth Park is a small rural town characterised by large residential lots and rural landscape, with residences mostly concentrated in the eastern corner of the suburb. There is no village centre, and residents would travel to Maitland (approximately 4 kilometres north) or East Maitland (approximately 4 kilometres east) to access a variety of services and shops. There is a pet store, church, children's playground, guitar repair store, and alpaca farm. There are two properties available for tourists via Booking.com which provide accommodation to visitors.

In 2021, Louth Park had a population of 922 people. The population increased by 40.9% (268 people) over the last five years from 2016 to 2021, compared to a 16.7% increase in the Maitland LGA. Louth Park is characterised by a younger population, with 28.5% of people aged under 18 years and a younger median age (35 years) compared to Maitland LGA (25.2% under 18 years and 36 years).

Couple families with children made up the majority of families living in Louth Park (62.4%) which was higher than Maitland LGA (44.0%). There was a total of 278 private dwellings in Louth Park in 2021, of which 95.3% were occupied. The most common type of dwelling in Louth Park was separate house (98.9%) which was higher compared to Maitland LGA (87.3%). Most people in Louth Park also owned their own home (either fully or with a mortgage) (94.7%), which was higher than Maitland LGA (67.0%).

Health care and social assistance is the top industry of employment, employing 14.4% of residents (compared to 16.2% in Maitland LGA). There were low rates of unemployment in Louth Park (2.6%) compared to Maitland LGA (4.7%) as well as high rates of labour force participation (76.0% compared to 64.0%). The median individual income in Louth Park was \$1,033 per week which was higher than Maitland LGA (\$802 per week).

According to the 2021 ABS SEIFA IRSAD, Louth Park had a decile score of 10 within the state and Australia indicating the highest level of advantage.

Overall, Louth Park is characterised by:

- A younger population with 28.5% of people aged under 18 years, which was higher than Maitland LGA (25.2%).
- Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment, employing 14.4% of residents in Louth Park and 16.2% of residents in Maitland LGA.
- Lower unemployment (2.6%) compared to Maitland LGA (4.7%).

6.2.3 Thornton

Thornton is a suburb located within the Maitland LGA and the closest residences within the suburb to the proposed modification are approximately 3.6 km west of the Workshop Area and 4.8 km west of the Creek Cut Area. The suburb is accessed via the New England Highway, Raymond Terrace Road, and the Hunter railway line. The New England Highway transects the suburb of Thornton, with the majority of the population residing north of the highway and largely removed from Bloomfield's operations. There is a small residential community south of the highway which are closest to Bloomfield's operations.

Thornton is identified as a major industrial cluster and regionally significant strategic centre in the *Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040* (LSPS). The rail corridor used by the Colliery enters and exits the mining lease area via Thornton. The role of the town centre and industrial land estate will help to contribute to the supply of greenfield housing and accommodate a diverse range of jobs and services including large manufacturing, freight, and warehouse businesses in the Greater Newcastle area (Maitland City Council, 2020).

Thornton is the largest suburb in the local study area, and one of the bustling suburbs of the Maitland LGA. It is bisected by the Hunter train line and characterised by recent residential developments along with a collection of shops, businesses, light industry and services. Key businesses, services and facilities located in Thornton include:

- Shops and businesses – including two medical centres, a supermarket, butcher, two cafes, ten takeaway restaurants, post office, barber shop, two hair salons, two pharmacies, a Pilates studio, fitness centre and two service stations.
- Community services and facilities – including four playgrounds, six sporting venues, a library and community centre.
- Education – including two government primary schools, one government secondary school and one non-government special school.
- Emergency services – including Thornton Rural Fire Brigade.
- Thornton Industrial Estate, a major industrial cluster home to large manufacturing, freight, and warehouse businesses. A number of businesses support the mining industry in the Hunter Coalfield, and continues to provide jobs in the metro region.

In 2021, Thornton had a population of 10,690 people. The population increased by 32.6% (2,628 people) over the last five years from 2016 to 2021, compared to a 16.7% increase in the Maitland LGA. The suburb is characterised by a younger population with a high proportion of the population under 18 years (25.5%) and a median age of 32 years, which was lower compared to Maitland LGA (36 years).

The highest proportion of family types in Thornton were couple families with children (47.1%), which was higher than Maitland LGA (44.7%). There was a total of 3,893 private dwellings in Thornton in 2021, of which 95.0% were occupied. The most common type of dwelling in Thornton was separate house (92.8%) which was higher compared to Maitland LGA (87.3%). There was a lower proportion of people in Thornton who owned their own home (either fully or with a mortgage) (64.3%) compared to the LGA (67.0%) and a higher proportion of people who rented (34.2% compared to 29.8% for the LGA).

Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment in 2021, employing 16.5% of the labour force (compared to 16.2% in Maitland LGA). There were low rates of unemployment in Thornton (4.0%) in 2021, compared to Maitland LGA (4.7%), as well as higher labour force participation rate (71.1% compared to 64.0%). The median individual income in Thornton was \$887 per week which was higher than Maitland LGA (\$802 per week).

According to the 2021 ABS SEIFA IRSAD, Thornton had a decile score of 5 within the state and Australia indicating a moderate level of disadvantage / advantage.

Overall, Thornton is characterised by:

- A younger population with 25.5% of people aged under 18 years, which was similar to Maitland LGA (25.2%).
- Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment, employing 16.5% of residents in Thornton and 16.2% of residents in Maitland LGA.
- Lower unemployment (4.0%) compared to Maitland LGA (4.7%).

6.2.4 Buchanan

Buchanan is a small rural suburb located within the Cessnock LGA and comprised of dispersed residences and businesses. The closest residence to the proposed modification is 2.0 km southwest of the Creek Cut Area, and is 1.6 km west of the S-Cut (South) and adjacent operations. The suburb is accessed via John Renshaw Drive, the Hunter Expressway and Buchanan/Mount Vincent Road.

The locality is predominantly rural landscape bisected northwest to southeast by the Hunter Expressway. The Colliery and the proposed modification are located across the boundaries of Buchanan and Black Hill. There are a small number of large lot residential properties along Buchanan Road and George Booth Drive, which bisect the suburb from north to south. A small portion of the western corner of the suburb is part of the Werakata State Conservation Area, which is popular among visitors from nearby towns and areas. Recreational activities within the park includes mountain bike riding, four-wheel drive touring, trail bike riding, horse riding, birdwatching and picnicking (NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2014).

Buchanan is characterised by half farmland and half forested areas, and is noted as the intersection between Maitland, Beresfield, Kurri Kurri and Edgeworth. There is no residential centre in Buchanan, and residents would travel to the nearby town of Kurri Kurri approximately 4km to the west to access services and shops.

In 2021, Buchanan had a population of 212 people living in 67 dwellings. Between 2016 and 2021, the population increased by 7.6% (15 people), compared to a 14.5% increase in the Cessnock LGA. Buchanan is characterised as an older population with a median age of 38 years and a high proportion of the population aged over 50 years (32.5%), which was similar to Cessnock LGA (37 years and 35.3%).

Couple families with children were the highest proportion of family types in Buchanan (39.0%), which was consistent with Cessnock LGA (39.3%). Buchanan was dominated by separate house dwelling types (100.0%) which was higher than Cessnock LGA (90.5%). There was a lower proportion of people in Buchanan who owned their own home (either fully or with a mortgage) (64.3%) compared to the LGA (70.0%).

The top industry of employment in 2021 was health care and social assistance, employing 21.3% of the labour force in Buchanan (compared to 14.3% in Cessnock LGA). Buchanan had lower rates of unemployed labour force (2.7%) in 2021, compared to Cessnock (5.6%). The median individual income in Buchanan was \$762 per week which was higher than Cessnock LGA (\$696 per week).

According to the 2021 ABS SEIFA IRSAD, Buchanan had a decile score of 8 within the state and Australia indicating a moderate to high level of advantage.

Overall, Buchanan is characterised by:

- An aging population with 32.5% of people aged over 50 years, which was similar to Cessnock LGA (35.2%).

- Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment, employing 21.3% of residents in Buchanan and 14.3% of residents in Cessnock LGA.
- Lower unemployment (2.7%) compared to Cessnock LGA (5.6%).

6.2.5 Buttai

Buttai is a small rural suburb located within the Cessnock LGA. The closest residence is approximately 600 m south of the S-Cut (South) and adjacent operations. These residences are approximately 1.9 km south of the proposed modification in the Creek Cut Area. The suburb is accessed via John Renshaw Drive which provides links to the Hunter Expressway and Kurri Kurri in the west and Beresfield in the east.

The area is primarily bushland and rural farmland with large residential lots dispersed throughout the suburb. As there is no residential centre, residents would travel to the nearby suburbs of Kurri Kurri approximately 7 km west or Beresfield approximately 8 km east to access a variety of services and shops. There is a winery and a ranch available for venue hire that is currently undergoing renovations.

It is noted that the median and average values of ABS statistics may be affected by confidentiality in small areas. In addition, due to the population size, the ABS has provided limited information to protect the confidentiality of data.

In 2021, Buttai had a population of 52 people living in 18 dwellings. Buttai is characterised as an older population with a median age of 42 years and a high proportion of the population aged over 50 years (30.8%), which was similar to Cessnock LGA (37 years and 35.3%).

Couple families with children were the highest proportion of family types in Buttai (87.5%), which was higher than Cessnock LGA (39.3%). The most common type of dwelling in Buttai was separate house (100.0%) which was higher than Cessnock LGA (90.5%). There was a lower proportion of people in Buttai who owned their own home (either fully or with a mortgage) (53.3%) compared to the LGA (70.0%). There was a higher proportion of people in Buttai who lived in 'other tenure type' (20.0%) compared to the LGA (1.4%).

The top industry of employment in 2021 was inadequately described/not stated by 21.7% of Buttai's labour force. The second highest industry of employment was split between construction, public administration and safety, and professional, scientific and technical services (17.4%). Buttai had lower rates of unemployment (0.0%) in 2021, compared to Cessnock LGA (5.6%). The median individual income in Buttai was \$1,238 per week which was higher than Cessnock LGA (\$696 per week).

According to the 2021 ABS SEIFA IRSAD, Buttai had a decile score of 8 within the state and Australia indicating a moderate to high level of advantage.

Overall, Buttai is characterised by:

- An aging population with a median age of 42, which was higher than Cessnock LGA (37 years).
- Construction, public administration and safety, and professional, scientific and technical services were the top industries of employment, each employing 17.4% of residents in Buttai which was higher than Cessnock LGA (9.2%, 6.1% and 8.9%, respectively).
- Lower unemployment (0.0%) compared to Cessnock LGA (5.6%).

6.2.6 Black Hill

The suburb of Black Hill is located within the Cessnock LGA and the City of Newcastle LGA. The closest residences to the proposed modification are 2.6 km south of the Creek Cut Area and 3.0 km south of the Workshop Area. The suburb is accessed via John Renshaw Drive, the Pacific Motorway and links to the New England Highway.

The locality is predominantly rural with forested areas, farmland and large properties. The Colliery and the proposed modification are located across the boundaries of Black Hill and Buchanan. A portion of the suburb is bounded by the Hunter Wetlands National Park in the southeast. The park is popular among residents and visitors for a range of recreational activities including walking, cycling, fishing, birdwatching, kayaking and picnicking.

There is no village centre in Black Hill, and residents would travel to the nearby town of Beresford approximately 4 km to the east to access services and shops. There is a primary school, church, cemetery, equestrian centre and archery range.

In 2021, Black Hill had a population of 516 people living in 172 dwellings. The population decreased by 7.9% (44 people) over the last five years from 2016 to 2021, compared to a 14.5% increase in the Cessnock LGA. Black Hill is characterised by an aging population with a median age of 47 years and a high proportion of the population aged over 50 years (44.4%) compared to Cessnock LGA (35.3%).

Couple families with children were the highest proportion of family types in Black Hill (53.8%), which was higher than Cessnock LGA (39.3%). Black Hill was dominated by separate house dwelling types (100.0%) which was higher than Cessnock LGA (90.5%). There was a higher proportion of people in Black Hill who owned their own home (either fully or with a mortgage) (87.6%) compared to the LGA (70.0%).

The top industry of employment in 2021 was health care and social assistance, employing 22.1% of the labour force in Black Hill (compared to 14.3% in Cessnock LGA). Black Hill had lower rates of unemployed labour force (4.0%) in 2021, compared to Cessnock (5.6%). The median individual income in Black Hill was \$903 per week which was higher than Cessnock LGA (\$696 per week).

According to the 2021 ABS SEIFA IRSAD, Black Hill had a decile score of 8 within the state and Australia indicating a moderate to high level of advantage.

Overall, Black Hill is characterised by:

- An aging population with 44.4% of people aged over 50 years, which was higher than Cessnock LGA (35.3%).
- Health care and social assistance was the top industry of employment, employing 22.1% of residents in Black Hill and 14.3% of residents in Cessnock LGA.
- Lower unemployment (4.0%) compared to Cessnock LGA (5.6%).

6.3 Regional study area

6.3.1 Overview

Cessnock LGA is characterised by a predominantly rural landscape with concentrated urban land in dispersed towns and villages. The Colliery is situated on the north-eastern boundary of the LGA, approximately 19 km northeast of the City of Cessnock. The LGA covers approximately 1,950 square kilometres and forms part of the Lower Hunter Region (Cessnock City Council, 2020). With a population of over 63,000 people, the majority of residents reside in a thin urban belt between the townships of Cessnock and Kurri Kurri.

European settlement in the region since the 1820's has seen the establishment and growth of pastoral lands, the coal mining industry, and the viticulture industry (Cessnock City Council, 2020). Mining has historically been the principal industry and source of employment in the Cessnock region, however the LGA has recently seen a number of mine closures (Cessnock City Council, 2020). Despite changes in industry, Cessnock was the sixth fastest growing LGA in NSW in 2021-2022 (Centre for Population, 2024). The *Local Strategic Planning Statement 2036* (Cessnock City Council, 2020) for Cessnock LGA sets out in the vision for the region to grow their existing industries in agriculture and viticulture, while promoting niche tourism opportunities and creating commercial centres for the growing population (Cessnock City Council, 2020).

The closest urban centre to the Colliery is Maitland, located in Maitland LGA. Located on the Hunter River, the City of Maitland is directly to the north of the Colliery. Similar to Cessnock, Maitland is characterised by a predominantly rural landscape with concentrated urban land in dispersed towns and villages. However, the rural character of Maitland is changing, as parts of the LGA have been developing and growing. During SIA consultation, some stakeholders noted that Maitland's population growth has led to changes in the community over time. Some stakeholders indicated that Maitland has grown due to its more affordable housing, while remaining close to Newcastle's employment areas. However this was also identified as a contributor to increased cost of living for local communities. Some stakeholders also noted a lack in appropriate infrastructure and services to meet regional growth and demand, such as health and medical services, roads and transport infrastructure, and education.

The growth of Maitland described by some stakeholders during consultation is also present and addressed in population trends and strategic plans for the region. Maitland is one of the fastest growing inland cities in Australia with an annual growth rate consistently above 2% (Maitland City Council, 2020). In 2021-2022 Maitland was the third fastest growing LGA in NSW (Centre for Population, 2024), with the population of Maitland expected to reach over 144,536 residents by 2041 (DPHI, 2022). Due to the LGA's proximity to employment clusters like Thornton and Rutherford as well as new urban release areas for greenfield housing supplying the Greater Newcastle Area, Maitland is a fast growing, regionally significant strategic centre which services both the hinterland and regional areas (Maitland City Council, 2020).

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* (the Plan) articulates the vision for the Hunter region to remain one of the leading regional economies in Australia (DPE, 2022). The regional plan acknowledges the importance of coal and power stations in establishing the Hunter as a leading regional economy. However the plan has also identified that many of these approvals will expire, which will allow land to be rehabilitated to agricultural, biodiversity, and other land uses (DPE, 2022). The Plan indicates that as current land use agreements reach the end of their leases there may be an opportunity to evaluate future land use and zoning approvals to support the development of the Hunter-Central Coast renewable energy zone (REZ). The development of the REZ in this region could take advantage of existing infrastructure, transport links, the Port of Newcastle, water resources and a skilled workforce (DPE, 2022).

6.3.2 Socio-economic indicators

6.3.2.1 Population

As displayed in Table 6.1, the regional study areas of Maitland and Cessnock experienced a higher rate of population growth between 2011 and 2021 when compared to the Hunter Valley and NSW. Between 2016 and 2021, Maitland grew by 16.7% which is double the rate for NSW (7.9%), while Cessnock grew by 14.5%.

Table 6.1 Population change 2011, 2016, and 2021 census

Locality	2011 Population	% Change (2011 – 2016)	2016 Population	% Change (2016 – 2021)	2021 Population
NSW	6,917,658	8.1%	7,480,228	7.9%	8,072,163
Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle)	243,246	8.3%	263,416	10.8%	291,946
Maitland	67,478	14.6%	77,305	16.7%	90,226
Cessnock	50,840	9.3%	55,560	14.5%	63,632

Source: ABS 2011, 2016 and 2021 Census Data

As displayed in Table 6.2 the Hunter Valley, Maitland LGA, and Cessnock LGA have a higher percentage of the population who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander when compared to both state and national census data.

Table 6.2 Indigenous population in the regional study area at 2021 census

	2021	
	Individuals	%
Australia	812,728	3.2%
NSW	278,043	3.4%
Hunter Valley (Exclu. Newcastle)	23,309	8.0%
Maitland	6,738	7.5%
Cessnock	6,480	10.2%

Source: ABS 2021 Census Data

6.3.2.2 Population projections

As shown in Table 6.3, Maitland LGA, Cessnock LGA and the Hunter Valley are expected to experience a higher rate of population growth compared to NSW. In particular, Maitland LGA is projected to more than double in population, increasing by 61.1% to 144,536 persons by 2041. Cessnock LGA is expected to increase by 43.1% by 2041, while the Hunter Valley by 35.2%. This compares to 17.3% for NSW overall.

On average, Maitland LGA is expected to experience the highest average annual growth rate between 2021 and 2041 at 2.4%, compared to Cessnock LGA (1.8%), Hunter Valley (1.5%) and NSW (1.0%).

The population trends for the Maitland and Cessnock LGAs are consistent with regional information that these are rapidly growing areas for population and urban development. The *Cessnock Community Strategic Plan* has identified that urban development is rapidly expanding within growth corridors between regional town centres (Cessnock City Council, 2022). Maitland has also experienced significant growth in the last two decades and will continue to grow along with the rest of the Greater Newcastle metropolitan area (Maitland City Council, 2020). The Centre for Population (2024) listed Maitland as one of the top twenty fastest growing LGAs in Australia in the 2021-2022 period.

Table 6.3 Population projections, 2021-2024

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	Change between 2021 and 2041
Maitland LGA						
Number	89,746	102,690	116,485	130,423	144,536	54,790
% change	-	14.4%	13.4%	12.0%	10.8%	61.1%
Average annual growth rate	-	2.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.1%	2.4%
Cessnock LGA						
Number	62,528	69,200	76,039	82,800	89,501	26,973
% change	-	10.7%	9.9%	8.9%	8.1%	43.1%
Average annual growth rate	-	2.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.8%
Hunter Valley (ex. Newcastle)						
Number	289,465	314,413	340,442	355,066	391,396	101,931
% change	-	8.6%	8.3%	4.3%	10.2%	35.2%
Average annual growth rate	-	1.7%	1.6%	0.8%	2.0%	1.5%-
NSW						
Number	8,166,757	8,462,770	8,933,640	9,404,886	9,872,934	1,706,177
% change	-	3.6%	5.6%	5.3%	5.0%	17.3%
Average annual growth rate	-	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

Source: (DPHI, 2022)

6.3.2.3 Age and sex profile

Table 6.4 shows the age and sex characteristics for the regional study area compared to the Hunter Valley and NSW. Overall, the regional study area profiles are mostly consistent, with key characteristics including:

- A lower median age in Maitland (36) and Cessnock (37) compared to the Hunter Valley (40) and NSW (39).
- Maitland, Cessnock, and the Hunter Valley all have a higher percentage of residents under 18 years compared to NSW.

- The Hunter Valley has a higher percentage of residents who are over 65 years of age when compared to NSW, while Cessnock is consistent with the state average. Maitland has less residents over 65 years, and more under 18 years.
- Overall, the sex distribution across Maitland, Hunter Valley and NSW are consistent, with slightly more females than males.

Table 6.4 *Age and sex profile*

Indicator	Maitland LGA	Cessnock LGA	Hunter Valley (ex. Newcastle)	NSW
Under 18 years	25.2%	23.7%	23.2%	21.7%
Over 65 years	15.5%	17.0%	19.3%	17.6%
Median age (years)	36	37	40	39
Dependency ratio*	58	59	63	56
% Males	48.7%	50.3%	49.7%	49.4%
% Females	51.3%	49.7%	50.3%	50.6%

* The dependency ratio relates the number of children (0-14 years old) and older persons (65 years or over) to the working-age population (15-64 years old).

Source: ABS, 2021 Census

6.3.2.4 Families

At the time of the 2021 census there were 25,244 families in the Maitland LGA and 17,108 families in the Cessnock LGA. Couple families with children represented the highest percentage of family composition type within Maitland (44.0%) and Cessnock (39.3%). Census data indicates that Cessnock has a higher percentage (22.1%) of one parent families when compared to Maitland (18.1%), Hunter Valley (17.7), and NSW (15.8%) data.

6.3.2.5 Dwellings

At the time of the 2021 Census, there were 35,413 private dwellings in the Maitland LGA and 25,765 in the Cessnock LGA. Maitland and Cessnock have a high occupancy rate (94.1% and 91.5%) compared to Hunter Valley and NSW. This indicates that most properties in the Maitland and Cessnock LGAs are occupied full time. The main dwelling type in Maitland LGA, Cessnock LGA and the Hunter Valley was separate houses. Cessnock LGA had the highest proportion of separate house dwellings (90.5%), with a low proportion of flats, units, apartments and semi-detached dwellings compared to the regional study area and NSW.

The *Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statement* estimates that Maitland will deliver approximately 21% of the total dwelling projection for Greater Newcastle (Maitland City Council, 2020).

6.3.2.6 Affordability

Overall, housing in Cessnock LGA and the Hunter Valley (excluding Newcastle) continues to be more affordable than Maitland LGA and the state, as shown in Table 6.5.

House Affordability

- Suburbs in Maitland LGA had a Rental Affordability Index (RAI) score of between 89-93 (unaffordable) (SGS Economics and Planning, 2024). As of December 2023, the median house price in Maitland LGA was \$730,000, representing a 5.7% increase from the previous year (HeatMaps, 2024).
- Suburbs in Cessnock LGA had a score of between 98-109 (moderately unaffordable) (SGS Economics and Planning, 2024). As of December 2023, the median house price in Cessnock LGA was \$620,000, representing a 7.6% increase from the previous year (HeatMaps, 2024).
- Surrounding suburbs in the Newcastle area had a score ranging from 77-89 (unaffordable), while suburbs in the Central Coast region scored 128 on the RAI (acceptable) (SGS Economics and Planning, 2024).

Rent Affordability

- Median weekly rent price for Maitland LGA was \$370 per week, representing a 15.6% increase between 2016 and 2021. This was the same across the regional study area and state.
- Cessnock LGA experienced the greatest increase in rental prices between 2016 and 2021, with a 21.4% increase in median weekly rent.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 outlines that housing supply is needed to support the increased population expected by 2041 (DPE, 2022).

Table 6.5 Median sale and rental price, 2023

	Median sale price	Sale price change (1 year)	Median rent (weekly)	Rent price change (between 2016-2021)
Maitland LGA	\$730,000	5.7%	\$370	15.6%
Cessnock LGA	\$620,000	7.6%	\$340	21.4%
Hunter Valley (exc. Newcastle)	\$700,000	2.4%	\$350	20.7%
NSW	\$963,000	3.2%	\$420	10.5%

Source: (Heatmaps, 2024), (ABS, 2022)

6.3.3 Economic profile

6.3.3.1 Gross regional product

Both Maitland LGA and Cessnock LGA experienced economic growth between 2013-2023 with real Gross Regional Product (GRP) having grown 49.4% and 9.9%, respectively, over a ten-year period (REMPPLAN, 2024).

The Gross Regional Product (GRP) of Maitland LGA is estimated at \$6.8 billion in 2023. This is 9.7% of the Hunter Region GRP and 0.9% the NSW Gross State Product (GSP). The largest contributor to annual economic output in Maitland LGA was Construction, generating \$2.6 billion in 2020/2021 (REMPPLAN, 2024). Manufacturing was the second largest at \$2.2 billion, followed by Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services at \$1.3 billion. Mining was the fourth largest contributor for Maitland LGA at \$1.3 billion.

Cessnock LGA's GRP is estimated at \$3.5 billion, which represents 5.1% of the Hunter Region GRP and 0.5% of NSW GSP. The largest output generating sector in Cessnock LGA was Manufacturing with an estimated annual output of \$1.5 billion. Construction was the second largest at \$897 million, followed by Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services at \$787 million. Mining was the fourth largest contributor for Cessnock LGA at \$532 million.

While mining is and has been one of the principal industrial bases and sources of employment for the region historically, changes in the mining industry has led to the growing success of the viticulture industry and thriving tourism industry of the region (Cessnock City Council, 2022). The Hunter Valley is Australia's oldest wine region, known as the Hunter Valley Wine Country, and is internationally acclaimed for the Shiraz and Semillon varietals. The region is home to more cellar doors than any other wine region in Australia, giving rise to a thriving tourism industry (Cessnock City Council, 2022).

The regional location of the study area and its proximity to the Pacific, New England, and Golden Highways and Hunter Expressways means better access to resource regions, major metropolitan markets of Newcastle and Sydney and economic infrastructure such as the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport. Maitland LGA is also home to two large industrial clusters at Thornton and Rutherford, which accommodate a diverse range of jobs and services. The city has a total of 608 hectares of industrially zoned land, of which 251 hectares are currently undeveloped for the future supply over the next 20 years (Maitland City Council, 2020).

6.3.3.2 Industry of employment

As shown in Figure 6.1, the top industry of employment was health care and social assistance in both the Maitland LGA and Cessnock LGA (16.2% and 14.3% respectively). The other top industries were retail trade, construction and education and training (Figure 6.1). This was in line with the top industries of employment trends seen in both the Hunter Valley region and NSW.

Industry	Maitland LGA	Cessnock LGA	Hunter Valley (ex. Newcastle) NSW
Health Care and Social Assistance	16.2%	14.3%	13.8%
Retail Trade	10.1%	9.7%	9.4%
Construction	9.0%	9.2%	9.1%
Education and Training	7.8%	6.0%	7.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	6.7%	8.8%	7.6%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4.7%	3.6%	4.3%

Figure 6.1 Top industries of employment, 2021

6.3.3.3 Labour force

As shown in Table 6.6, Maitland LGA had higher levels of labour force participation (64.0%) compared to Hunter Valley (58.4%) and NSW (58.7%). Cessnock LGA had the lowest level of labour force participation within the regional study area, with 56.5% of residents being either employed or unemployed and looking for work. In addition, Cessnock LGA had a higher unemployment rate compared to the region.

Table 6.6 Labour force, 2021

Labour force status	Maitland LGA	Cessnock LGA	Hunter Valley	NSW
Total labour force	45,403	28,714	137,309	3,874,012
Employed	95.3%	94.4%	95.3%	95.1%
Unemployed	4.7%	5.6%	4.7%	4.9%
Labour force participation	64.0%	56.5%	58.4%	58.7%

6.3.3.4 Unemployment rate

Quarterly unemployment rates show that over the last decade the Hunter Valley region has had consistently higher levels of unemployment than NSW. As shown in Figure 6.2, there was a peak in unemployment between 2014 and 2015 in Maitland LGA (8.9%), Cessnock LGA (14.0%) and Hunter Valley (10.0%), which can be attributed to job losses in the coal mining industry and contrast between employment during construction and operation of mines (NSW Parliament, 2015). Cessnock LGA had consistently high rates of unemployment, while Maitland LGA had lower unemployment rates than both the region and state since 2019. As of December 2023, unemployment was at an all-time low in the ten-year period for Maitland LGA (2.7%), Cessnock LGA (4.2%), Hunter Valley and NSW (both 3.3%).

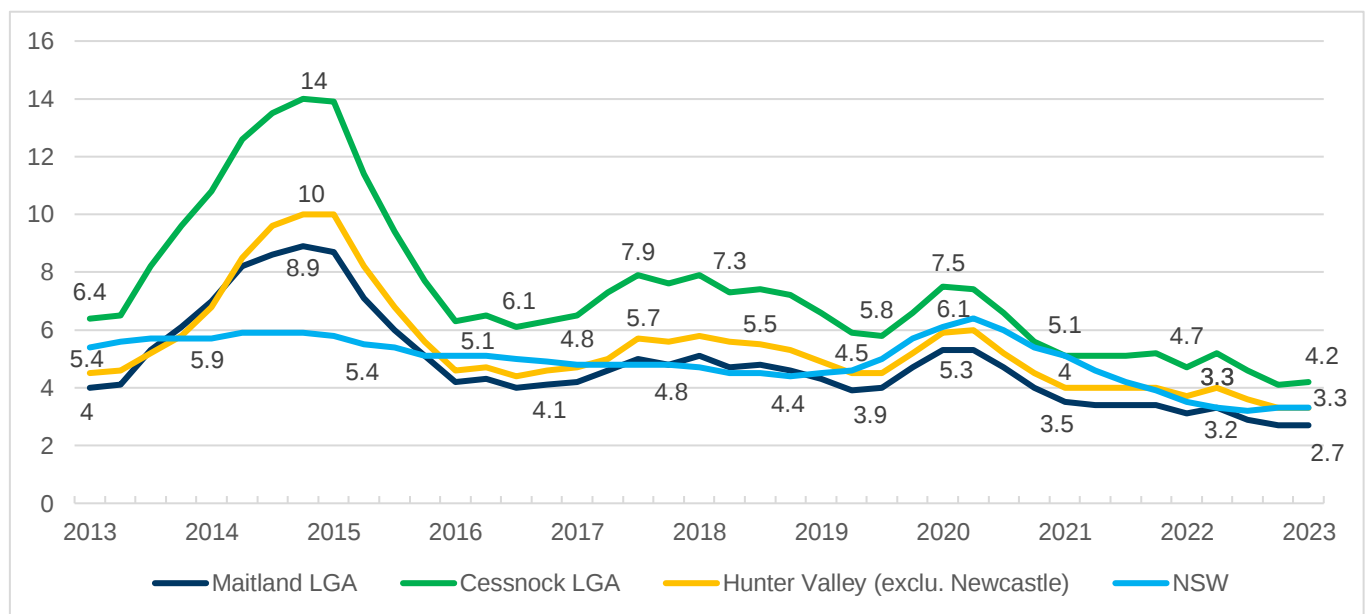


Figure 6.2 Quarterly unemployment rate Maitland LGA, Cessnock LGA, Hunter Valley and NSW, 2013-2023

6.3.3.5 Indigenous labour force

In 2021, the labour force participation rate of non-Indigenous people in Maitland LGA and Cessnock LGA was higher than that recorded for the Indigenous population (Table 6.7). The Indigenous labour force participation rate for Maitland LGA (64.2%) was higher compared to Hunter Valley (59.9%) and NSW (56.55%). The proportion of the labour force who were unemployed was higher in the Indigenous population (10.3%) compared to the non-Indigenous population (4.3%) of the Maitland LGA and the Cessnock LGA (9.8% compared to 5.2%).

Table 6.7 Indigenous employment and labour force participation, 2021

	Maitland LGA		Cessnock LGA		Hunter Valley		NSW	
	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous
Employed	95.7%	89.7%	94.8%	90.2%	95.6%	90.4%	95.2%	90.2%
Unemployed	4.3%	10.3%	5.2%	9.8%	4.4%	9.6%	4.8%	9.8%
Labour force participation rate	66.2%	64.2%	59.3%	53.5%	61.0%	59.9%	61.6%	56.5%
Total labour force (no.)	42,589	2,663	44,339	4,267	127,775	8,950	3,758,483	104,857

6.3.3.6 Youth labour force

As shown in Table 6.8, youth labour force (15-24 years) participation was highest in Maitland LGA (60.3%) and lowest in Cessnock LGA (55.0%) compared to Hunter Valley (55.4%) and NSW (55.5%). Cessnock LGA also had higher youth unemployment rates compared to the regional study area and NSW.

There are two TAFE NSW institutes in the regional study area located in Metford and Kurri Kurri, offering over 400 certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor, and graduate certificate courses. In addition, the University of Newcastle campus is located approximately 15 km from the regional study area.

SIA consultation indicated that the number of referrals for support to young people is increasing in Maitland and the surrounding region. It was noted that people are financially stressed, and that statistics around homelessness and youth homelessness may be/are underreported.

Table 6.8 Youth labour force, 2021

Youth labour force participation	Maitland LGA	Cessnock LGA	Hunter Valley	NSW
Employed	95.6%	94.9%	95.6%	95.5%
Unemployed	4.4%	5.1%	4.4%	4.5%
Labour force participation	60.3%	55.0%	55.4%	55.5%

6.3.3.7 Income

As shown in Table 6.9, Cessnock LGA had both a lower median total individual outcome and median total household income compared to the region and NSW in 2021. This reflects the labour force breakdown and higher levels of unemployment, compared to the surrounding region and state.

Table 6.9 Median income levels, 2021

Income	Maitland LGA	Cessnock LGA	Hunter Valley	NSW
Median total individual income per week	\$802	\$696	\$733	\$813
Median total household income per week	\$1,766	\$1,493	\$1,557	\$1,829

6.3.4 Community values

Throughout SIA consultation, the regional community was described as strong and supportive. Many community members take pride in the primary industries and the contribution these have to the broader region, and there remains a strong attachment to the rural landscape and natural beauty of the area. It was also apparent in SIA consultation that the community is undergoing rapid change and population growth, and services and infrastructure are required to support this growth and the growing community.

The region has a long history and is known for its viticulture and wine making, which has allowed the tourism industry to flourish (Cessnock City Council, 2022), and the agricultural and rural landscape of the region were described as giving people the opportunity to experience a 'slice of country living'. The rural character of the region was perceived as a reason for the current trends in population growth and desirability to move to the area. Stakeholders interviewed were largely open to this growth, however they would like to see Maitland and the surrounding regions maintain their rural character and green spaces. While agriculture and viticulture are historic industries within the region, so is mining, with many community members and families in the region having a connection to the regional mines, either as their employer or as a source of support and procurement for local/regional businesses.

Discussions with stakeholders and reviews of regional and local strategic planning documents indicated that there is not only value placed in the rural landscape, but also in the natural beauty of Maitland and a desire to see the area become one of environmental stewardship, responsibility and sustainability.

Maitland and Cessnock LGAs are in close proximity to Newcastle, and key employment hubs like Thornton and Rutherford. As such, this region is expected to attract a growing population in the coming years, which presents a challenge in providing affordable housing and services (Maitland City Council, 2020; Cessnock City Council, 2022). The communities have a mix of high and low socio-economic individuals/households and the high cost of living, including an increase in housing prices seen in both Cessnock and Maitland LGAs, was highlighted as a challenge for some residents. Concerns were raised regarding unidentified homelessness and displacement of people within the community, particularly for youth and victims of domestic violence.

Reviews of regional and local strategic planning documents as well SIA interviews indicate a community which is rapidly changing and wants to secure employment opportunities for local people and create a regional economy which is diverse, sustainable, and supported by local infrastructure and services.

The *Hunter Regional Plan 2041*, *Cessnock Community Strategic Plan*, *Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040+*, and the *Maitland +10 Plan* all articulate the vision and priorities for the region, which focusses on the above values and challenges – connected and safe communities, sustainable and prosperous economies, healthy environments, and accessible infrastructure and housing.

6.3.5 Community investment

The Bloomfield Group Foundation was established in 2006 to support and benefit local people through Hunter Valley community based programs and projects. The Foundation supports a diverse range of causes with a focus on supporting vulnerable members of the community, medical and health related research and support programs, and initiatives that underpin community health or welfare (Bloomfield, 2024). The Bloomfield Group and Bloomfield Group Foundation contribute to various community groups, charities, programs and projects in the Hunter Valley region.

In the 2022/2023 financial year, this included donations to various local organisations. Groups that received a significant donation included:

- Youth off the Streets – Hunter Valley
- Hunter Medical Research Institute
- Lifeline Direct

Other donation recipients included local community support, health, emergency and education services.

The Bloomfield Group also sponsors a number of local clubs and facilities in the local area. The Group contributed to the following organisations in the 2022/2023 financial year:

- Mindaribba Pre-School
- Maitland Show
- Maitland Rugby Blacks Netball
- Maitland Motor Cross Club
- Hunter Young Business Minds Awards 2022
- Maitland Regional Museum
- Maitland Polocrosse Club
- Maitland & Beyond Family History Inc.
- Maitland Musical Society
- Maitland Pony Club
- Black Hill Community Uniting Church

SIA consultation indicated the contributions from Bloomfield are highly valued by recipients, and that Bloomfield's representatives responsible for the program demonstrate a genuine interest in supporting local community organisations. It was felt that while the process to apply for support was straightforward, there is an opportunity to improve the connection between Bloomfield staff and the organisations. Examples provided included Bloomfield staff attending events and activities to speak to young people about working at Bloomfield. It was noted that Bloomfield had a particular interest in groups which supported young people in the region and community health and wellbeing.

6.3.6 Summary of key findings

Key findings most relevant to this SIA are summarised below:

- Maitland and Cessnock are experiencing high rates of population growth and change. Many new residents have been attracted to live in the area due to the rural character, relative affordability, and proximity to Newcastle. The community is felt to be strong and supportive.
- There remains a strong attachment to the rural landscape and natural beauty of the area, with a desire to see the area become one of environmental stewardship, responsibility and sustainability. Population growth was identified as placing pressure on infrastructure and services.
- While mining is and has been one of the principal industries for the region, the growing success of the viticulture industry, a thriving tourism industry linked to viticulture, and a growing population is leading to diversification of historic industries.
- Both Maitland LGA and Cessnock LGA experienced economic growth between 2013-2023 with real GRP having grown 49.4% and 9.9%, respectively, over a ten-year period.
- Key industries which contribute to the Maitland and Cessnock LGA economic output include construction, manufacturing, rental, hiring & real estate services, and mining.
- Maitland, Cessnock, and the Hunter Valley all have a higher percentage of residents under 18 years compared to the state of NSW.
- Suburbs in Maitland LGA are currently considered unaffordable, while Cessnock LGA is considered moderately unaffordable.
- Cessnock and Maitland LGAs have a mix of high and low socio-economic individuals/households and the high cost of living, including an increase in housing prices, was highlighted as a challenge for some residents, particularly in the context of a growing population. Concerns were raised regarding cost of living pressure for vulnerable residents such as young people.

- Quarterly unemployment rates show that over the last decade the Hunter Valley region has had consistently higher levels of unemployment than NSW. Peak regional unemployment occurred between 2014 and 2015. Cessnock LGA had consistently high rates of unemployment, while Maitland LGA had lower unemployment rates than both the region and state since 2019.
- The Bloomfield Group and Bloomfield Group Foundation contributed to various community groups, charities, programs and projects in the Hunter Valley region between the 2018/2019 and 2022/2023 financial years. These contributions are highly valued by the recipients, and it was felt that Bloomfield genuinely cares about supporting the wellbeing of local communities.

7. Social Impact Assessment

7.1 Property and land use changes

7.1.1 Land use changes

The proposed modification would require land clearing and blasting in the Creek Cut and Workshop Areas to excavate within an active mining area, and demolition of the existing workshop buildings in the Workshop Area. These areas are outlined in Figure 3.1 and comprise bushland in the Creek Cut Area, and previously cleared and rehabilitated landscapes in the Workshop Area. Land uses adjoining the proposed modification include:

- Current active open cut coal mining areas.
- Unshaped and shaped overburden dump areas.
- Progressively rehabilitated areas some of which are actively grazed by cattle.
- Workshop and surrounding area used for maintenance and fuel storage.
- Road linking the current coal mining areas with the ROM coal stockpiles adjacent to the CHPP.
- Road linking the current and proposed coal mining areas to the workshop.
- Areas of completed rehabilitation which are actively grazed by cattle.
- Open bushland and residential properties located adjacent to Buchanan Road to the northwest at Louth Park and John Renshaw Drive to the south at Buttai.
- Rail loop located in the forestry east of the Workshop Area (approximately 2.3 km), which connects the Colliery's CHPP to transport routes.

The proposed modification would require additional clearing of vegetation within the current mining lease. This would reduce vegetation in the existing bushland area. This, combined with the progressive mining of the project area, would result in changes to the landscape character of the local area. Although this would not be visible to the community, as highlighted in Section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, this was raised as a concern by some stakeholders during SIA consultation in relation to loss of green spaces, habitat and biodiversity. Impacts to community values associated with environmental impacts are discussed further in Section 7.5.1.

During SIA consultation, some stakeholders felt that mine rehabilitation and offsetting isn't managed as well as it could be (see Section 5.2.1). It is understood that rehabilitation of the Colliery would be required and the future use of the project area would become grazing/pastoral use. During SIA consultation, some stakeholders identified other future uses they would prefer to see for the Colliery, such as dedicating the land to:

- Conservation, with a commitment to returning mined land to local natural habitat
- Green space for recreational use
- Future energy

A Rehabilitation Management Plan, Final Void Management Plan, Landscape Management Plan, and Mine Closure Plan have been developed by Bloomfield and endorsed by DPE to manage rehabilitation of the Colliery at the cessation of mining. A separate Rehabilitation Management Plan has also been prepared and submitted to NSW Resources Regulator as a condition of the mining lease.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to engage with local communities and stakeholders about the proposed modification and potential environmental impacts, as well as the use of the Colliery post-mining.

7.1.2 Impacts to property

The proposed modification has the potential to lead to vibration, which could impact nearby properties. Results from the community survey indicate this has occurred in the past, with one respondent to the community survey (Section 5.2.2) raising concerns about existing impacts to their property due to vibration from blasting activities, and the resulting impact on the value of the property. Two respondents to the community survey also raised concerns about the potential for continued operations at the Colliery to impact property values for nearby houses. Impacts due to vibration are discussed further in Section 7.2.1. As identified in stakeholder interviews and in the community survey (Section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), some local residents also raised concerns that the potential continuation of the Colliery operations may conflict with/or decrease desirability of areas marked for future growth and housing developments in adjacent suburbs

7.2 Changes to local amenity

The proposed modification would see a continuation of noise and vibration levels, dust, air quality and visual amenity, which may be noticeable for community members located in areas immediately adjacent to operational infrastructure or activities.

Bloomfield's operational activities are currently approved for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Although the Colliery typically operates an eight hour shift roster five days per week, with additional production during the weekend using overtime if required.

7.2.1 Noise and vibration

The proposed modification may result in noise and vibration impacts, which may affect local residents in close proximity to the Colliery.

SIA consultation (Section 5.2.1) and the community survey (Section 5.2.2 and Appendix B) found that some community members currently notice noise and vibration from Colliery operations, particularly residents of Ashtonfield, Louth Park, and Buttai. When asked about the potential benefits, effects or consequences of the proposed modification in the community survey, 12 (8.3%) respondents answered that the project would have a 'negative' impact on noise, and a further 19 (13.2%) respondents answered that the project would have a 'very negative' impact on noise. In response to the same question, but regarding the impact of blasting and vibration from mining activities, 8 (5.6%) respondents answered that the project would have a 'negative' impact on blast and vibration, and a further 24 (16.7%) respondents answered that the project would have a 'very negative' impact on blast and vibration. Some stakeholders during SIA consultation identified that noisy activities and vibration (such as blasting and dumping of rocks/mine overburden) sometimes occur at night, or outside of the timeframes communicated by Bloomfield. During SIA consultation, works occurring at night were reported as being the most disruptive for nearby residents as this is typically when residents are home. Some stakeholders indicated that noise and vibration generated by night works affects some residents' wellbeing as it can disrupt sleep and cause stress. Some stakeholders during SIA consultation commented they would prefer works to not occur at night or on weekends to reduce the impacts of noise and vibration. The *Noise and Blast Impact Assessment* (EMM, 2024) found that noise generated at the site would not reach levels associated with sleep disturbance, and no further detailed assessment would be required as per the Noise Policy for Industry (NPI) (EPA 2017).

Concerns were also raised by some stakeholders during SIA consultation (Section 5.2.1) about the potential noise associated with starting a new pit, which stakeholders expected to be more pronounced compared to existing operations, as sound travels more easily across the landscape, as the noise is not contained when the pit has not been established. The *Noise and Blast Impact Assessment* (EMM, 2024) outlines that potential noise impacts would be minimised at the site by limiting operations that may pose a noise risk, and recommends that topographical shielding is considered where appropriate and practical. Existing noise and vibration impacts resulting from Bloomfield's operations are actively monitored and managed by Bloomfield through its *Blast Monitoring Program* and *Noise Monitoring Program*. The *Bloomfield Colliery Annual Review Report* highlighted that the *Blast Monitoring Program* and *Noise Monitoring Plan* have been approved by DPE, and quarterly noise monitoring has been undertaken in accordance with the monitoring plan (Bloomfield, 2023). All noise monitoring indicated that compliance with consent criteria was met at all locations during day, evening and the night-time periods (Bloomfield, 2023). Night time sleep disturbance criteria (LA1(1min)) were in compliance during all monitoring events (Bloomfield, 2023).

A small number of respondents to the community survey also raised concerns regarding vibration caused by blasting. Of the 145 respondents, two respondents cited impacts from vibrations caused by blasting as their primary reason for opposing the project, and one other identified blasting and vibration as an existing issue at their property. As discussed in Section 7.1.2, one respondent to the community survey raised concerns about impacts to their property, including repairs and underpinning, due to vibration caused by blasting. Bloomfield has prepared a *Blast Monitoring Plan* which is approved by DPE in accordance with Project Approval requirements for the operation of the Colliery (Bloomfield, 2023). Both the EPL and Project Approval stipulates monitoring requirements, restricts blasting hours, as well as limiting airblast overpressure and ground vibration impacts at the nearest residences (Bloomfield, 2023). Each blast is monitored at four nearby residences for ground vibration and overpressure (Bloomfield, 2023). Monitors are located at residences to the south, south-east, west and north-west of current open cut operations (Bloomfield, 2023). Under the Project Approval blasting must be carried out between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday to Saturday, with no blasting on Sundays and Public Holidays (Bloomfield, 2023). A maximum of two blasts a day and five blasts a week (averaged over 12 months) are allowed. The blasting assessment conducted as part of the *Noise and Blast Impact Assessment* (EMM, 2024), indicated that the impacts of blasts on local residents can be minimised to achieve the relevant criteria. EMM (2024) also recommended that Bloomfield continue to undertake off-site monitoring to validate blast impacts, and consult with blast manager and/or contractor(s) regarding techniques and timing to minimise impacts from mine blasting.

Any complaints received from community members regarding noise, vibration or air quality are investigated by Bloomfield, and the outcome of the investigation is provided to complainants. Over a 17 year period (2007 – present 2024) a total of 54 complaints had been received (approximately three per year) (EMM, 2024). During SIA consultation, some residents indicated they have felt stressed due to the time required to engage with Bloomfield when reporting issues associated with noise, vibration and dust. Although monitoring data suggests that exceedances in noise and air quality limits are managed through relevant management plans, SIA consultation indicated that some residents are concerned about impacts to local amenity due to noise, vibration and dust.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to actively engage with local communities and stakeholders, including through the CCC and community newsletters, to share information about the proposed modification, potential noise and vibration impacts to local residents, and how these will be managed.

7.2.2 Air quality

The proposed modification may result in air quality impacts, which may affect local residents in close proximity to the Colliery's operations. Dust is currently generated by the operations at the Colliery due to mining activities such as blasting, the operation of some machinery, and vehicle movements. The *Air Quality Impact and Greenhouse Gas Assessment* (Todoroski Air Sciences, 2024) found that although dust would continue to be generated at the site, the amount of dust generated could be managed by existing mitigation measures and monitoring programs, and would not necessitate any additional mitigation measures to be implemented at the site.

Although Bloomfield is required to implement dust suppression measures (see below) to mitigate and manage the impacts of dust through their Air Quality Monitoring Program (refer to Section 7.2.1), some local residents and stakeholders during SIA consultation and in the community survey raised concerns regarding the continuation of Colliery activities, and the potential for dust at their properties (refer to Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). In response to survey questions, nine respondents highlighted the presence of black dust on their properties and the potential health effects as a reason for opposing continued operations. When asked about the potential benefits, effects or consequences of the proposed modification in the community survey, 15 (10.4%) respondents answered that the project would have a 'negative' impact on air quality, and a further 22 (15.3%) respondents answered that the project would have a 'very negative' impact on air quality. Although the dust generated by the modification would be managed by existing mitigation measures, residents in the area are already sensitive to dust impacts from the operation, and may associate any dust found at their property with the modification occurring at the site.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to actively engage with local communities and stakeholders, including through the CCC and community newsletters, to share information about the proposed modification, potential air quality impacts to local residents, and how these will be managed.

7.2.3 Visual changes

As discussed in Section 3, the proposed modification would result in visual changes due to clearing of vegetation, however this area is surrounded by bushland to the north, west and east, which means that most of the Colliery is not visible to the general community. While there is some potential for general community members to view the mine from the south along John Renshaw Drive, there is a buffer of vegetation between the road and the Colliery which would screen most activities. While there is potential for some residents in the local study area to have views of Bloomfield's infrastructure and activities, most long-term residents will likely be used to its presence in the landscape given the mine has operated in the area for over forty years. Despite this, SIA consultation indicated some local residents are sensitive to Bloomfield's operations and are concerned about vegetation clearing as a result of the expansion (Section 5.2.1). In addition, new residents to the area may also be sensitive to the Colliery if they are less aware of Bloomfield's presence and operations. However, it is unlikely that most local community members would have views of these visual changes, unless they entered the site.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to actively engage with local communities and stakeholders, including through the CCC and community newsletters, to share information about the proposed modification, potential visual and environmental impacts, and how these will be managed.

7.3 Economy and employment

The proposed modification would ensure that the Colliery's contribution to the local and regional economy continues until 2035. Bloomfield's current contribution to the economy occurs through procurement and contracting, employment, and community investment.

As outlined in Section 6.3.3.1, both Maitland LGA and Cessnock LGA experienced economic growth between 2013-2023 with real GRP having grown 49.4% and 9.9%, respectively, over the ten-year period (REMPAN, 2024). The GRP of Maitland LGA was estimated at \$6.8 billion in 2023, while Cessnock LGA's GRP was estimated at \$3.5 billion. Mining was the fourth largest contributor in both Maitland LGA (\$1.3 billion) and Cessnock LGA (\$532 million). Bloomfield have reportedly paid an average of \$10.89 in royalties per ROM tonne over the past three years. The proposed modification is expected to contribute approximately \$65.4 million in royalties to the NSW government. Annual spend by the Colliery on contractors (materials and labour) is approximately \$8.5M per annum. Bloomfield also contributes to the community through support for local and regional community groups and organisations (refer to section 6.3.5).

The continued contribution to the regional economy was identified as a benefit by some respondents to the community survey when asked why they were/were not supportive of the proposed modification. Of the 122 responses to this question, 97 (79.5%) reflected positive sentiment regarding their support for Bloomfield's continued operation due to the continued contribution to the local economy through employment, community events, programs, charities and schools. With regard to the potential benefits, effects or consequences, 66.9% (95) of survey respondents answered that the project would have a 'very positive' impact on employment. Bloomfield's continued contribution to the regional economy also aligns with regional strategic priorities. A key priority for the Hunter Valley region is the creation of local employment opportunities and the diversification, growth, and sustainability of industry (Section 6.3). During SIA consultation, some stakeholders acknowledged that coal mining, and the mining industry in general plays a considerable role in the region regarding contribution to the economy.

The proposed modification would also ensure the continued employment of Bloomfield's 93 existing employees until 2035. According to data provided by Bloomfield, 52.5% of Bloomfield site employees live in Maitland LGA (41.0%) and Cessnock LGA (11.5%). An additional 16.7% of Bloomfield site employees live in Newcastle LGA. SIA consultation and the community survey found that mining is considered an important industry for the region as it provides employment and jobs, stability for livelihoods and income, and ensures that industry remains in the area, and contributes to the community through sponsorships and grants (see Section 5.2.2). As discussed in Section 6.2.2, there are high levels of labour force participation and low levels of unemployment in the local and regional study area. Predominant industries of employment for Maitland and Cessnock residents include manufacturing, construction, rental, hiring and real estate services, and mining (Section 6.3.3.2).

SIA consultation with local businesses, industry representatives and local organisations found there is a desire to continue building relationships between local businesses and Bloomfield, such as through procurement and employment opportunities, and to support long term, sustainable employment and procurement opportunities in the region.

In addition to the direct contribution Bloomfield makes to the local and regional economy, the Colliery also makes indirect contributions, such as through employees spending wages at local businesses like cafes, grocery stores and food outlets.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to build relationships with Chambers of Commerce, industry associations and local businesses, particularly in Maitland and Cessnock LGAs. It is also recommended that Bloomfield continue to provide procurement opportunities for local businesses, including local Indigenous businesses, and employment of local residents.

7.4 Community investment

The proposed modification would ensure that Bloomfield's contributions to local community groups would continue until 2035. The Bloomfield Group and the Bloomfield Group Foundation currently contributes to the local and regional study area through community investments, including donations, sponsorships, in-kind support, and targeted sponsorships. As discussed in Section 6.3.5, community investment is targeted to key areas, including local and regional community services, medical and health related research, projects and support programs, and programs aimed at underpinning community health and welfare.

Community investment makes a positive contribution to the local and regional economy through support to local community organisations, clubs, societies, events, and programs. During SIA consultation, stakeholders who receive funding from Bloomfield, noted that the contributions were valued. Recipients also noted that the application process to receive community funding from Bloomfield was straightforward. Some stakeholders also commented that Bloomfield's community investment has various flow on social benefits, such as contributing to local community wellbeing, and supporting longevity of smaller clubs and groups within the region. Several stakeholders noted during interviews that Bloomfield's long-term commitment and involvement in the local community was apparent and appreciated.

Some stakeholders interviewed noted that some people and organisations in the community may be unaware of the grant and funding opportunities available through Bloomfield. Funding recipients noted that there may be opportunities for Bloomfield to further promote community investment funding and opportunities through wider communications (i.e. social media). There was a shared sentiment among stakeholders that they would like to see more engagement from Bloomfield representatives beyond receiving funding, and that Bloomfield should get more involved with and see the projects and programs they are supporting.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to support local organisations through its community contributions program, as well as increase the participation and visibility of Bloomfield staff with the organisations which receive contributions.

7.5 Community values and wellbeing

7.5.1 Community values

The proposed modification and continuation of mining at Bloomfield has the potential to both support community values, and negatively impact community values for some community members. There is a strong sense of community among Maitland and Cessnock residents. Mining is one of the traditional industries in the region and is perceived as contributing to the area's character and the livelihood of many families and residents (Section 5.2.1). However, SIA consultation found there are also diverse views about the benefits and impacts of mining, with some community members concerned about the industry's impacts on the environment and climate change. During SIA consultation, some stakeholders referred to an 'us' and 'them' mentality with regard to mining, environmental stewardship, and climate change when asked about community trends and values.

As discussed in Section 6.3.3 and in Section 7.3, and confirmed during SIA stakeholder consultations and the community survey (Section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), mining is considered an important industry for the region as it provides employment and jobs, procurement and contracting opportunities, stability for livelihoods and income, and ensures that industry remains in the area. Results from the community survey found that 66.9% (95) of survey respondents answered that there would be a 'very positive' impact on employment. As discussed in Section 5.2.2, community investment makes a positive contribution to the local and regional economy, and the grants and funding made available by Bloomfield have various flow on social benefits. The community survey found these were the reasons most often cited by respondents in support of the proposed modification, with 97 (79.5%) of responses indicating positive sentiment regarding support of the continued operation (Appendix B). The majority of positive comments were regarding the contribution to the local economy through employment, community events, programs, charities and schools.

On the other hand, the proposed modification has the potential to negatively impact values associated with environmental protection, with local and regional communities valuing the environment and natural beauty of the regional landscape. As discussed in Section 7.1.1, some stakeholders have raised concerns about the potential environmental impacts resulting from the modification, primarily vegetation clearing. Potential impacts to biodiversity loss and habitat degradation from operations at the Colliery are closely managed and monitored, through several relevant plans. Despite these measures, some stakeholders raised concerns during SIA consultation and the community survey regarding impacts to vegetation and wildlife. These stakeholders felt that large areas of the Colliery which have been heavily cleared has detracted from the natural beauty and environmental value of the area, and there was a view that the area should be rehabilitated to match the original forest. A *Biodiversity Development Assessment Report* (BDAR) prepared for the modification found there would be a loss of approximately 51.81ha of native vegetation which forms part of the threatened ecological community in the form of *Lower Hunter Spotted Gum—Ironbark Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion*, which is listed as endangered under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) (EcoResolve, 2024). The BDAR recommends a range of measures to manage and mitigate impacts to biodiversity. Some local residents are likely to be sensitive to these impacts.

Some stakeholders in SIA consultation also raised concerns regarding the potential impacts arising from ongoing pollution of waterways (i.e. Four Mile Creek) and the water table from continued mining operations, and the impact this may have to the overall health of the river and creek systems which are used by wildlife and the community. The assessment of the project has identified that there will be no significant changes to the Colliery's surface water management system and no change is required to the approved discharge regime as any excess water will be stored on site (GHD, 2024b). Elwells Creek (which transects the Workshop Area and is a tributary to Four Mile Creek) was assessed in the Surface Water Impact Assessment (SWIA) and will require relatively small diversion as part of the proposed modification (GHD, 2024b). The SWIA found there are unlikely to be any measurable changes to flows occurring downstream in Four Mile Creek (GHD, 2024). Impacts are unlikely to occur to downstream watercourses or licensed surface water users arising from the construction and operation of the proposed modification (GHD, 2024b). The Bloomfield Water Management Plan will remain in place for the duration of the proposed modification and the recommendations made in the SWIA should be applied.

During SIA consultation and in the community survey some stakeholders raised concerns regarding the contribution of the project to climate change effects. This included concerns regarding the extension of mining operations at the Colliery, its overall impact on and relationship to climate change, and the place of coal in the future of the region and in the face of climate crisis. Some stakeholders during SIA consultation reported feeling stressed and a sense of "helplessness" in response to the proposed modification. The results of the community survey found that when asked about the potential benefits, effects or consequences of the proposed modification, seven (4.9%) respondents answered that that the project would have a 'negative' impact on climate change, while 23 (26.1%) respondents answered that there would be a 'very negative' impact on climate change (Appendix B). One respondent also identified the impacts of climate change as their reason for opposing the proposed modification.

It is recommended that Bloomfield continue to actively engage with local communities and stakeholders, including through the CCC and community newsletters, to share results of environmental management and monitoring reporting, as well as contributions to local organisations. Bloomfield could consider increasing the diversity and frequency of community and stakeholder notifications and engagement tools to enhance local relationships.

7.5.2 Aboriginal community and cultural values

Potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage have been identified and assessed in the *Bloomfield Colliery Continuation Project ACHAR* (OzArk, 2024). The field survey was completed by OzArk on 27 February 2024, with the assistance of representatives from Awabakal Descendants Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Kauwal Pty Ltd, and Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council. No Aboriginal objects were identified, and no landforms within the Additional Project Areas for Mining were assessed as having potential to contain subsurface archaeological deposits due to the topography (sloping landforms), erodibility of the soils, and the previous disturbances within the landforms present (OzArk, 2024).

Direct consultation with local Aboriginal stakeholders was not undertaken to inform this SIA, however as discussed in Section 5.2.3, it is understood that according to consultation to inform the ACHAR (OzArk, 2024), no specific cultural values were identified by the RAPs regarding the proposed sites for mining. However, the strong cultural values of Aboriginal communities regarding landscapes and cultural heritage sites are recognised.

Bloomfield maintains an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (ACHMP), which was prepared in consultation with Mindaribba LALC. The plan was endorsed by the Office of Environment and Heritage and approved by DPE. Any Aboriginal heritage evidence that is identified will be managed in accordance with the ACHMP and reported in the Annual Review (Bloomfield, 2023).

In addition to the ACHMP, it is recommended that Bloomfield prioritise building relationships with local Aboriginal stakeholders, RAPs, Traditional Custodians, local Indigenous businesses, and Indigenous employment providers to share information about the project, and the potential opportunities that may be available for local Indigenous people and businesses (e.g. employment and procurement opportunities). It is recommended that Bloomfield consider how to maximise provision of meaningful Indigenous employment, training and procurement opportunities.

7.6 Summary of social impacts

Table 7.1 Social impact summary

Summary of social impact	Stakeholders affected	SIA Guideline social impact category	Nature of impact	Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance	Mitigation measures	Magnitude	Likelihood	Residual significance
Property and land use										
Change in land use and character due to vegetation clearing outside of the current mining lease. While this would not be visible to the general community, this was raised as a concern in SIA consultation, and could impact community values associated with environmental protection. It is noted the change in land use would not be visible to the general community.	Residents in the local study area.	Surroundings	Negative Direct	Minor	Possible	Medium	Environmental Management Strategy	Minor	Possible	Medium
The future land use of the mining lease is proposed to be pastoral / cattle grazing. However SIA consultation indicated there may be alternate future land uses desired by the community (e.g. conservation, green space and recreational use, or future energy).	Local and regional community	Surroundings Community	Negative Direct	Minor	Possible	Medium	Final Void Management Plan Mine Closure Plan Rehabilitation Management Plan Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Community Consultative Committee (CCC)	Minimal	Possible	Low
Although impacts on local residents from blasting would be minimised, some local residents may be concerned about potential property damage, which may cause stress for some affected residents.	Residents in close proximity to the Colliery	Way of Life Community Livelihood	Negative Direct	Minor	Possible	Medium	Blast Monitoring Program, particularly: – Continue off-site monitoring – Consult with blast manager and/or contractor(s) regarding techniques and timing to minimise impacts from mine blasting Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Community Consultative Committee (CCC)	Minor	Unlikely	Low
SIA consultation identified some stakeholders raised concerns about the potential for decreased desirability of areas marked for future growth and housing development.	Residents in the local study area.	Community	Negative Indirect	Minimal	Unlikely	Low	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Noise Monitoring Plan Blast Monitoring Program Air Quality Monitoring Program Landscape Management Plan Final Void Management Plan Mine Closure Plan Rehabilitation Management Plan	Minimal	Unlikely	Low
Changes to local amenity										
Potential for noise and vibration generated by Bloomfield operations to affect residents in close proximity. Noise effects can disrupt daily life and affect wellbeing, while vibration has the potential to impact properties, causing stress for affected residents.	Residents in close proximity to the Colliery.	Way of life Health and wellbeing	Negative Direct	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Noise Monitoring Plan Blast Monitoring Program Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Complaints management CCC Works are not undertaken in the evenings/at night or on weekends.	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium
Dust generated by operations (i.e. blasting, the operation of some machinery, and vehicle movements) has the potential to affect lifestyles for nearby residents.	Residents in the local study area.	Health and wellbeing	Negative	Minor	Possible	Medium	Blast Monitoring Program Air Quality Monitoring Program Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Complaints management CCC	Minor	Unlikely	Low

Summary of social impact	Stakeholders affected	SIA Guideline social impact category	Nature of impact	Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance	Mitigation measures	Magnitude	Likelihood	Residual significance
Visual impacts to the landscape as a result of new clearing associated with the proposed modification.	Residents in the local study area.	Surroundings	Negative	Minimal	Unlikely	Low	Landscape Management Plan Environmental Management Plan	Minimal	Very unlikely	Low
Economy and employment										
Continued contribution to regional economy through procurement and contracting, employment, and community investment.	Local and regional study area	Livelihood	Positive Direct	Moderate	Almost certain	High	Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives	Moderate	Almost certain	High
Continued employment for Bloomfield's 93 current employees until 2035.	Bloomfield employees	Livelihood	Positive Direct	Moderate	Almost certain	High	Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives	Moderate	Almost certain	High
Indirect contributions to the local economy through employees spending wages at local businesses.	Local Businesses	Livelihood	Positive Indirect	Minor	Likely	Medium	Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives	Minor	Likely	Medium
Community Investment										
Contribution to the local and regional community through sponsorships, grants, and fundings. Contributions valued by community organisations and provide flow on social benefits and contribute to community well-being.	Recipients of sponsorships, funding and/or grants Local communities	Community Accessibility Health and wellbeing	Positive	Moderate	Likely	High	Community contributions Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP)	Moderate	Likely	High
Community values and wellbeing										
Potential for community values associated with environmental protection and conservation to be negatively impacted by the modification.	Local and regional communities	Community	Negative Indirect	Minor	Possible	Medium	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Landscape Management Plan Environmental Management Plan SWIA mitigation and management measures BDAR mitigation and management measures	Minor	Unlikely	Low
Potential for community values associated with mining to be supported through continued economic contribution to the region through employment and jobs, procurement and contracting opportunities, and community investment.	Local and regional communities	Livelihoods	Positive	Minor	Possible	Medium	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) Community contributions Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives	Minor	Likely	Medium
The ACHAR found that although there are strong values associated with the landscape, no specific cultural values or objects were identified during consultation as being potentially impacted by the modification.	Local and regional Aboriginal community	Culture	Negative	Minimal	Unlikely	Low	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives	Minimal	Unlikely	Low

8. Recommended mitigation and management measures

The social impacts and benefits identified and assessed in this report will be managed and mitigated through a range of measures, including those recommended in other EIS specialist studies.

Table 8.1 identifies the mitigation measures recommended to respond to the potential social impacts and benefits identified in Section 7. In some cases, the mitigation measures are already being implemented by Bloomfield as part of its ongoing operations, and our recommendations have been made with these programs in mind. Where relevant, additional or enhanced mitigation measures have been identified based on industry standards, practices and guidelines, and on feedback from stakeholders during consultations (Section 5).

Bloomfield will continue to monitor its social impacts, and results will continue to be reported through Bloomfield's annual plan, meetings with the Bloomfield Community Consultative Committee (CCC), and other community and stakeholder updates.

Table 8.1 Social impact mitigation and management measures

Mitigation measure	Description	Timing
Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP)	Bloomfield will continue to actively engage the community through its Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP), in order to continue building relationships with local communities, and share information about the proposed modification. The CSEP will help to ensure that: – The community and stakeholders have a high level of awareness of all processes and activities. – Accurate and accessible information is made available. – A timely response is given to issues and concerns raised by the community. – Feedback from the community is encouraged. – Opportunities for input are provided. The CSEP will include strategies and protocols to: – Communicate with potentially affected residents, other community members, businesses, and other key stakeholders to provide information about the project, and the likely nature, extent, and duration of changes during operation of the proposed modification. – Identify and engage with key stakeholders who may be impacted by project activities, such as local residents. The CSEP will define communication and consultation tools and activities, timing and responsibilities, and monitoring requirements.	Ongoing
Complaints management	Enquiries and a complaints management system will continue to be managed by Bloomfield. This will ensure that residents and stakeholders are notified in a timely manner about works activities and potential for impacts, accurate information is accessible, and enquiries and complaints are managed in a timely manner. The CSEP will define the requirements for the complaints management system to be implemented throughout the duration of the project, including 24-hour, seven days a week phone line, postal and email address for written enquiries, and publication of contact details. The complaints management systems will be maintained throughout the operation of the Colliery.	Ongoing

Mitigation measure	Description	Timing
Community Consultative Committee	Bloomfield will continue to facilitate the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) to provide a forum for open discussion between representatives of Bloomfield, the community, Council and other stakeholders on issues directly relating to the Colliery's operations, environmental performance and community relations, and to keep the community informed on these matters. The CCC provides a forum to: – Establish good working relationships between Bloomfield, the community and other stakeholders in relation to the Colliery – Provide for the ongoing communication of information on Colliery operations and the environmental performance of the mine (including noise, vibration, and air quality) – Provide an opportunity for comment on the Colliery's environmental performance – Discuss community concerns and review the resolution of community complaints – Discuss how best to communicate relevant information on the Colliery and its environmental performance to the broader community – Work together towards outcomes of benefit to the Colliery, immediate neighbours and the local and regional community. Bloomfield will periodically review the operation and membership of the CCC in line with the Community Consultative Committee Guideline (DPE, 2023c), so that membership is appropriate for the issues discussed, and that matters discussed and minutes are distributed to all interested community stakeholders where possible.	Ongoing
Community Contributions	Bloomfield will continue to provide community contributions, which seek to build and maintain a good relationship with local communities. The community contributions will continue to contribute financial and in-kind contributions to local community-based initiatives, through an annual application process. Recommendations through the SIA consultation include: – More engagement from Bloomfield representatives with the organisations and events they sponsor and fund. – Raising community awareness of the community investment opportunities available through Bloomfield.	Ongoing
Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives	Bloomfield will continue to provide local residents and businesses employment and procurement opportunities. This includes: – Continuing to build relationships with local chambers of commerce, industry associations and local businesses across Maitland and Cessnock LGAs – Promotion and advertising of sub-contracting and employment opportunities through local stakeholders and agencies, including Indigenous organisations – Reporting on Bloomfield and its sub-contractors local and Indigenous employment and procurement commitments	Ongoing

9. Conclusion

This report presents an assessment of the potential social impacts and benefits that may result from the Bloomfield Colliery Continuation – Modification 5 project. The potential impacts have been identified through a review of other technical studies prepared for the EIS, desktop research, and findings from stakeholder interviews and a community survey.

The SIA identified the following potential social benefits:

- Continued contribution to the local and regional economy through employment, business procurement and contracting opportunities, and indirect effects such as spending of wages at local businesses.
- Continued community investment through sponsorships and donations to local community organisations, groups, and.

The following potential negative social impacts were identified:

- Potential for actual or perceived impacts to properties in close proximity to the Colliery, which can lead to wellbeing effects for affected residents.
- Changes to or continued impacts to local amenity due to noise, vibration and air quality impacts due to continued operation activities, which can lead to wellbeing effects for affected residents.
- Impacts to community values associated with environmental protection and conservation due to actual or perceived environmental impacts such as vegetation clearing and contribution to climate change effects.

The SIA has identified mitigation measures in response to potential social impacts, and to enhance social benefits. These include continuing to implement or enhancing existing measures implemented by Bloomfield to manage its social impacts. These are summarised below:

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Complaints management
- Community Consultative Committee
- Community contributions
- Local and Indigenous employment and procurement initiatives

10. References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (ABS) (2011). *2011 Census*. Retrieved from Australian Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>
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Appendices

Appendix A

SIA Review Questions

SIA Review Questions

General	
Does the lead author meet the qualification and experience requirements?	Yes – refer to Section 1.4
Has the lead author provided a signed declaration?	Yes – refer to Section 1.4
Would a reasonable person judge the SIA report to be impartial, transparent and suitably rigorous given the nature of the project?	The SIA has been prepared by social scientists with proven experience in SIA. The SIA has been prepared using proven social science research methods relevant to the nature of the project.
Projects social locality and social baseline	
Does the SIA report identify and describe all the different social groups that may be affected by the project?	Yes – Section 2.1 and 6.2 provides a description of the social locality, including the different social groups who may be affected by the project.
Does the SIA report identify and describe all the built or natural features that have value or importance for people, and explain why people value those features?	Yes – Section 3, 6.1 and 6.2 provides a description of built or natural features that have value for people in the social locality, as relevant to the scope of the assessment.
Does the SIA report identify and describe historical, current, and expected social trends or social changes for people in the locality, including their experiences with this project and other major development projects?	Yes – Section 5.2.2 describes historical, current and expected social trends or social changes for people in the social locality, as relevant to the scope of the assessment. Section 5 reports findings from consultation which includes local stakeholders' concerns about this project and other major development projects in the region.
Does the social baseline study include appropriate justification for each element, and provide evidence that the elements reflect both relevant literature and the diversity of views and likely experiences?	Yes – the elements and indicators discussed in Section 5.2.2 (the social baseline) are justified in the SIA scoping exercise (Section 2.2). Section 4 has been informed by relevant literature and data as referenced in the section. The SIA consultation activities reported in Section 5 and throughout Sections 6 to 7 sought to understand the views of a diverse range of local stakeholders, and how they expect to be affected by the project.
Does the social baseline study demonstrate social-science research methods and explain any significant methodological or data limitations?	Yes – Section 2 describes the SIA methodology including the social science research methods implemented, and the data limitations.
Identification and description of social impacts	
Does the SIA report adequately describe likely social impacts from the perspectives of how people may experience them, and explain the research used to identify them? When undertaken as a part of SIA scoping and initial assessment, has the plan for the SIA report been detailed?	Yes – Section 5 and 7 describes the potential social impacts of the project, including the concerns of local communities based on outcomes of consultation activities described in Section 2 and 5. Section 2.2 presents the SIA scoping exercise, which justifies the focus areas for the social baseline (Section 6) and assessment of impacts (Section 7).
Does the SIA report apply the precautionary principle to identifying social impacts, and consider how they may be experienced differently by different people and groups?	Yes – Section 7 describes the potential social impacts of the project on local communities and stakeholders, and considers how different groups in the community, particularly vulnerable community members, may experience the impacts differently.
Does the SIA report describe how the preliminary analysis influenced project design and EIS engagement strategy?	Outcomes from the SIA consultation activities informed the approach to EIS consultation.
Community engagement	
Were the extent and nature of engagement activities appropriate and sufficient to canvass all relevant views, including those of vulnerable or marginalised groups?	Yes – the SIA consultation activities were planned to target stakeholders relevant to the scope of the assessment. The outcomes from SIA consultation activities informed the approach to EIS consultation.
How have the views, concerns and insights of affected and interested people influenced both the project design and each element of the SIA report?	Consultation findings have informed the social baseline (Section 6), impact identification and assessment (Section 7) and identification of mitigation measures (Section 8).

Predicting and analysing social impacts	
Does the SIA report impartially focus on the most important social impacts to people at all stages of the project, without any omissions or misrepresentations?	In line with the principles for SIA of being 'impartial' and 'inclusive' the SIA focuses on the concerns expressed by stakeholders and communities during SIA consultation (reported in Section 5).
Does the SIA report analyse the distribution of both positive and negative social impacts, and identify who will benefit and who will lose from the project?	Yes – Table 7.1 identify positive and negative impacts and who is affected.
Does the SIA report identify its assumptions, and include sensitivity analysis and alternative scenarios? (including 'worst-case' and 'no project' scenarios where relevant)	Yes – sensitivity analysis is presented as relevant throughout Section 7.
Evaluating significance	
Do the evaluations of significance of social impacts impartially represent how people in each identified social group can expect to experience the project, including any cumulative effects?	Yes – Section 7 recognises that different groups in the community may experience impacts differently.
Are the evaluations of significance disaggregated to consider the likely different experiences for different people or groups, especially vulnerable groups?	Yes – the evaluations of significance in Sections 7 considers the different experiences of different groups, including vulnerable groups.
Responses, monitoring and management	
Does the SIA report propose responses that are tangible, deliverable, likely to be durably effective, directly related to the respective impact(s) and adequately delegated and resourced?	Yes – Section 8 demonstrates how the proposed social impact mitigation and enhancement measures directly respond to the impacts and benefits identified in the SIA, along with the residual impact rating based on their effective implementation.
Does the SIA report demonstrate how people can be confident that social impacts will be monitored and reported in ways that are reliable, effective and trustworthy?	Yes – Section 8 describes the approach to monitoring and reporting of social impact management.
Does the SIA report demonstrate how the proponent will adaptively manage social impacts and respond to unanticipated events, breaches, grievances and non-compliance?	Yes – Section 8 describes the approach to adaptive management in response to complaints.

Appendix B

Community survey data analysis

Survey Data Analysis

Of the 145 responses, more than half were from local residents (56%) who supported continued mining operations at the Colliery (79.3%) with 18.6% opposing the Project. Figure B.1 provides a breakdown of respondents to the survey and their role in the community.

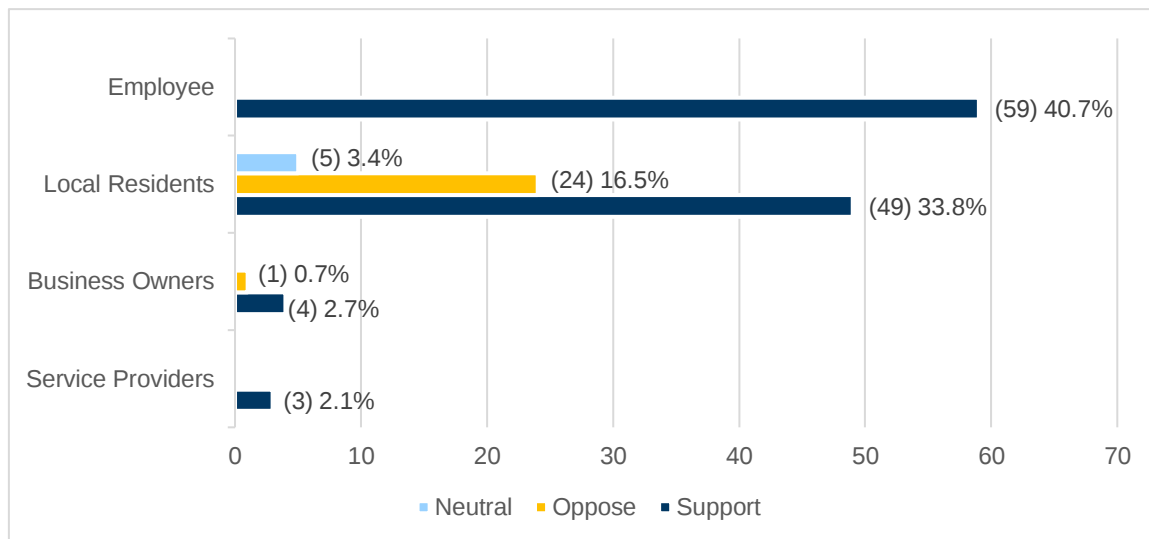


Figure B.1 Respondents to the survey

Question 1: Have you had any previous communication with Bloomfield Collieries?

Over half of survey respondents (56.6% or 81) stated they have not had any previous communication with Bloomfield Collieries (Figure B.2). There were 62 respondents who answered 'yes', indicating they have had prior communication with Bloomfield Collieries. Those who answered yes were asked to provide more information regarding the topic of discussion. A summary of topics is provided below:

- Employment
- Mining continuation project
- Safety and Environmental impacts
- Letter box flyer about mine activities, plans, traffic changes, milestone celebrations and impacts
- Community Consultation Committee

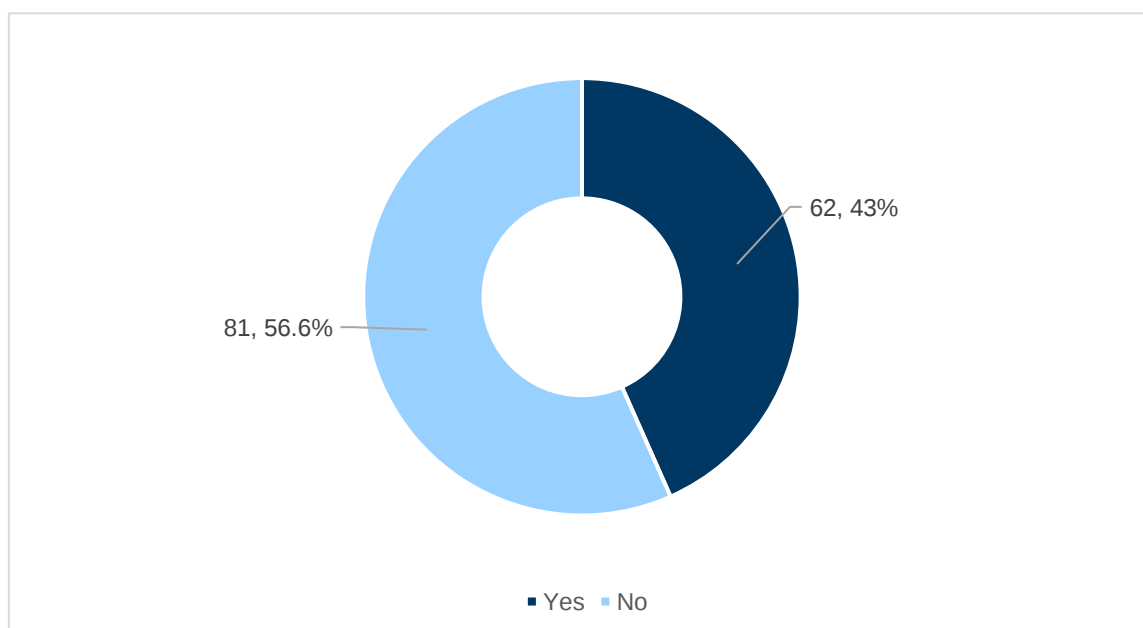


Figure B.2 Have you had any previous communication with Bloomfield Collieries?

Question 2: How supportive are you of continued mining at Bloomfield Colliery?

According to the survey response, the majority of survey respondents (79.3% or 116) were supportive of continued mining at the Colliery. A smaller proportion of respondents (17.3% or 25) opposed or strongly opposed continued mining. There were six respondents (4.1%) who were neutral regarding continued mining (Figure B.3).

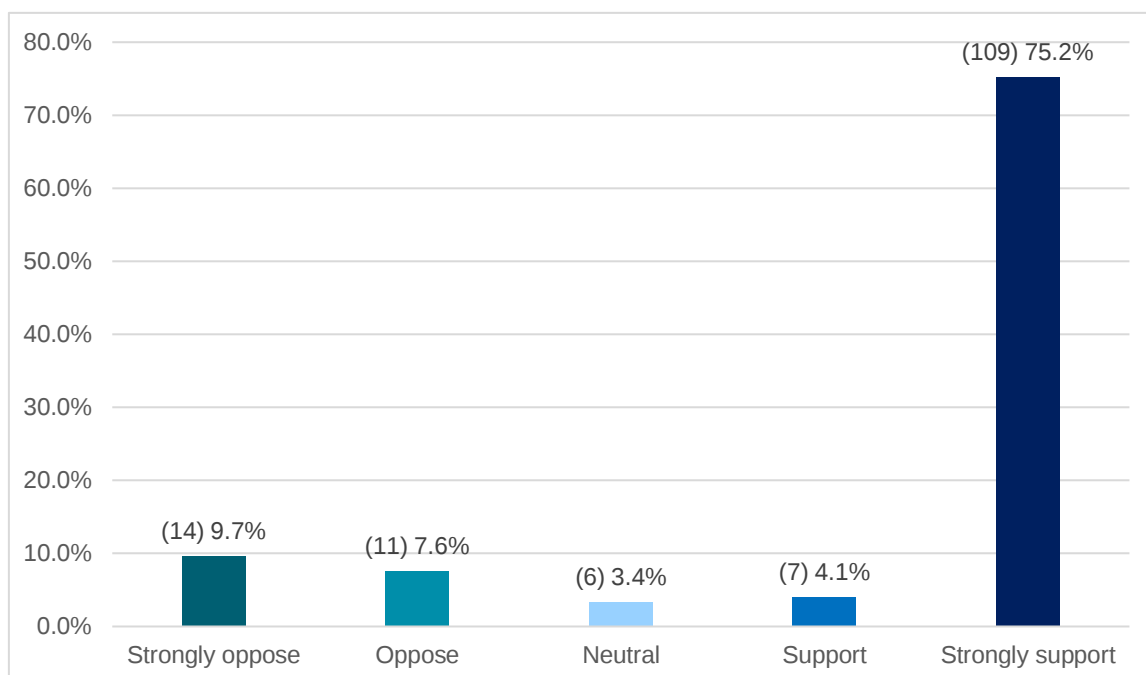


Figure B.3 How supportive are you of continued mining?

Respondents to the question were asked to provide more detail about their opposition or support of continued mining. Of the 122 comments for this question, 97 (79.5%) contained positive sentiment regarding their support of the continued operation, while 25 (20.5%) were negative. The majority of positive comments were regarding the contribution to the local economy through employment, community events, programs, charities and schools. Negative comments focused on the environmental impacts of continued operation, disruptions due to mining activities and ecological concerns.

The responses are summarised below into key themes:

Table B.1 Comments in support/opposition of continued mining at Bloomfield Colliery

Theme	Discussion
Positive	
Employment and Economy	– Provides stable jobs for local workers, ensuring peace of mind – Boosts the local economy through funding for essential services – Indirect and direct employment of local workers – Bloomfield is a significant local employer, fostering continued employment for its workers – Provides valuable economic support to the Commonwealth, state and community through taxes, royalties, sponsorships and donations
Community-focused	– They actively support surrounding communities, charities, schools and events in the lower Hunter region – Their focus is on being compliant and community-oriented, ensuring they contribute positively – They invest in community events and programs (collaboration with Newcastle University - innovation for the next generation) – Sponsorship of young local players in sporting endeavours, nurturing talent and promoting a healthy lifestyle – Community minded, secure and stable employment

Theme	Discussion
Safety and standards	– Prioritise worker safety and maintain an excellent safety record – Practice responsible mining by Australian owned and operated mining company – Operations have minimal impact on local communities – Actively support the environment through policies and conscious decision-making – Considerate of neighbours and surroundings
Negative	
Environmental concerns	– Clearing of trees and vegetation near residential properties – Noticeable air pollution, with outdoor furniture covered in black dust – Coal dust is evident on properties, needs to be continually cleaned through pressure spraying – Increased amount of black dust, which affects health, especially when breathed in – Mining contributes significantly to global warming – Need to transition away from fossil fuels toward more sustainable energy sources to ensure a healthy Earth for future generations
Residential impacts	– Bright lights from late-night mining can be seen from nearby suburbs, namely Ashtonfield – Occasional blasting noise and vibrations disturb nearby residents – Mining activities disrupt sleep, operations should be limited to daylight hours
Ecological impacts	– Sensitive ecology of the area. Adverse impact to wildlife and vegetation clearing is concerning. – Impacts of noise and bright lights to nocturnal animals. – Conservation of natural habitat during operation and after closure including the surrounding land outside the mining lease zone.

Question 3: Below is a list of potential benefits, effects or consequences that may result from Bloomfield's continued operations to 2035. Please consider how the project may affect you, either positively or negatively, and select the appropriate ranking for each potential impact or benefit using the options provided.

For this question, respondents were asked to consider 19 potential impacts or themes and rank their perceived significance. There were 144 responses to this question, of which the outcomes are presented in Table B.2 and Figure B.2.

Figure B.4 provides the overall weighted average of the themes, with a higher weight indicating a higher positive impact, and a lower weight indicating a higher negative impact. The themes with the highest proportion of 'very negative' perceived potential impacts were 'Blast & Vibration' (16.7%), 'Climate Change' (16.1%) and 'Air Quality' (15.3%). The themes with the highest proportion of 'very positive' perceived potential impacts were 'Employment' (66.9%), followed by 'Small Businesses' (52.5%) and 'Rehabilitation' (46.2%). A breakdown of the perceived impact of each theme is provided in Table B.2.

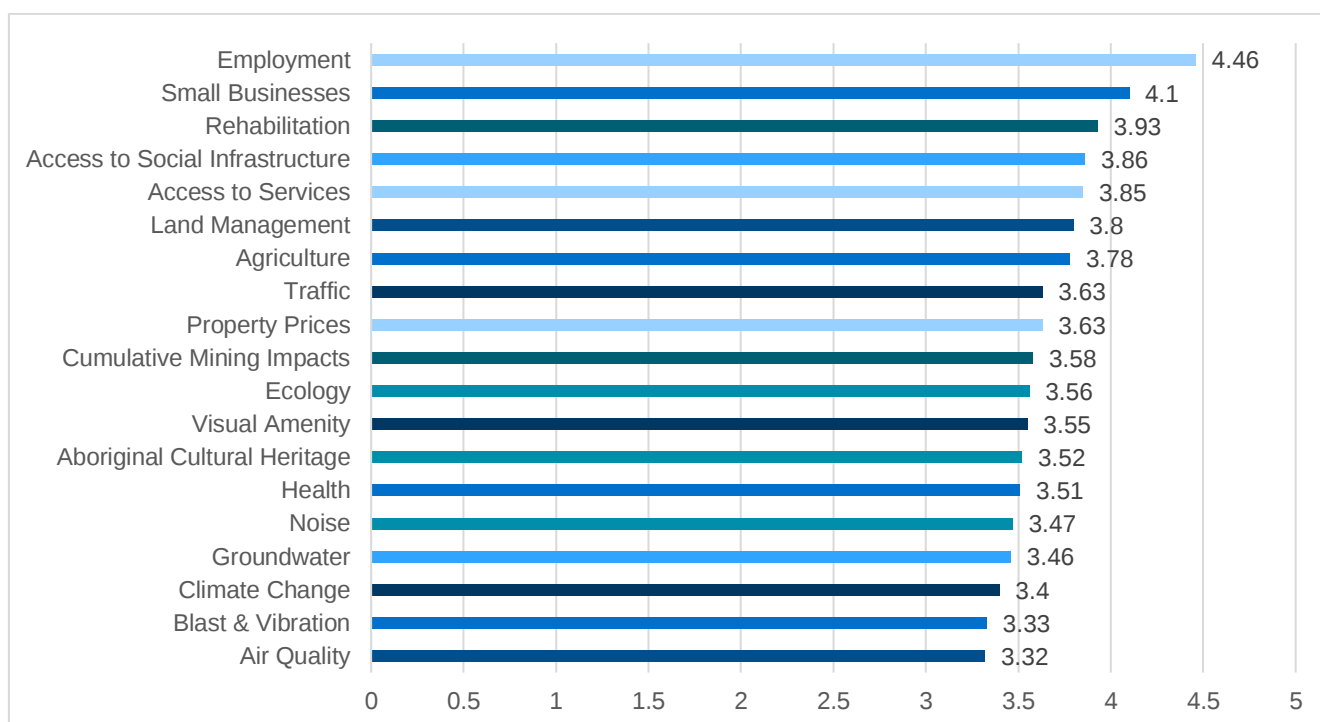
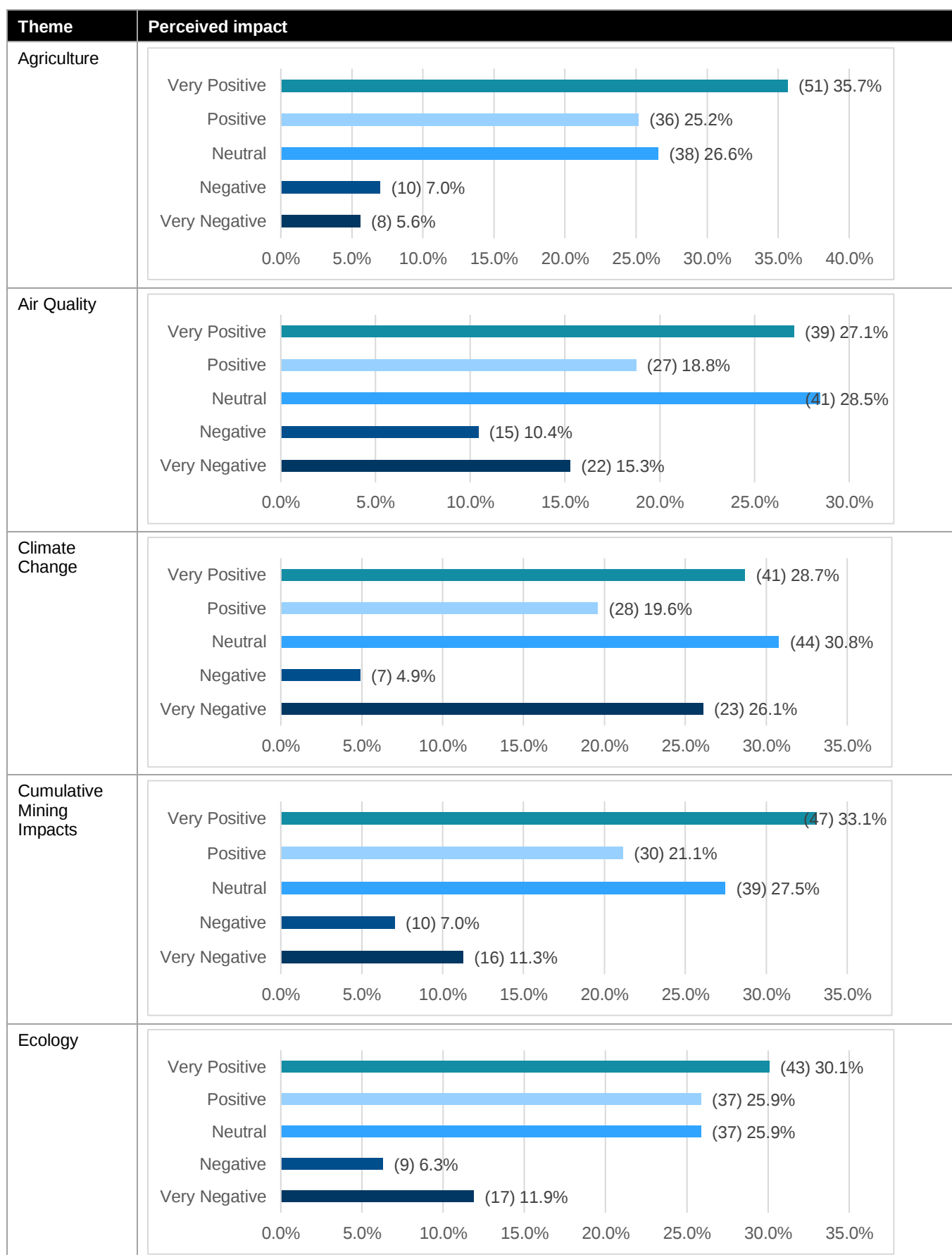
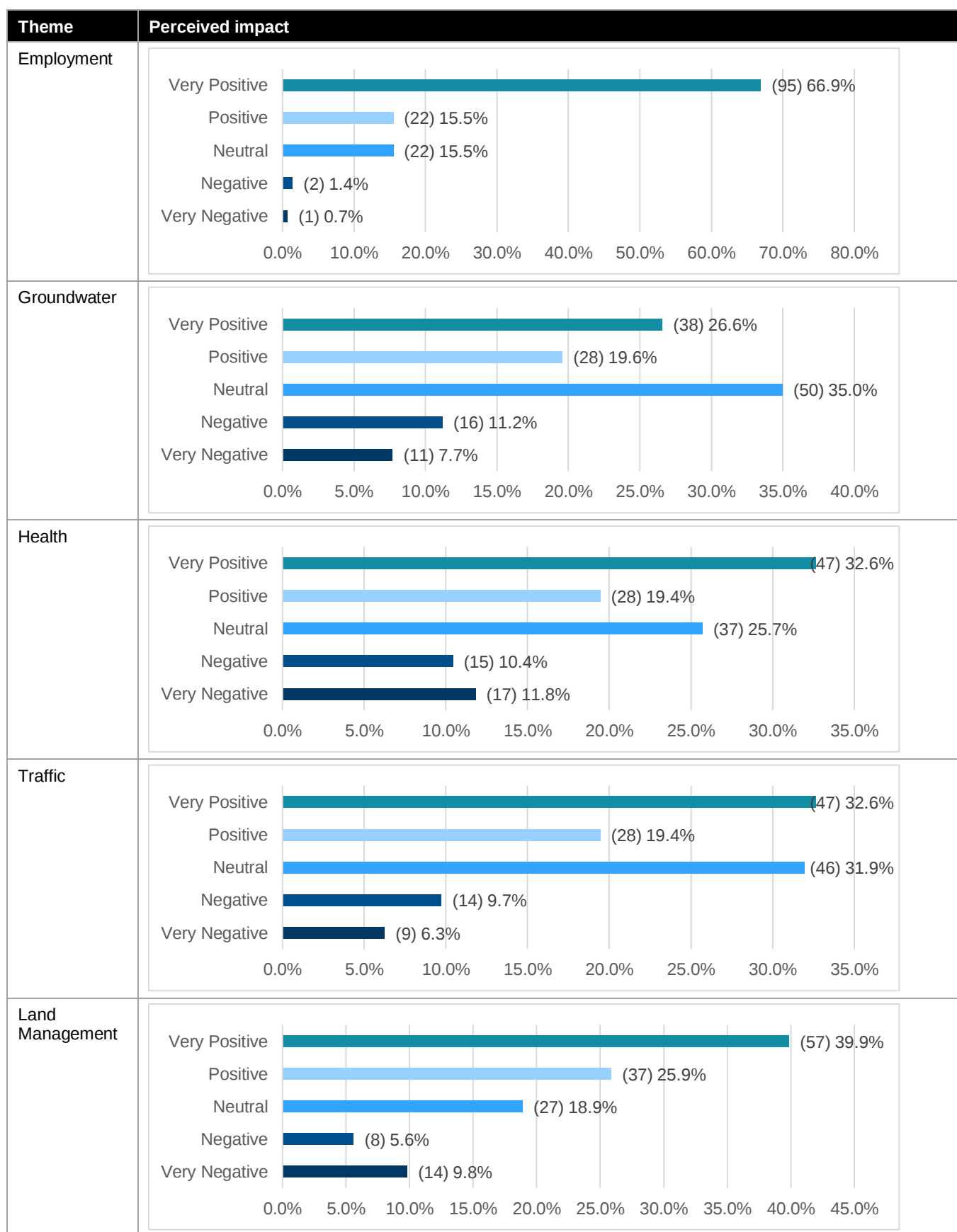


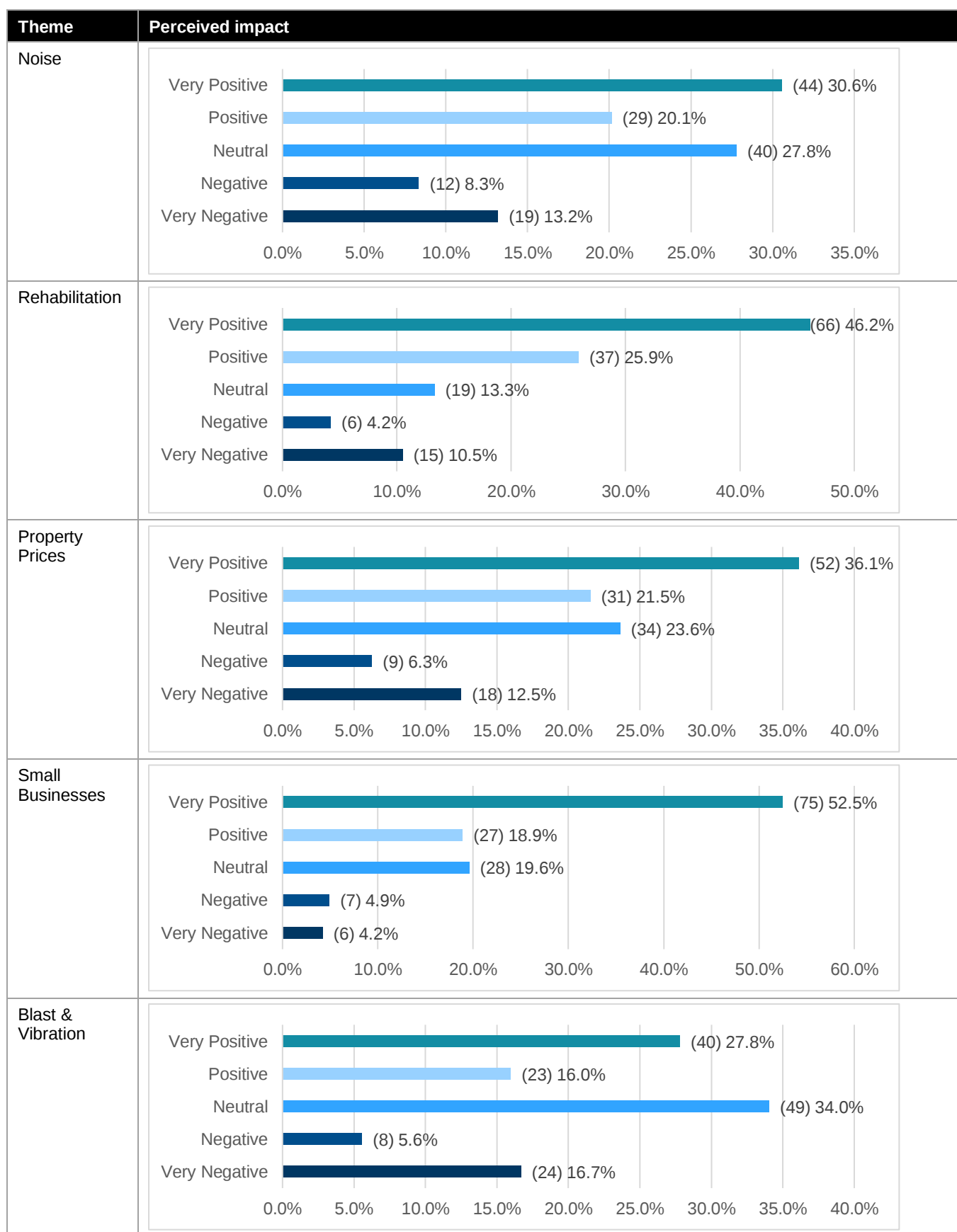
Figure B.4 Weighted average of impacts

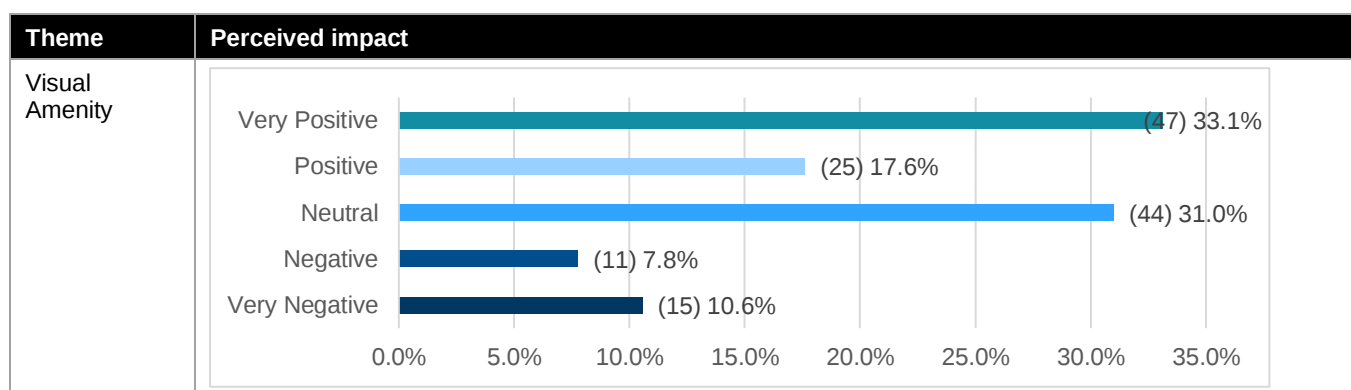
Table B.2 Potential benefits, effects or consequences and their significance

Theme	Perceived impact	
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	Very Positive	(35) 24.5%
	Positive	(30) 21.0%
	Neutral	(62) 43.4%
	Negative	(7) 4.9%
	Very Negative	(9) 6.3%
		0.0% 10.0% 20.0% 30.0% 40.0% 50.0%
Access to Services	Very Positive	(52) 36.4%
	Positive	(37) 25.9%
	Neutral	(39) 27.3%
	Negative	(10) 7.0%
	Very Negative	(5) 3.5%
		0.0% 5.0% 10.0% 15.0% 20.0% 25.0% 30.0% 35.0% 40.0%
Access to Social Infrastructure	Very Positive	(49) 34.5%
	Positive	(41) 28.9%
	Neutral	(40) 28.2%
	Negative	(7) 4.9%
	Very Negative	(5) 3.5%
		0.0% 5.0% 10.0% 15.0% 20.0% 25.0% 30.0% 35.0% 40.0%









Question 4: Do you have any comments you would like to share about the proposed continuation of Bloomfield's operations?

A total of 67 respondents shared comments regarding the proposed continuation of Bloomfield's operations. Some respondents strongly opposed any extension, mentioning environmental concerns and negative impacts to quality of life. Issues highlighted were regarding noise, air and water quality, as well as potential impacts on property values.

However, the majority of respondents were supportive of the continued operations, citing the benefits of long-term employment, economic support for the community, and Bloomfield's commitment to safety and environmental standards. Suggestions for improvement include better dust suppression methods and upgrading road infrastructure surrounding the mining operational area. Key responses are highlighted below:

Positive:

- Bloomfield is a reputable local company and a great asset to the local community due to their caring and responsible attitude
- Long term, continued employment for locals and supportive of local businesses
- Safety, environment and community standards and expectations
- Gives back to the community
- Overall, impacts are believed to be small or not significant to surrounding area
- Continued communication/consultation with the community is important, and is appreciated by people so they can be involved in current operations and future plans
- Very discrete operation as many people are unaware of its location

Negative:

- Negative impact to the land and local area with limited rehabilitation, final land use should be converted to conservation land rather than cattle grazing
- Respondents expressed disappointment in the application for continued operations
- Impacts include poor air quality, noise impacts, water quality, vibration impacts, and decrease in house values
- Need better dust controls, dust suppression methods
- Blasting has caused issues with property due to movement that will require extensive repairs as it has affected the value
- Bloomfield should assist in funding updates to Buchanan Road and upgrading intersection at New England Highway (congestion at shift changes)

Question 5: Do you live or work in Maitland or Cessnock local government areas? Please select only one answer.

Figure B.5 shows the proportion of residents living or working in the Maitland or Cessnock local government areas (LGA). A high proportion of residents (67 respondents or 46.9%) both live and work within the Maitland and/or Cessnock LGAs. There was a small proportion of respondents (14 or 9.8%) who did not live or work in the Maitland or Cessnock LGAs.

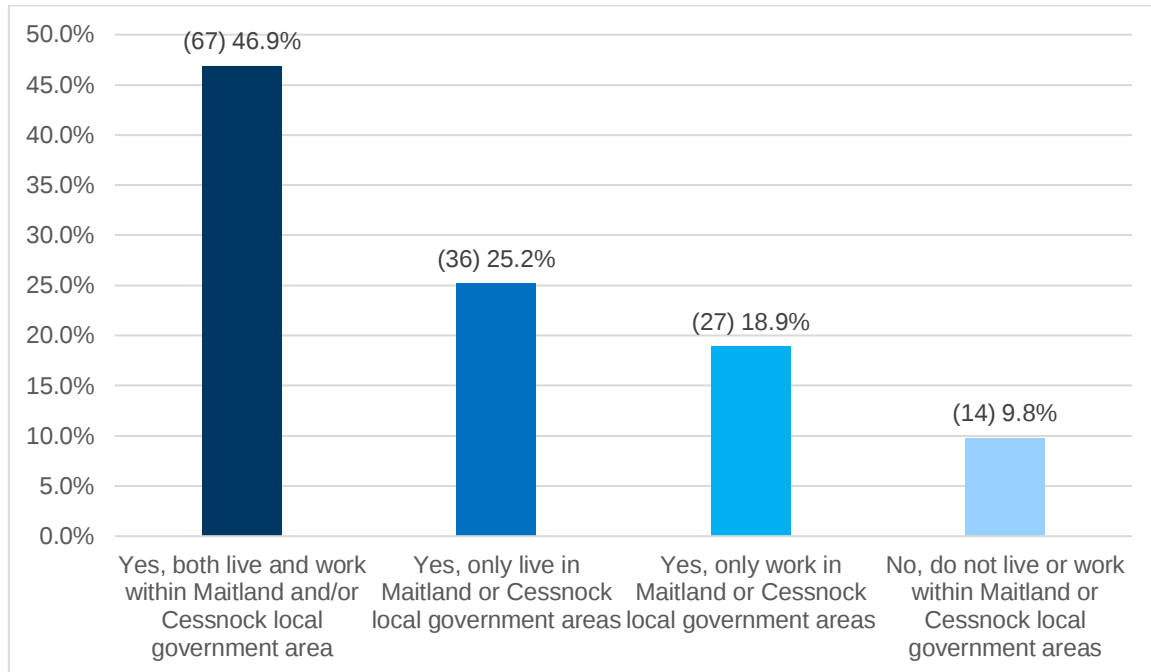


Figure B.5 Do you live or work in Maitland or Cessnock LGAs?

Question 6: What is your suburb and postcode?

The following question aimed to gain insight into where the majority of respondents live and their proximity to the area of operation. Over half (51.8% or 74) of survey respondents live in Ashtonfield or Maitland / Louth Park, which are the suburbs closest to the Colliery's operational site. A large proportion of respondents selected 'other' (39 respondents or 27.3%), which included suburbs in Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle and surrounds. A small proportion (16 respondents or 11.2%) lived in Black Hill or Thornton, which are communities located in close proximity to the Colliery (Figure B.6).

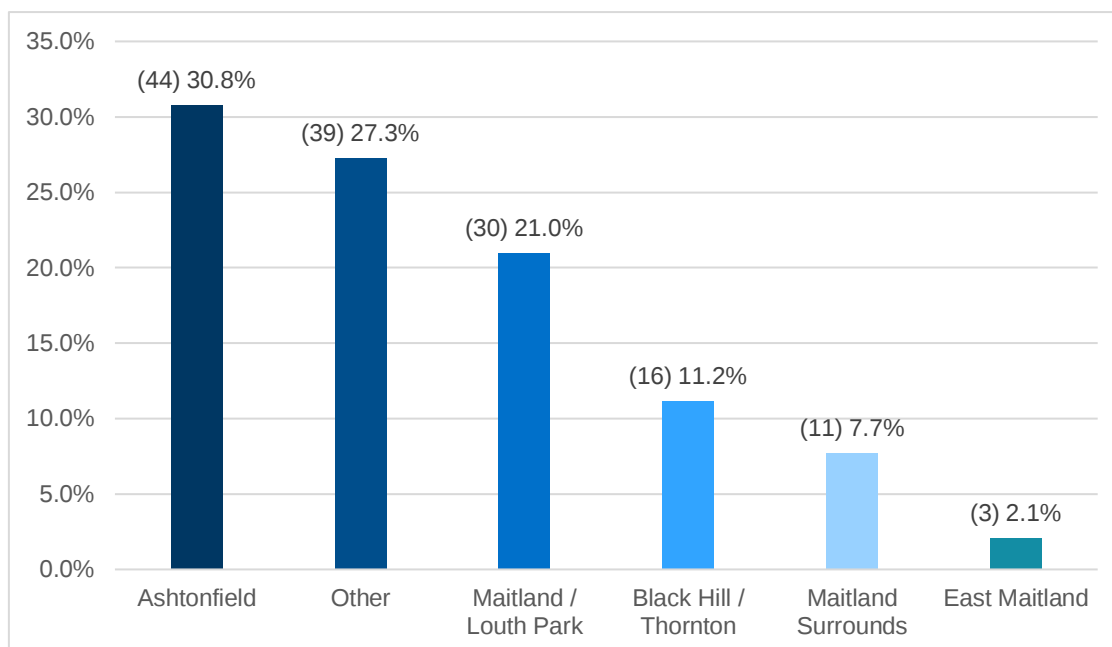


Figure B.6 What is your suburb and postcode?

Question 7: Which of the following best describes you? (Please select only one category which is the most appropriate for your situation).

Of the 141 respondents who answered this question, the highest proportion of respondents were local residents (56.7% or 80 people), followed by Bloomfield Employee / Contractor (39.7% or 56 people) and Business owners (7.1% or 10 people) (Figure B.7).

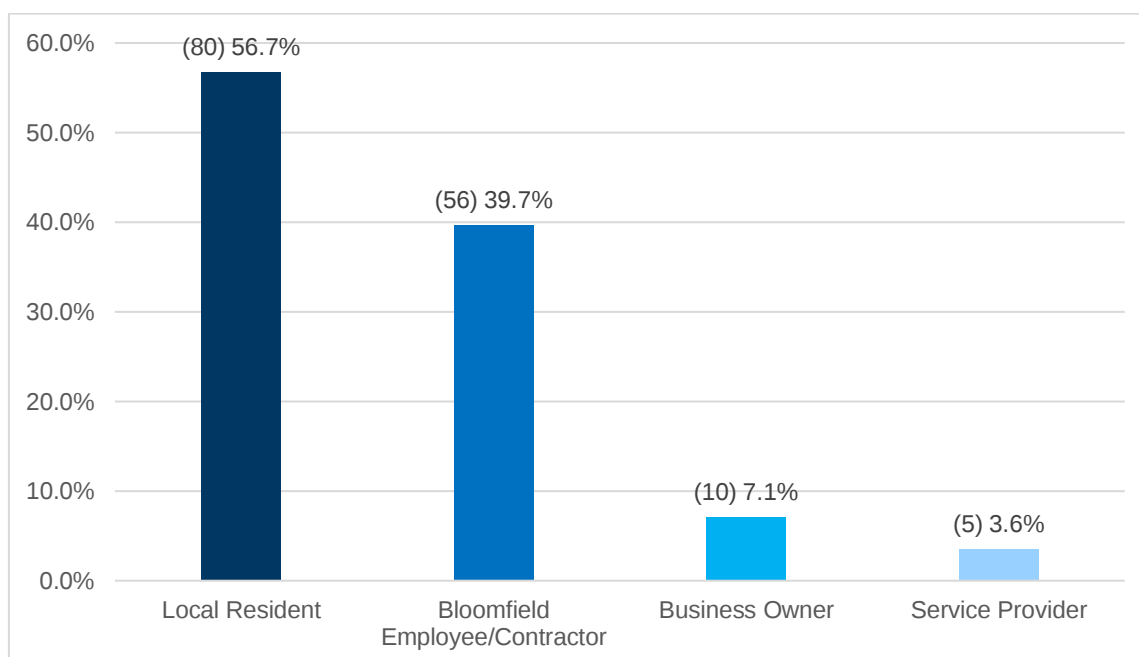


Figure B.7 Which of the following best describes you?

Question 8: What age bracket do you fall into?

Figure B.8 shows the age group breakdown for survey respondents. All respondents were over the age of 15, with the majority of respondents being over the age of 35 years (86.5% or 122). The 55-64 year old age group had the highest proportion of respondents, accounting for 31.2% of all responses.

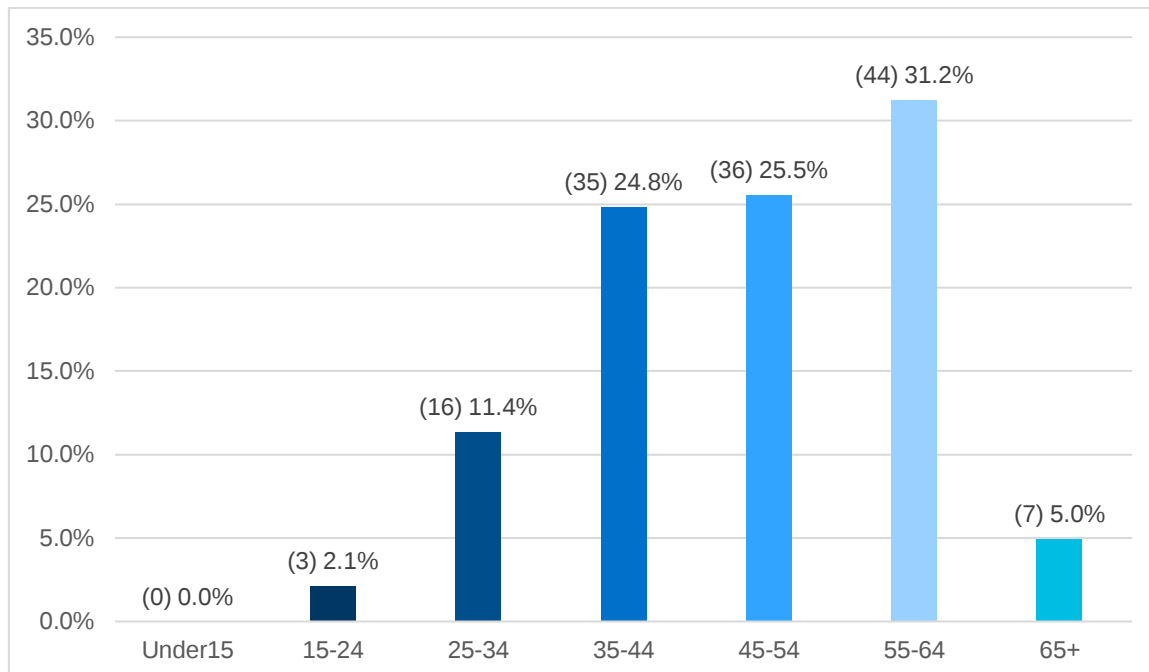


Figure B.8 What age bracket do you fall into?

Question 9: During the assessment process Bloomfield will update the community via a number of methods. Please indicate your preference for ongoing consultation below:

According to the survey response, the majority of respondents indicated their preference for consultation was through newsletter (60.0% or 87 responses). The second most preferred option was by email (35.9% or 52), followed by Bloomfield's Group Website (24.1% or 35). Figure B.9 provides a breakdown of respondents' preferences for future consultation.

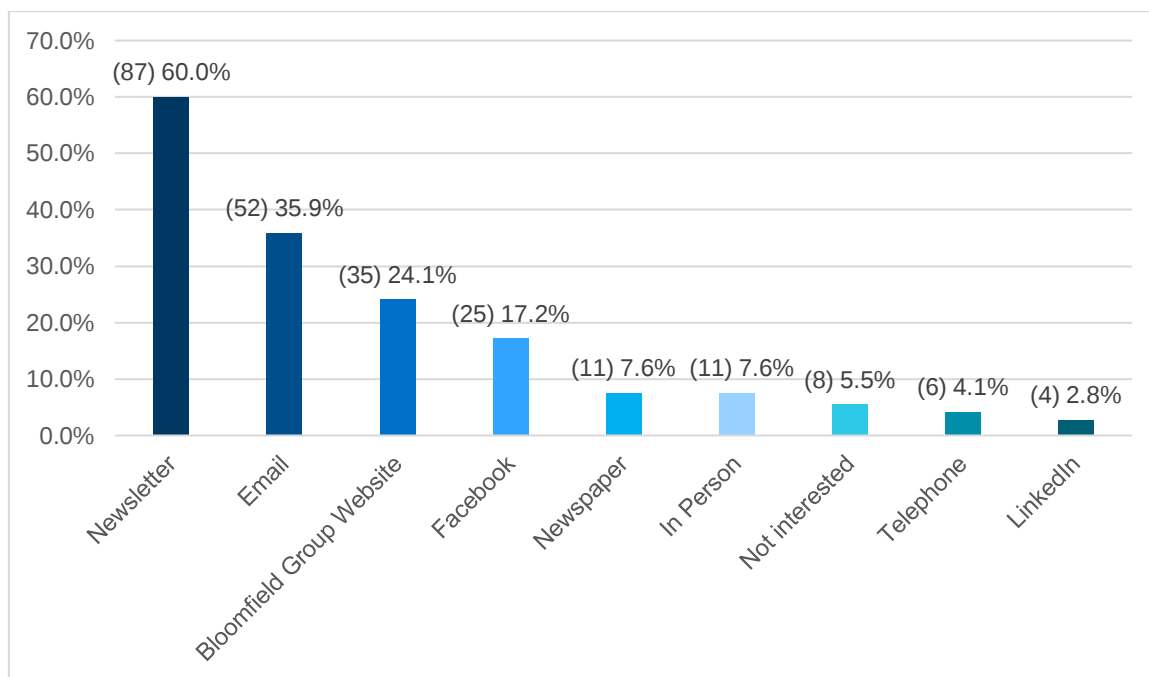


Figure B.9 Ongoing consultation preferences for respondents

Appendix C

Socio-economic indicators

Table C.1 *Key socio-economic indicators – local study area, 2021*

Indicator	Ashtonfield	Louth Park	Thornton	Buchanan	Buttai	Black Hill
Population and Demography						
Total persons	4,589 persons	922 persons	10,690 persons	212 persons	52 persons	516 persons
Population change (2016-2021)	-1.2%	41.0%	32.6%	7.6%	-3.7%	-7.9%
Under 18 years	25.9%	28.5%	25.5%	25.9%	5.8%	20.2%
Over 65 years	14.7%	7.9%	10.3%	16.0%	7.7%	19.2%
Median age	39	35	32	38	42	47
Indigenous (%)	4.7%	4.4%	7.1%	18.4%	9.6%	4.5%
Family Characteristics						
Total Families	1,315	266	3,092	59	8	145
Couple families with children	50.3%	62.4%	47.1%	39.0%	87.5%	53.8%
Couple families without children	35.4%	30.1%	35.8%	30.5%	37.5%	36.6%
One parent family	13.9%	7.5%	15.9%	22.0%	0.0%	11.7%
Population Mobility						
Lived at the same address as one year ago (%)	85.9%	77.9%	79.5%	84.8%	78.8%	87.8%
Lived at the same address as five years ago (%)	59.9%	49.5%	49.6%	60.4%	68.0%	63.7%
Culture and diversity						
Born in non-main English-speaking country	7.5%	2.7%	5.4%	0.0%	2.3%	5.4%
Languages spoken at home other than English	8.7%	3.6%	6.2%	3.8%	0.0%	3.1%
Employment and Economy						
Top industry of employment	Health care and social assistance (16.7%)	Health care and social assistance (14.4%)	Health care and social assistance (16.5%)	Health care and social assistance (21.3%)	Inadequately described / Not stated (21.7%)	Health care and social assistance (22.1%)
Labour force participation	68.4%	76.0%	71.1%	64.0%	82.5%	65.4%
Unemployment	3.5%	2.6%	4.0%	2.7%	0.0%	4.0%
Median individual income per week (\$)	\$891	\$1,033	\$887	\$762	\$1,238	\$903
Median household income per week (\$)	\$2,148	\$3,293	\$2,051	\$2,028	\$3,750	\$2,980
Dwelling Structure						
Housing (total private dwellings) (number)	1,616278	278	3,893	67	18	172

Indicator	Ashtonfield	Louth Park	Thornton	Buchanan	Buttai	Black Hill
Separate House (%)	93.9%	98.9%	92.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Semi-detached, terrace house, townhouse (%)	5.8%	0.0%	6.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Flat, unit or apartment (%)	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Median persons per household	2.8	3.5	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.2
Tenure Type						
Owned (fully or with a mortgage) (%)	77.6%	94.7%	64.3%	64.3%	53.3%	87.6%
Rented	21.5%	5.7%	34.2%	7.1%	0.0%	6.5%
Weekly median rent (\$)	\$440	\$400	\$400	\$460	\$346	\$586
Median housing price (REA, 2024)	\$835,000	\$1,520,000	\$750,500	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing availability (As of May 2024)	23 houses and 1 unit	6 houses	44 houses and 2 units	N/A	N/A	3 houses
Education						
Completion of Year 12 (or equivalent) (%)	49.6%	58.2%	47.3%	38.5%	42.5%	49.8%
Bachelor degree level (%)	23.9%	24.8%	19.7%	21.4%	20.7%	26.6%
Certificate level (%)	45.5%	42.1%	55.7%	51.2%	44.8%	35.9%
Advance diploma and diploma level (%)	18.5%	22.6%	16.9%	15.5%	10.3%	23.6%
Socio-economic disadvantage / advantage						
SEIFA IRSAD decile (2021) (within NSW)	7	10	4	8	9	9

Source: ABS, 2021 Census

