



# Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project

## SCOPING REPORT



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Moolarben Coal Complex is located approximately 40 kilometres (km) north of Mudgee in the Western Coalfields of New South Wales (NSW) (Figures 1 and 2). The Moolarben Coal Complex is operated by Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd (MCO).

The Moolarben Coal Complex is an existing mining operation, comprising the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117) (as modified) and Stage 2 Project Approval (08\_0135) (as modified) and involves four approved open cut mining areas (OC1 to OC4), three approved underground mining areas (UG1, UG2 and UG4) and other mining related infrastructure (including coal processing and transport facilities) (Figures 3 and 4).

Mining operations at the Moolarben Coal Complex are currently approved until 31 December 2038 with a combined coal production rate of 22 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa).

MCO currently operates across multiple open cut mining areas and at current production rates, mining (i.e. run-of-mine [ROM] coal extraction) within the Stage 1 open cut mining areas (OC1, OC2 and OC3) will likely be completed in 2026. Mining of the remaining Stage 2 open cut mining area (OC4) would continue beyond 2026 within the currently approved mine life of the Moolarben Coal Complex (i.e. 31 December 2038).

MCO has identified an opportunity to extend open cut mining operations at OC3 further south. The extended open cut mining operations would provide approximately 10 years of mining (from 2026 to 2036), which would occur in parallel with mining of OC4 (Figure 5). This would maximise use of the existing mining fleet and maintain steady production of ROM coal at the Moolarben Coal Complex post completion of mining within the Stage 1 open cut mining areas.

This Scoping Report is for the OC3 Extension Project (the Project). Approval is being sought through a new development application under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

While the Project is an extension to existing operations at the Moolarben Coal Complex, the Project would be lodged as a stand-alone development application (i.e. 'Stage 3' of the Moolarben Coal Complex). A separate modification to the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117) would be required for the receipt and processing of Project ROM coal and to integrate final landforms (Figure 6).

If approved, the Project would form a new component of the overall Moolarben Coal Complex. The Project would not change the overall life of the currently approved Moolarben Coal Complex (31 December 2038), peak product coal production rate (22 Mtpa coal), or the previously assessed peak workforce (approximately 250 construction personnel and 740 operational personnel).

The Project would result in extension of employment of the existing Stage 1 open cut workforce (approximately 317 personnel) until 2036 (i.e. within the approved life of the Moolarben Coal Complex) and would generate royalties associated with the additional ROM coal recovery.

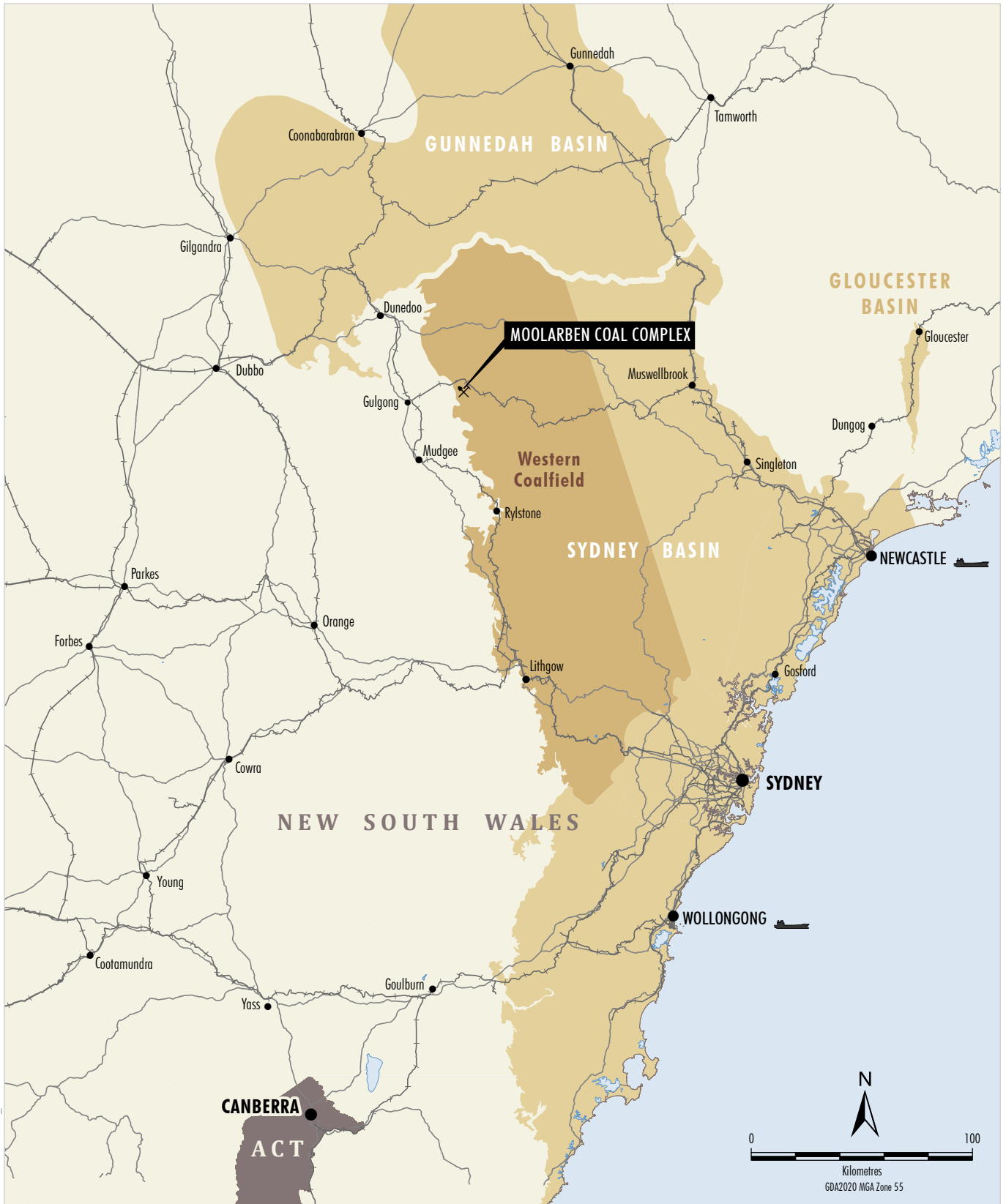
Baseline studies for the Project have commenced within a study area within Mining Lease (ML) 1691, Exploration Licence (EL) 6288 and EL 7073, where all freehold land within the study area is owned by Moolarben (Figure 4). Mining areas for the Project will be defined within this study area following completion of the baseline environmental studies, technical studies and stakeholder engagement.

Mining would extend south within a valley containing land previously cleared for low-intensity agricultural purposes. Mining would move further away from private landholders in Cooks Gap and closer to Cooyal. The Project mining areas are unlikely to be visible from private land due to intervening topography.

### 1.1 APPLICANT DETAILS

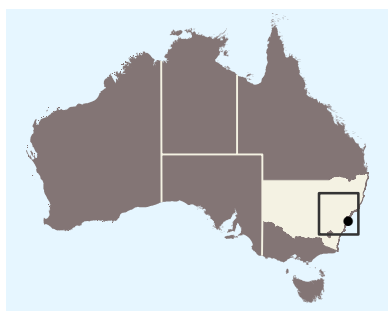
MCO (ABN 59 077 939 569) is the applicant for the Project. The contact details for MCO are:

Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd  
Postal: Locked Bag 2003, Mudgee NSW 2850  
Phone: +61 2 6376 1500



AMN-20-18-06-Env EIS SR - 2014

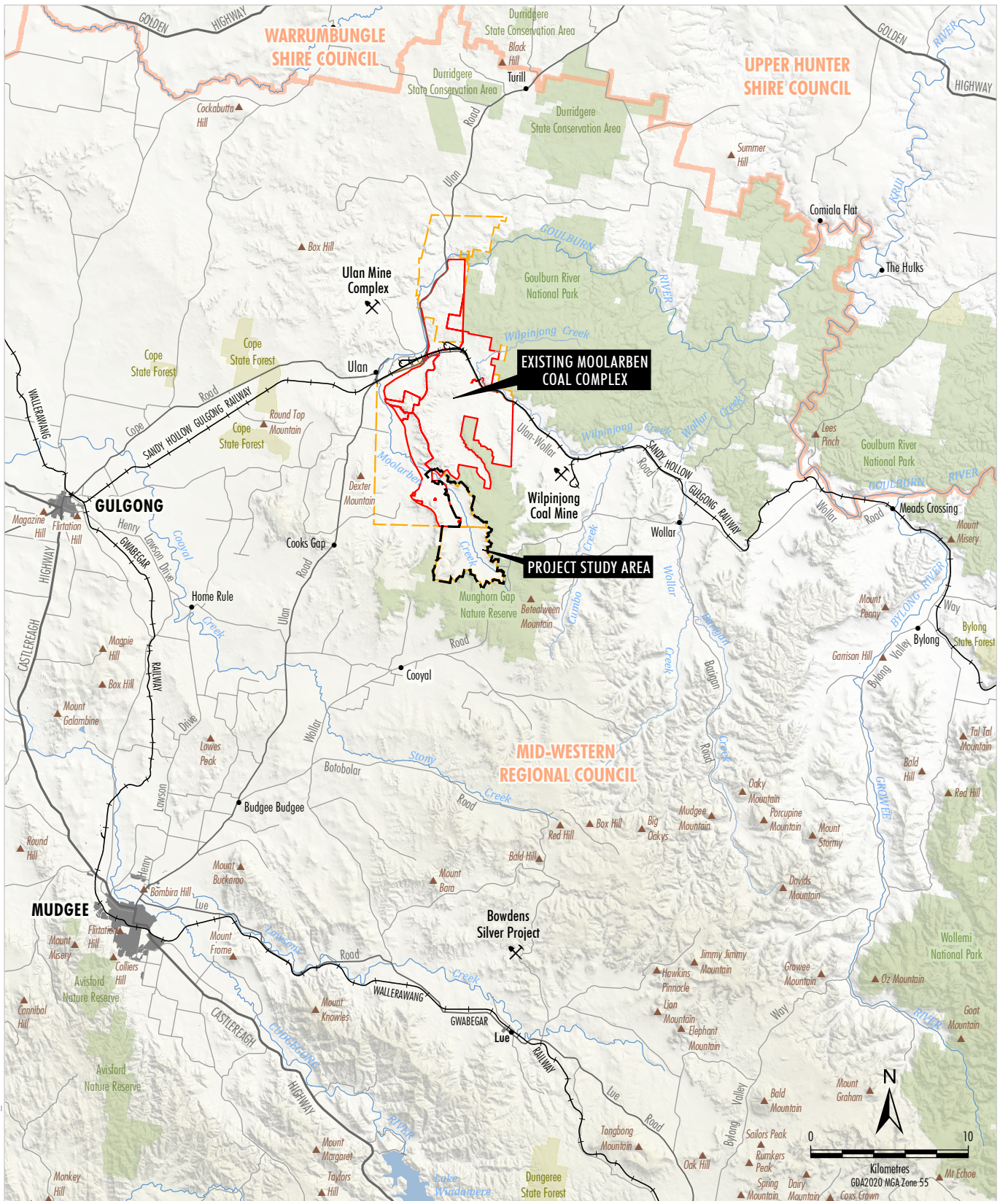
Source: NSW Spatial Services (2021)



- LEGEND
- Highway
  - +— Major Railway
  - Coalfield

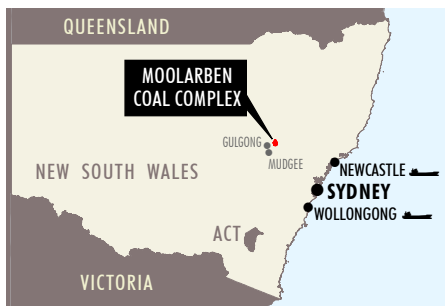
**YANCOAL**  
 昆煤澳大利亚有限公司  
**MOOLARBEN COAL**  
**MOOLARBEN COAL COMPLEX**  
 Regional Location

Figure 1



AMN-20-18-06-Exp EIS SR - 2024

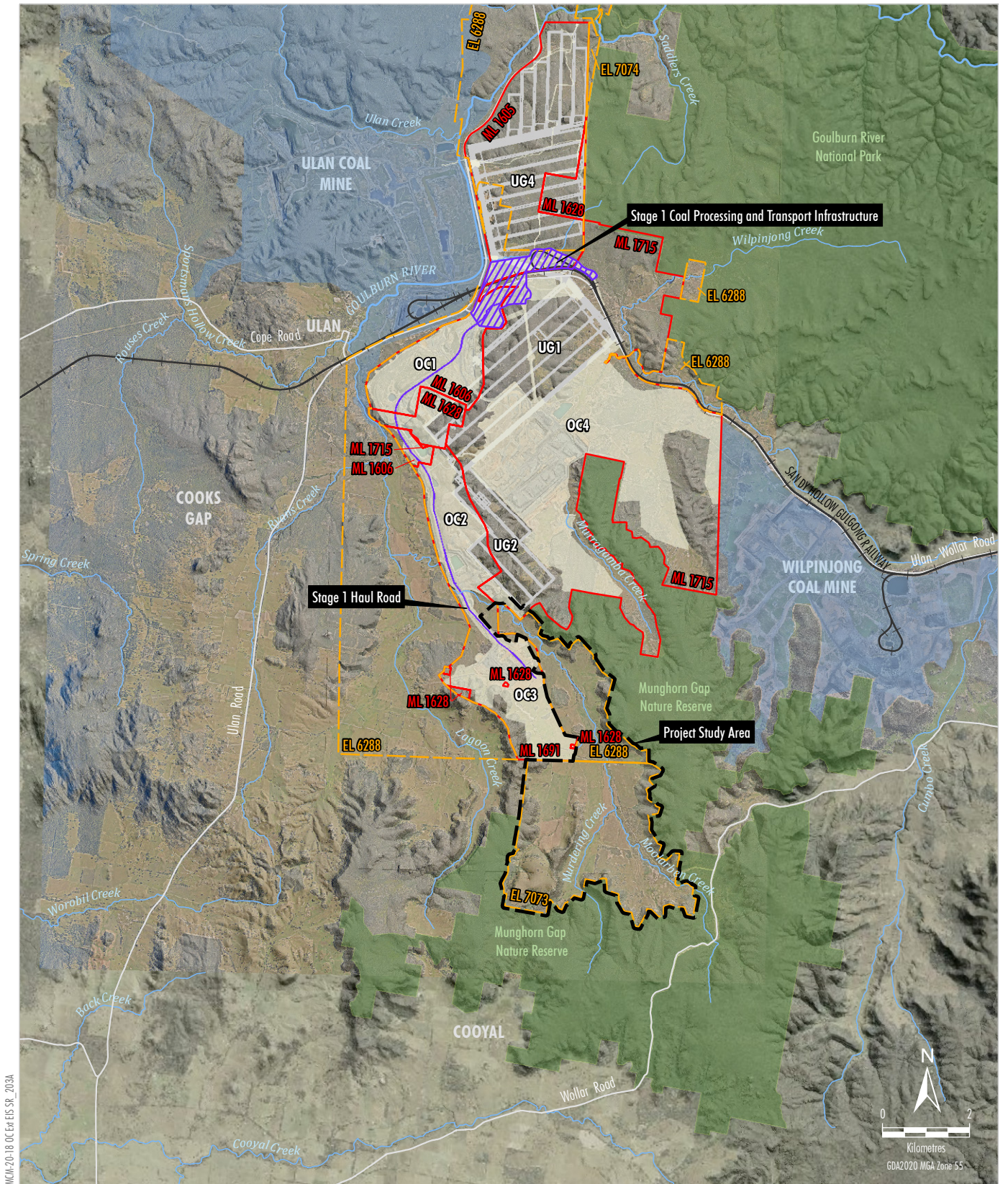
Source: NSW Spatial Services (2021)



- LEGEND**
- State Forest
  - National Parks/Nature Reserves
  - Local Government Boundary
  - Exploration Licence Boundary
  - Mining Lease Boundary
  - Mining Operation
  - Project Study Area

**YANCOAL**  
 MOOLARBEN COAL  
 Project Location

Figure 2



**LEGEND**

- National Parks/Nature Reserves
- Other Mining Operation
- Exploration Licence Boundary
- Mining Lease Boundary
- Existing/Approved Development
- Underground Longwall Layout
- Moolarben Coal Complex Disturbance Footprint
- Stage 1 Coal Processing and Transport Infrastructure
- Project Study Area

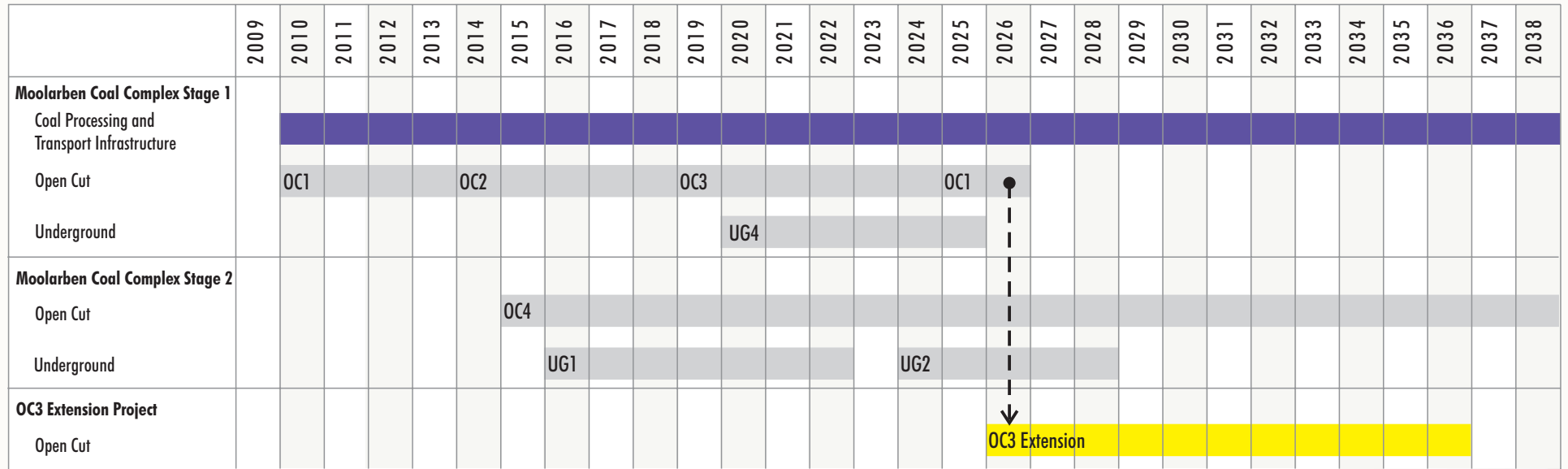
Source: MCO (2021); NSW Spatial Services (2021)  
 Orthophoto: MCO (Jan 2021)

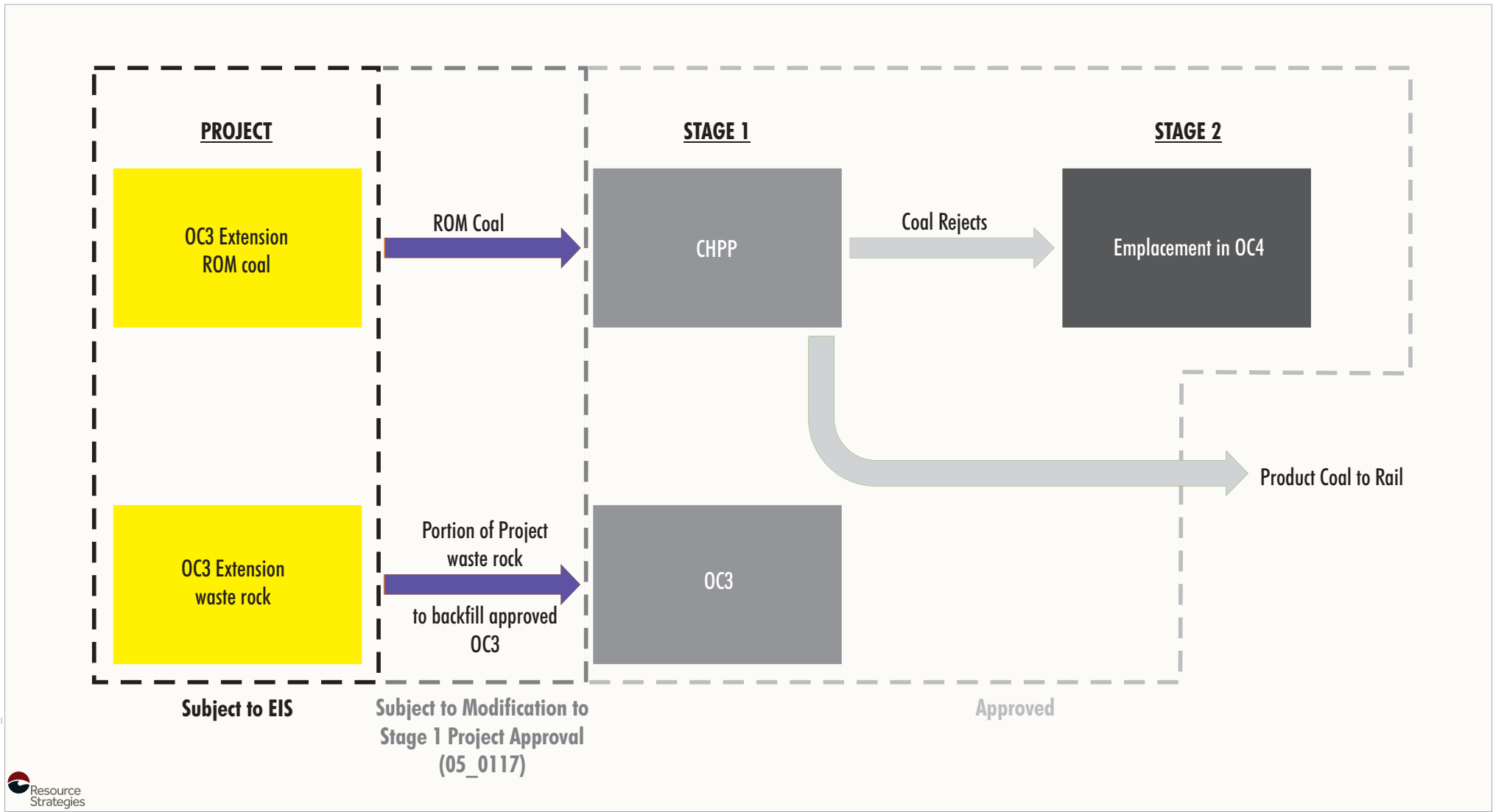


**MOOLARBEN COAL COMPLEX**  
 Approved Moolarben Coal Complex and  
 Proposed Open Cut Extension

**Figure 3**







MCM-20-18 OC-EIS SR\_002A



- LEGEND
- Project Components
  - Modification to Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117)
  - Approved Moolarben Coal Complex Components



MOOLARBERN COAL COMPLEX  
 Project Interaction with  
 Approved Moolarben Coal Complex

Figure 6

The MCO website is:

<http://www.moolarbencoal.com.au>

The Moolarben Coal Complex is located at 12 Ulan-Wollar Road, Ulan NSW 2850.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

### 1.2.1 History of the Moolarben Coal Complex

MCO is the operator of the Moolarben Coal Complex on behalf of the Moolarben Joint Venture (Moolarben Coal Mines Pty Ltd [MCM], Yancoal Moolarben Pty Ltd [YM] and a consortium of Korean power companies). MCO, MCM and YM are wholly owned subsidiaries of Yancoal Australia Limited (Yancoal).

Since the commencement of coal mining operations in 2010, mining activities have occurred within OC1, OC2, OC3 and OC4. First workings for UG1 commenced in April 2016, with secondary workings (i.e. longwall extraction) commencing in October 2017. Underground development towards UG4 commenced in 2020 (Figure 5).

The main infrastructure area approved at the Moolarben Coal Complex is the coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP), coal stockpiles and rail loadout facility approved under the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117) (Figure 3). All ROM coal from Stage 1 and Stage 2 mining operations is handled, processed and loaded to trains using the Stage 1 infrastructure.

Main site access for the Moolarben Coal Complex is via Ulan-Wollar Road, off Ulan Road. Access to the Stage 1 infrastructure area is via Ulan Road.

The Moolarben Coal Complex generates coarse and fine rejects, and ultrafine (tailings) rejects, in the coal preparation process (up to approximately 3.5 Mtpa).

Rejects are conveyed from the CHPP to the rejects bin adjacent to the Stage 1 ROM coal facility and then hauled or conveyed to OC4 (approved under Stage 2) for in-pit disposal/emplacement.

### 1.2.2 Project Overview

The Project is proposed to allow for extraction of additional coal within existing mining and exploration tenements adjacent to approved operations at the Moolarben Coal Complex.

The final Project description (to be included in the Environmental Impact Statement [EIS]) will be informed by the outcomes of environmental assessment and stakeholder engagement, however it is expected the Project would include the following activities:

- extension of open cut operations within ML 1691, EL 6288, and EL 7073 to allow mining of additional coal reserves;
- extraction of up to 9 Mtpa of ROM coal;
- mining operations between approximately 2026 to 2036 (which is within the approved life of the Moolarben Coal Complex of 31 December 2038);
- extension of employment of the existing Stage 1 open cut workforce (approximately 317 personnel) until 2036;
- construction and operation of new ancillary infrastructure in support of mining operations;
- construction and operation of existing and new water management and water storage infrastructure in support of mining operations;
- development of an integrated waste rock emplacement landform;
- ongoing exploration activities in the Project area;
- construction of haul road crossings of Moolarben Creek and Murdering Creek;
- quarrying and/or excavation of borrow pits within approved disturbance areas to provide construction materials;
- blasting activities; and
- other associated infrastructure, plant, equipment and activities.

Consistent with the existing configuration between Stage 1 and 2, ROM coal extracted for the Project would be trucked via the Stage 1 haul road to be handled, processed and loaded to trains via the existing Stage 1 infrastructure (Figures 3 and 6). This would be subject to a separate modification to the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117), similar to Modification 3 to Stage 1 which was approved in 2015.

### 1.2.3 Summary of Key Avoidance, Minimisation and Offset Strategies

The Project Development Application area is largely situated within previously cleared land historically used for low-intensity agriculture activities (e.g. grazing and some dryland cropping). The surrounding land uses include existing open cut mining for the approved OC3 immediately north of the Project area, as well as the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.

The topography changes from relatively flat in previously cleared areas to steep and vegetated along the edges of the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. The major drainage features are Moolarben Creek and Murdering Creek.

Key avoidance and minimisation measures for the Project would include (Figure 7):

- locating the proposed open cut pits largely within valley floor areas previously cleared for low-intensity agriculture;
- avoiding disturbance of habitat features for threatened bat species associated with the steeper terrain adjacent to the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve; and
- avoiding open cut mining within 200 metres (m) of Moolarben Creek and Murdering Creek.

When considered cumulatively, the Project would not change the approved mine life or peak coal production rate of the existing Moolarben Coal Complex.

Key offset strategies for the Project would include development of a biodiversity offset strategy as per the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act).

Additional avoidance, minimisation and offset strategies will be developed during further development of the detailed Project description and will be described in the EIS.

## 1.3 RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

This section provides an overview of the related Moolarben Coal Complex, including existing and approved components that would be operated in conjunction with the Project under separate approvals.

A description of the Project's interaction with other surrounding developments, including how cumulative impacts will be assessed, is provided in Section 2.3.

### 1.3.1 Approved Moolarben Coal Complex

#### ***Moolarben Coal Project Stage 1***

Stage 1 of the Moolarben Coal Complex comprises open cut operations in OC1, OC2 and OC3, underground operations in UG4 and coal processing and transport facilities.

A separate modification to the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117) would be required for the receipt and processing of Project ROM coal and to integrate final landforms (refer below).

Existing mining operations and coal processing and transport activities associated with the approved Stage 1 would continue in accordance with Project Approval (05\_0117).

#### ***Moolarben Coal Project Stage 2***

Stage 2 of the Moolarben Coal Complex comprises open cut operations in OC4 and underground operations in UG1 and UG2. All ROM coal produced by the Stage 2 operations is transported to the Stage 1 coal processing and transport facilities.

Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Moolarben Coal Complex operate as an integrated mining operation, with shared water management, reject disposal and other environmental management strategies. It is not expected that any modification to Stage 2 would be required to incorporate the Project. However, this will be confirmed through the development of the EIS for the Project (and modification to Stage 1).

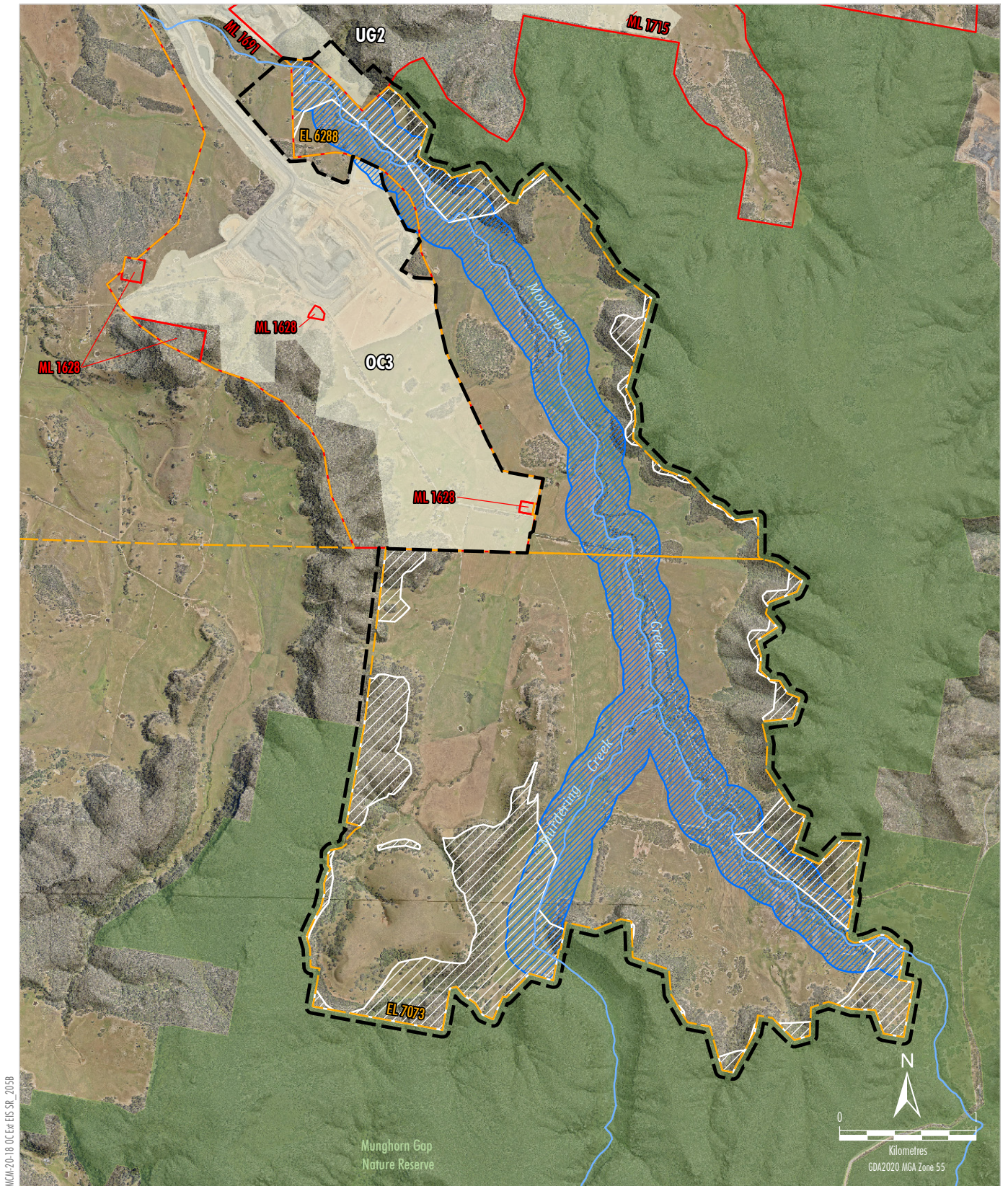
Existing mining operations associated with Stage 2 would continue in accordance with Project Approval (08\_0135).

#### ***Proposed Modification to Stage 1***

Stage 1 of the Moolarben Coal Complex (Project Approval [05-0117]) would be separately modified to align with the Project, including to account for changes to the approved OC3 final landform as a result of the OC3 extension and to allow for the existing CHPP and train load-out facility to receive, process and transport ROM coal extracted for the Project (Figure 6).

## 1.4 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Scoping Report has been prepared to support a request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the EIS being prepared for the Project.



MCM-20-18-OC-EIS SR\_2058

**LEGEND**

- National Parks/Nature Reserves
- Exploration Licence Boundary
- Mining Lease Boundary
- Moolarben Coal Complex Disturbance Footprint
- Proposed Open Cut Extension
- Project Study Area
- No Proposed Open Cut Mining (Ancillary and Supporting Infrastructure Only)
- Indicative Threatened Bat Habitat Avoidance Area

Source: MCO (2021); NSW Spatial Services (2021)  
 Orthophoto: MCO (Jan 2021)



**MOOLARBEN COAL COMPLEX**  
**Key Project Avoidance and Minimisation Measures**

**Figure 7**

This document provides an initial description of the Project for key State regulatory agencies to initiate the preparation of the SEARs in accordance with clause 3 of Schedule 2 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* (EP&A Regulation).

The SEARs will identify matters that will need to be addressed in the EIS for the Project.

The Project will also be referred to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment for consideration as to whether the Project meets the criteria of a 'Controlled Action' and requires approval under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Section 5 Community Engagement – outlines consultation with stakeholders that has already been undertaken for the Project and the consultation proposed to be carried out for the Project.

Section 6 Proposed Assessment of Impacts – identifies key environmental issues of particular relevance to the Project, outlines the proposed level and scope of environmental assessment, and identifies strategies to address the impacts identified.

Section 7 References.

## 1.5 STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been prepared in consideration of the *State Significant Development Guidelines* (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment [DPIE], 2021a), in particular *Appendix A – Preparing a Scoping Report*.

Other relevant State Significant Development Guidelines that have been considered in the preparation of this document include:

- *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021b) (Section 5);
- *Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021c) (Section 2.3 and Attachment C); and
- *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021d) (SIA Guideline) (Attachment B).

This document is structured as follows:

- Section 1 Introduction – provides a summary of the Project and describes the purpose and structure of this Scoping Report.
- Section 2 Strategic Context – identifies the key issues relevant to the justification and evaluation of the Project, including how the Project relates to existing land uses in the area.
- Section 3 Project – describes the context of the Project, provides a description and rationale for the Project.
- Section 4 Statutory Context – outlines the permissibility of the Project and identifies potentially relevant statutory planning instruments.

## 2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 2.1 PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The Project is located in an area with extensive existing mining operations, including the Moolarben Coal Complex, Ulan Mine and Wilpinjong Mine.

The Project would provide for the extension of mining at the Moolarben Coal Complex within approved coal production limits and approved mine life. The extraction of Project coal reserves would also be supported by the use of existing and approved infrastructure at the Moolarben Coal Complex (Section 1.3).

MCO currently operates across multiple open cut mining areas and at current production rates, mining within the Stage 1 open cut mining areas (OC1, OC2 and OC3) will likely be completed in 2026. Mining of the remaining Stage 2 open cut mining area (OC4) would continue beyond 2026, albeit at lower production rates.

MCO has identified an opportunity to extend open cut mining operations at OC3 further south. The extended open cut mining operations would provide approximately 10 years of mining (from 2026 to 2036), which would occur in parallel with mining of OC4 (Figure 5). This would maximise use of the existing mining fleet and maintain steady production post completion of mining within the Stage 1 open cut mining areas.

The proposed location of the Project would result in progression of active mining away from publicly visible areas.

If approved, the Project would result in an improved final landform with no final voids (including within the approved OC3 area) as mine voids within the Project area would be progressively backfilled so that they are free draining.

MCO has elected to proceed with the Project as proposed as:

- Additional coal reserves identified adjacent to the existing approved OC3 open cut, which are located in existing mining and exploration tenements and on Moolarben-owned freehold land, could be efficiently recovered to provide additional positive returns on existing investments at the Moolarben Coal Complex.

- The Moolarben Coal Complex is an operational thermal coal mine with long-standing customer relationships and existing sale agreements for thermal coal exports.
- There would be substantial capital savings associated with the use of existing infrastructure and mobile equipment at the Moolarben Coal Complex and operational cost efficiencies associated with the use of existing Moolarben Coal Complex systems and workforce.
- The existing Stage 1 open cut workforce would be available for the Project.
- The Project would provide incremental economic benefits to NSW, such as increased royalties.

#### 2.1.1 Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW

The *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* (NSW Government, 2020) recognises the value of coal production to the NSW economy, including:

- Existing industry investment and extension of the life of existing operations (rather than development of greenfield operations).
- The long history of coal mining in NSW, and its close ties with local communities.
- The potential for coal production to deliver significant economic benefits to local communities, including jobs and investment.
- Coal production's significant contribution to export earnings as the State's biggest single export earner.

The *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* also states that the NSW Government will:

*... recognise existing industry investment by continuing to consider responsible applications to extend the life of current coal mines, and by streamlining the process for exploring new areas and areas adjacent to current mining operations to deliver a better economic return to NSW ...*

The Project would be consistent with the *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* as:

- the Moolarben Coal Complex has been operating since 2010 and the Project would realise additional coal extraction within existing mining and exploration tenements immediately adjacent to the existing operations;
- the Project has been developed in a manner that considers the benefits and consequences of the development for other land uses, including coexistence with the adjacent Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve; and
- the Project would result in the following benefits for the local area, NSW and for the national economy:
  - extension of employment of the Stage 1 open cut workforce (within the approved operational workforce 740 personnel for the Moolarben Coal Complex), and other expenditure-induced indirect jobs;
  - support for local and regional business, including construction-related capital expenditure and substantial ongoing operating expenditure;
  - State and Commonwealth corporate tax contributions;
  - contributions to local government for community infrastructure and services; and
  - payment of significant coal royalties to the NSW Government over the life of the Project.

### 2.1.2 Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan

The *Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan* (NSW Government, 2012a) (Upper Hunter SRLUP) outlines strategies to address sustainable management of agricultural land and natural resources, and acknowledges the ongoing contribution of mining to the region:

*The strength of the mining industry creates many benefits directly to the Upper Hunter region. These benefits include lower unemployment, higher average incomes and increased business investment.*

The approved Moolarben Coal Complex provides existing benefits to the Upper Hunter region. There would be incremental benefits as a result of the Project.

The EIS will consider the potential interactions of the Project with surrounding land uses in accordance with the objectives of the Upper Hunter SRLUP.

### 2.1.3 Other Strategic Planning Documents

The following strategic planning documents will also be considered in the planning of the Project and the preparation of the EIS:

- *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036* (NSW Government, 2017a).
- *Mid-Western Region Community Plan – Towards 2030* (Mid-Western Regional Council, n.d.).
- *Mid-Western Regional Local Strategic Planning Statement – Our Place 2040* (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2020).
- *Developments adjacent to National Parks and Wildlife Service lands: Guidelines for consent and planning authorities* (National Parks and Wildlife Services [NPWS], 2020).

Further consideration of the Project on social, environmental and economic grounds, including consideration of the principles of ecologically sustainable development, consideration of alternatives and a cost-benefit analysis, will be included in the EIS. This evaluation will consider the *Guidelines for the economic assessment of mining and coal seam gas proposals* (NSW Government, 2015).

## 2.2 KEY FEATURES OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDS

### 2.2.1 Local and Regional Context

The Project is located in the Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area. A preliminary Schedule of Lands for the provisional Development Application Area is provided in Attachment A.

Landforms within and in the vicinity of the Project area are characterised by the lower lying areas associated with Moolarben Creek, surrounded by the undulating foothills and ridges of the adjacent Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. Elevations in the Project area range from 465 m to 690 m.

Land use other than mining in the vicinity of the Project includes agricultural enterprises (grazing and dryland cropping), commercial, industrial and residential areas of Ulan, rural residential areas of Cooks Gap and Cooyal and conservation areas (Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve and Goulburn River National Park).

## 2.2.2 Natural and Built Features

A preliminary investigation of environmentally sensitive areas of State significance (as defined in the *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* [State and Regional Development SEPP]) with respect to the Project has identified the following:

- The provisional Development Application Area is not within coastal waters of the State.
- No lands identified as 'coastal wetlands' or 'littoral rainforest' within the meaning of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2018*, or reserved as an aquatic reserve under the *NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994* (FM Act), or as a marine park under the *NSW Marine Parks Act 1997* occur within the provisional Development Application Area.
- No lands within a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention or lands within a World Heritage area under the World Heritage Convention occur in or near the provisional Development Application Area.
- No lands identified in an Environmental Planning Instrument as being of high Aboriginal cultural significance or high biodiversity value have been identified within the provisional Development Application Area.
- No lands reserved as a state conservation area under the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, or places, buildings or structures listed on the State Heritage Register under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* occur within the provisional Development Application Area.
- No lands declared as critical habitat under the BC Act or FM Act occur within the provisional Development Application Area.
- Crown land within the provisional Development Application Area is shown on Figure 4.

## 2.2.3 Key Risks and Hazards

Key risks and hazards for the Project include flooding along Moolarben Creek, bushfire management, management of contaminated land and final landform stability and safety. These hazards and risks will be considered in the EIS for the Project.

## 2.3 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The EIS will consider whether the Project is likely to generate cumulative impacts with other developments/projects, including the existing Moolarben Coal Complex, in accordance with the *Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021c).

A detailed summary of existing developments and future projects that will be assessed cumulatively in the EIS is provided in Attachment C.

### 2.3.1 Mining Operations

The Project is an extension of the existing Moolarben Coal Complex, and is located within an existing mining precinct along with the Ulan Mine Complex (located immediately north) and Wilpinjong Coal Mine (located immediately east) (Figures 2 and 3). Potential interactions with these mines will be considered in detail in the EIS for the Project.

The Project would result in additional ROM extraction (and associated additional royalties) and would require 317 personnel for mining operations. However, there would be no cumulative change to annual product coal production rates, rail movements, approved mine life or peak employment for the Moolarben Coal Complex.

In addition, the Project would have no direct interaction with the public road network as employees and deliveries would access the Project area via the existing Moolarben Coal Complex site access. As above, no cumulative change to peak vehicle movements to and from the Moolarben Coal Complex would occur as a result of the Project.

The Bylong Coal Project, a proposed open cut and underground coal mining operation in the Bylong Valley, was refused by the NSW Independent Planning Commission in 2019 and therefore no potential interactions will be considered in the Project EIS.

The Bowdens Silver Project is a proposed silver, lead and zinc open cut mine approximately 25 km south of the Project. An EIS was lodged for the Bowdens Silver Project in May 2020. Potential interactions with the Bowdens Silver Project will be considered in the EIS.

In April 2021, the Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade released the Wollar Allocation Area (immediately east of the Wilpinjong Mine) for competitive selection for a coal exploration licence.

DPIE has undertaken a Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment (PRIA) for the Hawkins and Rumker potential release areas under the NSW Government's *Strategic Release Framework for Coal and Petroleum Exploration*. The potential release areas are located approximately 20 km from the Project.

Limited interaction is expected between the Project and the Wollar Allocation Area and there is currently no detail regarding potential future mining activities in the Hawkins and Rumker potential release areas. On this basis the allocation area and potential release areas will not be considered in the EIS.

### 2.3.2 Electricity Transmission and Renewable Projects

There are a number of solar and wind renewable projects in the wider region associated with the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone that are either operational, approved but yet to be constructed or under assessment. These projects include:

- Beryl Solar Farm.
- Stubbo Solar Farm.
- Wollar Solar Farm.
- Barneys Reef Wind Farm.
- Tallawang Solar Farm.
- Valley of the Winds Wind Farm.
- Birriwa Solar Farm.
- Dunedoo Solar Farm.
- Uungalla Wind Farm.

SEARs have been issued for the Valley of the Winds Wind Farm, proposed to be developed approximately 55 km north-west of the Project. The associated Scoping Report includes options for potential electricity transmission line (ETL) corridors to connect to the Wollar substation which would intersect with the existing Moolarben Coal Complex, however would not intersect the Project area.

SEARs have also been issued for a proposed State Significant Infrastructure upgrade of the existing Wollar substation to support existing and proposed renewable developments within the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.

There is limited potential for interactions between the Project and electricity transmission upgrades and renewable projects. Notwithstanding, the EIS will consider any potentially relevant interactions with environmental matters for these projects (e.g. social, road transport).

## 2.4 THIRD-PARTY AGREEMENTS

MCO has an existing Voluntary Planning Agreement with the Mid-Western Regional Council for the approved life of the Moolarben Coal Complex (i.e. 2038). MCO would engage with the Mid-Western Regional Council regarding any amended Planning Agreement for the Project.

In accordance with the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Project Approvals (05\_0117 and 08\_0135) MCO would continue to contribute financially to the implementation of the Ulan Road Strategy, along with the proponents of the Ulan Coal Mine and Wilpinjong Coal Mine. The Project does not directly interact with the public road network, and is not anticipated to change existing vehicle movements to the Moolarben Coal Complex.

An access agreement is also in place with the NSW Rural Fire Service to facilitate bushfire management access to the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve through the existing OC3 area and Project area. This agreement would continue for the Project.

A number of private landholders are afforded acquisition and/or mitigation rights under Stage 1 and Stage 2 Project Approvals (05\_0117) and (08\_0135) to address predicted air quality and noise impacts of the approved Moolarben Coal Complex. MCO has entered into agreements with a number of the landholders to implement noise attenuation works.

Noise and air quality impact assessments will be undertaken for the EIS, to identify any private landholders that may be entitled to acquisition and/or mitigation rights in accordance with the *Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy for State Significant Mining, Petroleum and Extractive Industry Developments* (NSW Government, 2018a).

### 3 PROJECT

#### 3.1 OVERVIEW

Table 1 provides a summary of the key characteristics of the Project. Indicative timing and interaction of the Project with the approved Moolarben Coal Complex is shown in Figures 5 and 6, respectively. Production limits for the Moolarben Coal Complex and the Project are detailed in Figure 8.

Further detail on the Project description is provided below.

#### 3.2 DESCRIPTION

##### 3.2.1 Project Area

The Project proposes extraction of additional coal reserves within existing mining and exploration tenements held by MCO, on Moolarben-owned freehold land (Table 2 and Figure 4).

**Table 2**  
**Mining and Exploration Tenements**  
**Related to the Project**

Tenement Reference	Expiry
ML 1691	23/09/2034
EL 6288	23/08/2023
EL 7073	12/02/2026

The Project area has largely been constrained to previously cleared land which has historically been used for low intensity agricultural activities (i.e. grazing and dryland cropping).

Environmental constraints within the Project area and associated avoidance, minimisation and offset measures are described in Section 1.2.

##### 3.2.2 Conceptual Physical Layout and Design

The conceptual physical layout and design of the Project would be prepared in consideration of outcomes of key environmental assessments and exploration drilling.

Key components of the Project layout would include open cut pits, haul roads and associated creek crossings, internal access roads, water management infrastructure (e.g. clean water diversions, mine water dams and sediment dams) and temporary waste rock stockpiles.

Flood bunds would be constructed along haul roads adjacent to Moolarben and Murdering Creeks to protect infrastructure from flood events up to the 1 percent (%) annual exceedance probability.

##### 3.2.3 Uses and Activities

###### *Exploration*

Geological exploration activities would continue to be undertaken over the life of the Project to provide input to mine planning and engineering studies to refine the understanding of coal quality and geological structures.

###### *Geology*

The Illawarra Coal Measures underly the Project area, which includes the target Ulan Seam.

However, there are some areas where the coal resource is either not present or recoverable (i.e. where the Ulan Seam outcrops in Moolarben Creek or where there are basalt intrusions).

The thickness of overburden over the Project area typically ranges from less than 25 m thick (along eroded sections of Moolarben Creek) up to approximately 50 m along the valley edges at the boundary of the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. On this basis the proposed open cut extensions for the Project would be relatively shallow.

The extent of the coal resource and associated open cut mining areas within the Project area is being determined by exploration works and would be detailed in the EIS.

###### *Open Cut Mining Operations*

The Project would mine up to 9 Mtpa of ROM coal using conventional open cut mining methods (such as drilling and blasting, consistent with the existing Moolarben Coal Complex operations).

ROM coal from the Project would be hauled to the Stage 1 ROM coal facility (ROM coal stockpile and transfer bin), where it would be sized and conveyed to the CHPP with ROM coal from the rest of the Moolarben Coal Complex.

Project open cut mining activities and associated mobile equipment movements would occur 24 hours per day, seven days per week consistent with currently approved operations for the Moolarben Coal Complex.

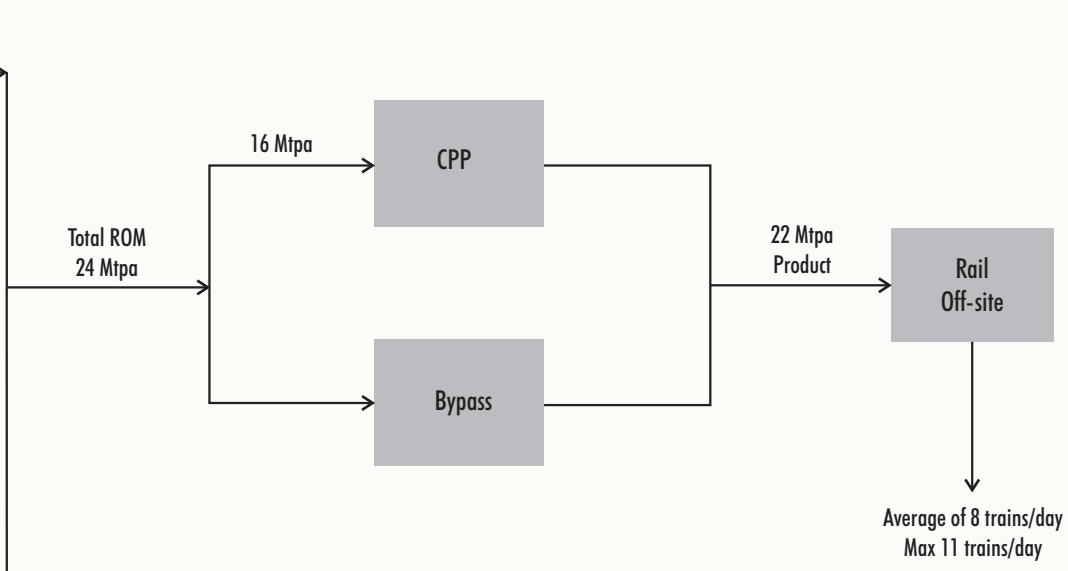
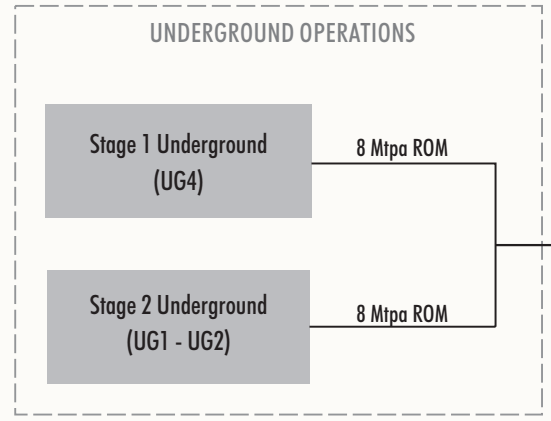
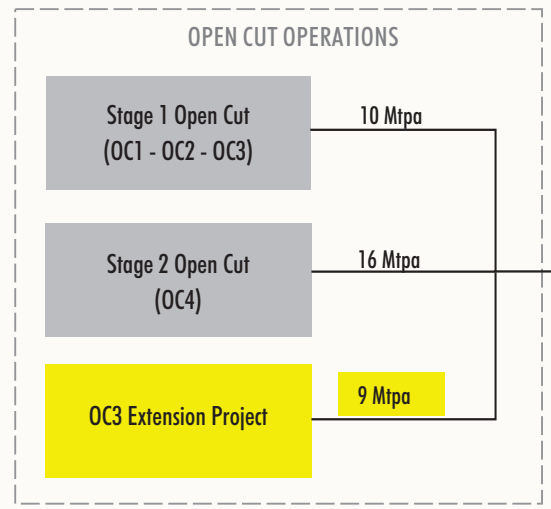
**Table 1**  
**Summary of the Approved Moolarben Coal Complex and the Project**

Project Component	Approved Moolarben Coal Complex		Project (OC3 Extension)
	Stage 1 (Project Approval 05_0117)	Stage 2 (Project Approval 08_0135)	
Mine Life	Mining operations can be carried out until 31 December 2038.		Mining operations for the Project would be carried out until approximately 2036.
Open Cut Mining Method	Conventional open cut mining within OC1, OC2 and OC3 areas.	Conventional open cut mining within OC4 area.	Mining within existing mining and exploration tenements and on Moolarben-owned freehold land, via conventional open cut mining methods (as per Stage 1 and 2).
Open Cut Coal Extraction Limits	Up to 10 Mt of ROM coal extracted from the open cut mining operations in any calendar year.	Up to 16 Mt of ROM coal extracted from the open cut mining operations in any calendar year.	Up to 9 Mt of ROM coal would be extracted from the Project in any calendar year.
	Up to 16 Mt (total) of ROM coal extracted cumulatively from the open cut operations at the Moolarben Coal Complex in any calendar year.		Unchanged.
Coal Processing and Offsite Transport	Up to 16 Mtpa of ROM coal from the Moolarben Coal Complex can be processed (washed) in any calendar year. Total coal production of 22 Mtpa. Average of 8 trains per day and peak of 11 trains per day.	The Proponent shall ensure that all coal extracted from the site is sent to the Moolarben Stage 1 mine surface infrastructure area for processing (washing) and/or transport to market via rail.	All ROM coal extracted from the Project would be hauled to the existing Stage 1 infrastructure for processing and transport to market via rail. No change (cumulatively) to Stage 1 processing and transport limits (16 Mtpa coal washed and 22 Mtpa of total coal produced, average of 8 trains per day and peak of 11 trains per day) as a consequence of the Project.
Coal Rejects	Co-disposal of coal rejects with waste rock in the open cut voids.		Unchanged <sup>1</sup> .
Workforce	Peak operational workforce of 740 personnel. Peak construction workforce of 250 personnel.		Extension of employment of the Stage 1 open cut workforce to 2036. No increase cumulatively in previously assessed peak workforce at the Moolarben Coal Complex.
Hours of Operations	Mining operations and associated activities can be carried out 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.		Mining operations and associated activities would be carried out 24 hours per day, seven days per week as per the Stage 1 and 2 Project Approvals.
Site Access	Main site access via Ulan Road and CHPP access via Ulan-Wollar Road.		Unchanged <sup>2</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> The Project would not directly create coal rejects as these are produced at the Stage 1 CHPP. The Project would not increase the rate of reject production and rejects could continue to be managed as per the existing practices.

<sup>2</sup> The Project does not involve any direct interaction with the public road network. Employees, contractors and deliveries would access the Project area via the existing Moolarben Coal Complex site access and internal Moolarben Coal Complex roads.

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**LEGEND**

- Project Components
- Approved Moolarben Coal Complex Components



MOOLARBEN COAL COMPLEX

Moolarben Coal Complex and OC3 Extension Project - Coal Production Limits

Figure 8

### **Supporting Infrastructure**

Construction activities for the Project would be limited to development of facilities and infrastructure to support of the extension of open cut operations.

The level of construction activity for the Project is significantly reduced through the proposed use of the existing coal handling, processing and transport infrastructure at the approved Moolarben Coal Complex.

Other construction activities undertaken progressively over the life of the Project would include:

- progressive development of dams, pumps, water diversions, pipelines, drains, storages and other water management equipment and structures;
- progressive development of haul roads, light vehicle access roads and services; and
- construction of ancillary infrastructure (e.g. electricity distribution infrastructure, internal roads, potable water supply and site communications).

Project construction activities located within Project operational mining areas would be undertaken up to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, on the basis that noise from these activities would be indistinguishable from mining operations.

Other activities that would be conducted as a component of the Project include environmental monitoring and the development of minor associated infrastructure (such as, but not limited to, temporary crib and equipment maintenance facilities).

### **Waste Rock Management**

Waste rock (including overburden and interburden) mined during development of the Project would be progressively placed in the mine voids (i.e. in-pit) once the coal has been mined. A portion of the waste rock would be hauled to the approved OC3 area to assist with landform integration for the Project and Stage 1 (subject to a separate modification to the Stage 1 Project Approval [05\_0117]).

Temporary out-of-pit emplacement areas would be located adjacent to the open cut mining operations (within approved disturbance areas) to assist in managing waste rock throughout the life of the Project in preparation for establishing the final landform.

### **Water Management**

The water management strategy for the Project would be based on maximising the diversion of clean water runoff around disturbance areas, containing and re-using mine water (to prevent downstream contamination) as well as controlling sediment runoff from disturbed areas such as waste rock emplacements or areas cleared in advance of mining.

If the Project is approved, the water management system required for the Project would be integrated with existing infrastructure for the Moolarben Coal Complex.

### **Rehabilitation and Closure Activities**

The Project open cut voids would be progressively backfilled as mining progresses.

If approved, the Project would result in no final void remaining in the rehabilitated landform (including the approved OC3 area) as mine voids within the Project area would be backfilled so that they are free draining.

The Project would also include integration of progressive rehabilitation for the Moolarben Coal Complex with rehabilitation of additional disturbance areas proposed for the Project. A rehabilitation strategy for these areas will be presented in the EIS.

### **Site Access**

All workers and deliveries would access the site from the existing main site access via Ulan-Wollar Road for Stage 1. Workers and delivered materials would then be transported to the Project area via internal roads.

The transportation, handling and storage of all dangerous goods for the Project would be conducted in accordance with the NSW *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017* (or its latest equivalent).

### **3.2.4 Timing**

The Project mining activities are expected to occur over a period of 10 years between 2026 to 2036, which is within the approved mine life of the Moolarben Coal Complex of 31 December 2038.

It is anticipated that Project activities would commence as soon as practicable after all necessary consents, approvals and licences have been obtained to ensure continuity of operations from the approved OC3.

Detailed mine sequencing and scheduling for the life of the Project, integrated with approved operations at the Moolarben Coal Complex and within existing production limits, will be provided in the EIS.

### 3.3 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

#### 3.3.1 Alternatives Considered

The location and extent of the Project is constrained by the location of existing mining and exploration tenements and Moolarben-owned freehold land, and the extent of the recoverable coal resource, while having regard to significant environmental constraints (such as major drainages and the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve).

A number of alternatives to the proposed Project have been considered by MCO to date and have not been adopted, including:

- not proceeding with any mining in the Project area (however this would result in inefficient use of existing equipment and infrastructure at the Moolarben Coal Complex and loss of resource within existing tenements);
- mining the resources in the Project area at a higher annual rate;
- mining the coal resource in the Project area in the most cost-efficient manner (e.g. single, large open cut pit), resulting in greater surface disturbance impacts, water resource impacts and/or large mining void(s) left in the final landform; and
- mining the coal resource closer to key environmental features (e.g. within 200 m of Moolarben and Murdering Creeks or impacting threatened bat habitat).

The above alternatives have not been adopted, as they had potential outcomes that were not aligned with stakeholder expectations and MCO's objectives for the Project. Further discussion of these alternatives, and why they were not adopted for the Project will be included in the EIS.

#### 3.3.2 Further Alternatives to be Considered

Further consideration of alternatives will be undertaken as a component of the EIS. This will include, but not be limited to:

- measures to avoid, mitigate, rehabilitate and monitor the potential impacts of the Project;
- post-mining land uses of the rehabilitated Project final landform; and
- potential water management efficiency measures, water storage options and water sharing opportunities.

## 4 STATUTORY CONTEXT

This section outlines the planning framework and statutory context relevant to the assessment of the Project. It also provides a consideration of the Project against the objects of the EP&A Act.

### 4.1 POWER TO GRANT CONSENT

#### 4.1.1 Applicability of Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Division 4.1 of the EP&A Act creates a threefold classification of development under the Act.

The threefold classification is:

- development that may be carried out without development consent;
- development that may be carried out with development consent; and
- development that is prohibited.

The Project falls into the classification of development that may be carried out with development consent.

Development Consent for the Project will be sought under the State Significant Development provisions (i.e. Division 4.7) under Part 4 of the EP&A Act. The EP&A Act and EP&A Regulation generally set the framework for planning and environmental assessment in NSW.

Under section 4.36 of the EP&A Act, a class of development, such as mining, may be declared as State Significant Development by the State and Regional Development SEPP.

Clause 8 of the State and Regional Development SEPP provides that the development is declared to be a State Significant Development for the purposes of the EP&A Act if:

- the development on the land concerned is, by the operation of an environmental planning instrument, not permissible without Development Consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act (first criterion); and
- the development is specified in Schedule 1 or 2 (second criterion).

With respect to the first criterion identified above, the Project may be carried out only with Development Consent under Part 4 of the EP&A Act, pursuant to clause 7 of the Mining SEPP (described further below).

In regard to the second criterion identified above, development for the purpose of mining coal, is specified in Schedule 1, Item 5 as being State Significant Development.

The Project is a development for the purpose of coal. Therefore, the development would be a State Significant Development.

Development Consent will be sought from the NSW Minister for Planning or the Independent Planning Commission (IPC).

### 4.2 PERMISSIBILITY

Section 4.38 of the EP&A Act provides that development consent may not be granted under Division 4.7 of Part 4 if the development is wholly prohibited by an environmental planning instrument, but may be granted despite the development being partly prohibited by an environmental planning instrument.

The Project provisional Development Application Area is located wholly within the Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area and is covered by the Mid-Western Regional Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Mid-Western Regional LEP).

Clause 2.3(2) of the Mid-Western Regional LEP relevantly provides:

*The consent authority must have regard to the objectives for development in a zone when determining a development application in respect of land within the zone.*

The provisional Development Application Area includes land zoned under the Mid-Western Regional LEP as:

- Zone RU1 (Primary Production); and
- Zone E3 (Environmental Management).

Open cut mining is permitted with consent under the Mid-Western Regional LEP in Zones RU1 and E3.

The Project is permissible land use under NSW legislation and the EIS will include consideration of the potential impacts of the Project on other existing, approved or likely preferred land uses in the vicinity of the Project.

#### 4.2.1 Planning Provisions

##### ***State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007***

The EIS will include detailed consideration of the aims of Part 1 of the Mining SEPP and the matters for consideration in Part 3 of the Mining SEPP based on the Project description and findings of the key environmental impact assessment studies.

Clause 50A(2) of the EP&A Regulation and Part 4AA of the Mining SEPP require that for any proposed mining areas where a new mining lease is required, the Development Application for the Project must be accompanied by either a current Gateway Certificate or a Site Verification Certificate (SVC) (that certifies that the land on which the proposed development is to be carried out is not Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land [BSAL]).

MCO lodged an application for an SVC with DPIE on 28 October 2021. Consistent with this application, it is anticipated that DPIE will issue an SVC for the mining lease application area certifying that the land within the SVC application area is not BSAL.

A preliminary review of the Project against the Mining SEPP did not identify any matters that could prevent the Project from proceeding.

##### ***Other State Environmental Planning Policies***

In addition to the Mining SEPP, the following SEPPs may potentially be relevant to the Project:

- State and Regional Development SEPP;
- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*;
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 33 (Hazardous and Offensive Development)* (SEPP 33);
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 44 – Koala Habitat Protection*; and
- *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 – (Remediation of Land)* (SEPP 55).

Relevant provisions and objectives of the above SEPPs will be considered in the preparation of the EIS.

#### 4.2.2 Planning Strategies

The following strategic planning documents will be considered in preparation of the EIS:

- *Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW* (NSW Government, 2020);
- *NSW Climate Change Policy Framework* (Office of Environmental and Heritage [OEHL], 2016);
- *Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036* (NSW Government, 2017a);
- Upper Hunter SRLUP (NSW Government, 2012a) (recommended for review in the 'Hunter Regional Plan 2036' [NSW Government, 2016]);
- *Central Tablelands Local Strategic Plan 2016 – 2021* (Central Tablelands Local Lands Services, 2016);
- *Mid-Western Region Community Plan Towards 2030* (Mid-Western Regional Council, n.d.);
- *Mid-Western Regional Local Strategic Planning Statement – Our Place 2040* (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2020); and
- *Developments adjacent to National Parks and Wildlife Service lands: Guidelines for consent and planning authorities* (NPWS, 2020).

#### 4.3 OTHER APPROVALS

##### 4.3.1 Mining Act 1992

MCO will lodge Mining Lease applications separately with the Division of Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG) (within the Department of Regional NSW) for the Project.

Mining activities for the Project would also be partly located within mining leases obtained in support of the approved Moolarben Coal Complex (e.g. ML 1691).

Under the NSW *Mining Act 1992* (Mining Act), environmental protection and rehabilitation are regulated by conditions included in all mining leases, including requirements for the submission of a Rehabilitation Management Plan and Annual Reviews.

Under section 4.42(1)(c) of the EP&A Act, if the Project is approved as State Significant Development, the grant of one or more mining leases under the Mining Act cannot be refused if those leases are necessary for the carrying out of the approved Project and are to be substantially consistent with the development consent issued for the Project.

#### **4.3.2 Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997**

The NSW *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (PoEO Act) and the NSW *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2009* set out the general obligations for environmental regulation in NSW.

The approved Moolarben Coal Complex currently operates under Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) 12932, granted under the PoEO Act for the scheduled activities of coal works (>5 Mtpa), extractive activities (>0.5 to 2 Mtpa) and mining for coal (>5 Mtpa). EPL 12932 contains conditions that relate to emission and discharge limits, operational shutdown requirements under specific combinations of environmental conditions, environmental monitoring and reporting.

If approved, the Project would require an EPL under the PoEO Act.

#### **4.3.3 Roads Act 1993**

Moolarben Road is closed for public access across the existing OC3 and Project areas. There are no other public roads within the Project area and therefore no works on the public road network are required.

Site access is via the existing Stage 1 access. No road upgrades to the existing site access are required for the Project and therefore no approvals under the NSW *Roads Act 1993* are expected.

#### **4.3.4 Water Management Act 2000**

Under section 4.41(1)(g) of the EP&A Act, if the Project is approved as State Significant Development, water use approvals under section 89, water management work approvals under section 90, or activity approvals (excluding aquifer interference approvals) under section 91 of the WM Act would not be required for the Project.

The EIS will include consideration of the Project against the water management principles and access licence dealing principles under the WM Act. The EIS will also identify water access licences required for each water source associated with the Project.

#### **4.3.5 Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999**

The Project will be referred to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment for consideration as to whether the incremental development associated with the Project constitute a 'Controlled Action' and require approval under the EPBC Act.

If the Project is assessed under the assessment bilateral agreement with the NSW Government for impacts on water resources, the NSW and Commonwealth Governments may jointly obtain the advice of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development on the Project (IESC).

#### **4.4 PRE-CONDITIONS TO EXERCISING THE POWER TO GRANT CONSENT**

Relevant pre-conditions to the consent authority exercising its power to grant consent are presented in Attachment D.

#### **4.5 MANDATORY MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Matters that the consent authority is required to consider in deciding whether to grant approval for the Project are presented in Attachment D.

## 5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 5.1 ENGAGEMENT DURING PROJECT SCOPING

MCO engages regularly with the community through the following mechanisms:

- a dedicated website (<http://www.moolarbencoal.com.au/>);
- Moolarben Coal Complex Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meetings (with meeting minutes provided on the MCO website and emailed direct to interested stakeholders);
- maintenance of a community hotline; and
- community newsletters.

Consultation to date in relation to the Project which has assisted to inform the preparation of this Scoping Report has included:

- Project briefings for the Moolarben Coal Complex CCC at quarterly meetings on 9 March, 8 June and 7 September 2021.
- A general Project scoping meeting with representatives of DPIE on 23 June 2021.
- Project briefing with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) on 2 June 2021.
- A Conceptual Project Development Plan meeting with representatives of MEG (within the Department of Regional NSW) on 6 October 2021.
- Project briefing for the Mid-Western Regional Council on 28 May and 25 November 2021.
- Consultation with the Ulan Mine Complex and the Wilpinjong Coal Mine.
- Project briefing letters to various service providers and State Government agencies including NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Ambulance, NSW Police, NSW Health and NPWS in June 2021.

A social impact assessment scoping meeting will also be undertaken with relevant representatives of DPIE to inform the scope of the Social Impact Assessment for the EIS.

In addition to the general Project consultation outlined above, CDM Smith also conducted Social Impact Assessment (SIA) scoping stage engagement in June and July 2021.

CDM Smith engaged with a range of stakeholders to ascertain views on existing cumulative and potential incremental Project social impacts and benefits, including (Attachment C):

- the Moolarben Coal Complex CCC members;
- Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC);
- Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG);
- NSW Police Force;
- NPWS;
- NSW Rural Fire Service;
- NSW Department of Education;
- Mid-Western Regional Council; and
- nearby residents and landholders, including Cooks Gap and Cooyal.

Potential Project incremental impacts, including potential cumulative impacts with other mining developments, will be investigated in the Project EIS specialist studies.

### 5.2 COMMUNITY VIEWS

Key views raised in Project engagement to date include:

- socio-economic benefits of the approved Moolarben Coal Complex, including employment, expenditure within the local region (contractors and materials), community contributions and indirect benefits such as workforce use of local businesses;
- reduction in visual impacts from the Moolarben Coal Complex due to rehabilitation works undertaken to date and extension of existing progressive rehabilitation works for the Project;
- extension of socio-economic benefits of the approved Moolarben Coal Complex as a result of extension of operations due to the Project;
- acknowledgment that while there may be amenity impacts (e.g. noise, dust and visual) to landholders in Cooks Gap, the Project is unlikely to increase (or may decrease) these impacts as mining progresses south;
- potential for noise, dust and visual (lighting) amenity impacts to be experienced by landholders in Cooyal as mining progresses south;
- potential impacts to groundwater and surface water resources;

- potential for reduction in traffic safety on rural roads;
- potential impacts to biodiversity values;
- greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Project;
- potential cumulative impacts with other mining and infrastructure projects in the region (e.g. cumulative impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage, groundwater and surface water); and
- uncertainty around the marketability of properties and businesses for landowners located in close proximity to the Project.

### 5.3 PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

A community and stakeholder engagement program has been developed for the Project that will support both the EIS and SIA processes in accordance with the *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021b). Key objectives of this program are to:

- engage with Project stakeholders, including the existing workforce, about the progress and nature of the Project;
- recognise and respond to local interests or concerns regarding the Project; and
- continue the ongoing dialogue between MCO and local community and landholders.

The issues raised and outcomes of the community and stakeholder engagement program will be reported in the EIS and SIA.

The engagement program will include, but not be limited to, the following government agencies and authorities:

- DPIE;
- DAWE;
- NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA);
- Mid-Western Regional Council;
- Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (within DPIE);
- MEG (within Department of Regional NSW)
- NSW Resources Regulator;
- DPIE – Water;

- DPIE – Crown Lands;
- NSW Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR);
- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) (including DPI Agriculture and DPI Fisheries);
- NSW Health;
- Transport for NSW (including Roads and Maritime Services);
- Heritage NSW (within the Department of Premier and Cabinet);
- NPWS;
- NSW Police;
- NSW Ambulance;
- NSW Rural Fire Service; and
- Central Tablelands Local Land Services.

The stakeholder engagement program also recognises other key stakeholders including:

- Mudgee and surrounding smaller communities/localities such as Ulan, Cooks Gap, Cooyal and Gulgong (Attachment B);
- the Aboriginal community;
- other industries and businesses in the area, including agricultural enterprises, retail and hospitality businesses and mining-related support services;
- neighbouring mining operations (Ulan Coal Mine and Wilpinjong Coal Mine);
- local, State and Federal elected representatives;
- local community and landholders;
- infrastructure owners (e.g. TransGrid, Telstra);
- industry groups (e.g. Mudgee Chamber of Commerce);
- potential downstream infrastructure providers (e.g. Australian Rail Track Corporation, Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group, Port Waratah Coal Services); and
- environment and community groups (e.g. MDEG, Mudgee LALC).

The EIS engagement program will include the use of a variety of consultation mechanisms, such as:

- public availability of key documents (e.g. this request for SEARs and the EIS);
- existing Moolarben Coal Complex community information mechanisms;
- consultation with the Aboriginal community in accordance with the requirements of the *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010* (Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water [DECCW], 2010a); and
- meetings with government agencies and other stakeholders.

#### **5.4 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The EIS will be supported by a SIA prepared in accordance with the SIA Guideline (DPIE, 2021d).

Attachment B provides a SIA Scoping Report prepared by CDM Smith in consideration of the SIA Guideline. The SIA Scoping Report:

- identifies the Project's area of social influence, including stakeholders that may be affected by the Project;
- establishes a social baseline; and
- identifies potential social impacts needing further investigation in the SIA and assigns a proportionate level of assessment.

## 6 PROPOSED ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

### 6.1 OVERVIEW

DPIE has published a draft Scoping Worksheet that includes a generic checklist of matters to assist proponents to:

- consider all matters;
- filter out any matters that are not relevant to the project; and
- inform the likely level of assessment required in the EIS.

The Scoping Worksheet has been reviewed to identify the key potential environmental issues associated with the construction and operation of the Project. Key potential environmental issues are those environmental aspects that will require Project-specific assessment to assess the potential impacts and develop measures to avoid, mitigate and/or monitor the potential impacts of the Project.

The proposed level and scope of assessments have been identified (Table 3 and Attachment C) to assist DPIE with issuing of the SEARs for the Project under clause 3 of Schedule 2 of the EP&A Regulation.

The proposed level and scope of assessments were determined based upon:

- understanding of the strategic and statutory context (Sections 2 and 4);
- the details of the Project (Section 3);
- feedback from stakeholder consultation undertaken to date (Section 5);
- baseline environmental data; and
- experience from previous environmental management and approvals processes at the Moolarben Coal Complex.

### 6.2 KEY MATTERS REQUIRING FURTHER ASSESSMENT IN THE EIS

The key matters identified as requiring further assessment in the EIS for the Project are provided in Table 3, including a preliminary list of study requirements to address these matters.

Suitably qualified and experienced specialists will be commissioned to conduct the studies outlined in Table 3, and independent peer review will be conducted for select key studies in consideration of the '*Peer Review – Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Series*' (NSW Government, 2017b) (or its latest version).

In addition to consideration of the key matters, potential impacts on the following other environmental aspects will also be addressed as a component of the EIS:

- greenhouse gas emissions;
- potential impacts on aquatic ecology;
- potential odour emissions;
- management of bushfire risk; and
- preliminary hazard analysis in accordance with SEPP 33.

Assessment of the key potential environmental issues and the other potential impacts identified above will include consideration of:

- the existing environment, using baseline data gathered over the life of the Moolarben Coal Complex and neighbouring operations, or specifically for the Project as appropriate;
- potential impacts of all stages of the Project including relevant cumulative impacts (refer to Section 2.3 and Attachment C);
- measures that could be implemented to avoid, mitigate, rehabilitate/remediate, monitor and/or offset the potential impacts of the Project; and
- contingency plans and/or adaptive management for managing any potentially significant residual risks to the environment.

Assessments for the EIS will consider applicable policies, guidelines and plans listed on DPIE's website (<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/policies-and-guidelines>).

**Table 3**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Access	Road and rail facilities Traffic and Parking	<p><b>Standard</b> Road Transport Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of changes in traffic volumes on the surrounding road network – in accordance with the <i>Guide to Traffic Generating Developments</i> (Roads and Traffic Authority, 2002).</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> on the road network resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate and/or monitor the potential incremental impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders concerned about potential impacts on the road or rail network.</p>	<p><b>Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No direct interaction with public roads.</li> <li>No increase in the assessed peak workforce and associated traffic movements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Consideration of Approved Moolarben Coal Complex (Stage 1 and Stage 2)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of existing site access roads at the Moolarben Coal Complex.</li> <li>Implementation of the <i>Ulan Road Strategy</i>.</li> </ul>
Air	Particulate matter Gases	<p><b>Detailed</b> Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modelling and assessment of potential air quality impacts as a result of Project activities – in accordance with the <i>Approved Methods for the Modelling and Assessment of Air Pollutants in New South Wales</i> (EPA, 2016).</li> <li>Estimation of greenhouse gas emissions and consideration of relevant Government policy.</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate and/or monitor the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders concerned about potential particulate matter and dust deposition impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of feasible and reasonable mitigation measures on-site to minimise particulate matter generation during construction activities and mining operations, including proactively modifying mining operations in response to adverse meteorological conditions.</li> <li>Minimisation of active disturbance areas and progressive rehabilitation of disturbed areas.</li> <li>Use of the existing Moolarben Coal Complex CHPP.</li> <li>Use of and extension to the existing air quality monitoring network to maintain compliance with air quality criteria.</li> <li>Application of the <i>Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy for State Significant Mining, Petroleum and Extractive Industry Developments</i> (NSW Government, 2018a).</li> </ul>

**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Amenity	Noise	<p><b>Detailed</b> Noise and Blasting Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modelling and assessment of potential noise impacts as a result of construction activities and mining operations, including road and rail traffic – in accordance with relevant guidelines, including the <i>Noise Policy for Industry</i> (EPA, 2017), <i>NSW Road Noise Policy</i> (DECCW, 2011), <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> (Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2009) and <i>Rail Infrastructure Noise Guideline</i> (EPA, 2013).</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate and/or monitor the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders concerned about potential impacts on acoustic amenity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of feasible and reasonable mitigation measures on-site to minimise noise generation during construction activities and mining operations, including proactively modifying mining operations in response to adverse meteorological conditions.</li> <li>Use of the existing Moolarben Coal Complex CHPP.</li> <li>Use of and extension to the existing noise monitoring network to maintain compliance with noise criteria.</li> <li>Application of the <i>Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy for State Significant Mining, Petroleum and Extractive Industry Developments</i> (NSW Government, 2018a).</li> </ul>
	Vibration	<p><b>Detailed</b> Noise and Blasting Assessment to include assessment of potential vibration and overpressure impacts as a result of blasting conducted for the Project.</p> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders and infrastructure owners concerned about potential blasting impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of blast monitoring procedures to maintain compliance with blast criteria.</li> </ul>
	Visual	<p><b>Standard</b> Visual Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simulation of landscape and visual impacts (if any) as a result of mining operations, particularly from publicly accessible viewpoints.</li> <li>Visibility of mining extensions to be confirmed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders concerned about potential visual impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mining extensions unlikely to be visible from private or publicly accessible viewpoints.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Biodiversity	Terrestrial flora and fauna	<p><b>Detailed</b> Biodiversity Development Assessment Report prepared in accordance with the <i>Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020</i> (DPIE, 2020), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential impacts on any terrestrial and aquatic species, populations, ecological communities or their habitats, including consideration of aquatic ecology, groundwater and surface water assessments.</li> <li>Identification of measures that would be implemented to maintain or improve the biodiversity values of the surrounding region in the medium to long-term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of vegetation disturbance within threatened bat habitat within the Project area.</li> <li>Consideration of environmental assessment outcomes during detailed mine planning, including minimisation of vegetation disturbance - particularly areas with higher ecological values.</li> <li>Implementation of surface disturbance protocols, including pre-clearance surveys, and weed and feral animal control measures.</li> <li>Implementation of offset and compensatory measures in accordance with relevant NSW and Commonwealth Government policies.</li> </ul>
	Aquatic flora and fauna	<p><b>Detailed</b> Aquatic Ecology Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential impacts on aquatic species, populations, ecological communities or their habitats, including consideration of groundwater and surface water assessments.</li> <li>Identification of measures that would be implemented to maintain or improve the aquatic ecology values of the surrounding region in the medium to long-term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of open cut mining within 200 m of Moolarben and Murdering Creeks.</li> <li>Implementation of stream health monitoring and water quality management measures.</li> <li>Implementation of a water management strategy.</li> </ul>
Built Environment	Public infrastructure	<p><b>Standard</b> Road Transport Assessment, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of changes in traffic volumes on the surrounding road network – in accordance with the <i>Guide to Traffic Generating Developments</i> (Roads and Traffic Authority, 2002).</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> on the road network resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with Mid-western Regional Council and other stakeholders regarding potential road transport impacts on the local road network.</p> <p><b>Detailed</b> Noise and Blasting Assessment to include assessment of potential vibration and overpressure impacts as a result of blasting conducted for the Project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of existing site access roads at the Moolarben Coal Complex.</li> <li>Implementation of the Ulan Road Strategy.</li> <li>Implementation of blast monitoring procedures to maintain compliance with blast criteria.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Economic	Natural resource use Livelihood Opportunity cost	<p><b>Detailed</b> Economic Assessment prepared in accordance with the <i>Guidelines for the economic assessment of mining and coal seam gas proposals</i> (NSW Government, 2015) and <i>Technical Notes supporting the Guidelines for the Economic Assessment of Mining and Coal Seam Gas Proposals</i> (NSW Government, 2018b), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic assessment of potential impacts on the regional and NSW economy and a cost-benefit analysis.</li> <li>Project justification, including consideration of alternatives, principles of ecologically sustainable development and the objects of the EP&amp;A Act.</li> <li>Consideration of the significance of the coal resource.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with other industries and businesses in the area, including the agriculture industry, retail and hospitality businesses and mining-related support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of strategies to maximise local employment and support local businesses.</li> </ul>
Hazards and risks	Bushfires	<p><b>Standard</b> assessment of potential bushfire risk.</p> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with local NSW Rural Fire Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of bushfire management and mitigation measures to minimise bushfire risk to and from Project infrastructure.</li> <li>Undertake a preliminary hazard analysis in accordance with SEPP 33.</li> </ul>
	Flooding	<p><b>Detailed</b> flood impact assessment to be completed as part of the Surface Water Assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of environmental assessment outcomes during detailed Project design work to minimise flood risks.</li> <li>Establishment of flood levies/bund(s), if required.</li> <li>Undertake a preliminary hazard analysis in accordance with SEPP 33.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Hazards and risks (continued)	Land contamination	<p><b>Detailed</b> Land Contamination Assessment prepared in accordance with <i>State Environmental Protection Policy No 55 – Remediation of Land</i> (SEPP 55), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential for contaminated land within the study area and identification of contaminated sites.</li> <li>Investigation of required remediation works to be undertaken prior to the commencement of the Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any contaminated soil as a result of the development to be remediated in accordance with relevant guidelines.</li> <li>Rainfall run-off from Project disturbance areas would be managed to prevent contamination of downstream water sources from sediment laden water.</li> <li>Activities with the potential to cause contamination would be segregated from areas containing stockpiled soils with the potential for rehabilitation.</li> <li>Potential contaminants would be stored in appropriate locations and training would be provided to staff on how to manage spills and leaks.</li> </ul>
Heritage	Aboriginal	<p><b>Detailed</b> Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment prepared in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010</i> (DECCW, 2010a), <i>Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales</i> (DECCW, 2010b), and <i>Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW</i> (OEH, 2011) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of impacts on items of Aboriginal cultural heritage and Aboriginal cultural values.</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and other known or potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate, monitor and manage the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with interested Aboriginal parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of environmental assessment outcomes during detailed Project design work (e.g. locations of Aboriginal heritage sites).</li> <li>Involvement of the Aboriginal stakeholders during the assessment and operational phases.</li> <li>Implementation of Ground Disturbance Permit process.</li> <li>Implementation of management measures to mitigate and monitor potential impacts on Aboriginal heritage.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Heritage (continued)	Historic	<p><b>Detailed</b> Historic Heritage Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential impacts on non-Aboriginal cultural heritage and landscapes.</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and other known or potential impacts on cultural heritage and landscapes.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate, monitor and manage the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with interested stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of environmental assessment outcomes during detailed Project design work (e.g. locations of historic heritage sites).</li> <li>Management of historic heritage sites in accordance with a Heritage Management Plan.</li> </ul>
Land	Land Capability Soil Chemistry	<p><b>Detailed</b> Land and Soil Capability Assessment prepared in accordance with the <i>Interim Protocol for Site Verification and Mapping of Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land</i> (NSW Government, 2013), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delineation of soil landscape units present in the study area using laboratory testing of soil characteristics where required.</li> <li>Identification of Land and Soil Capability classes in the study area.</li> </ul> <p><b>Detailed</b> Agriculture Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential impacts to agricultural enterprises and industry as a result of the Project, including consideration of water availability, change in land use and socio-economic effects.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate, monitor and manage the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Detailed</b> Geochemistry and Spontaneous Combustion Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of geochemistry of overburden, interburden, coal and coal reject material within the study area.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate, monitor and manage the potential impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stripping and salvaging topsoil to maximise its values for re-use in rehabilitation, as determined by soil mapping and suitable soil stripping depths.</li> <li>Managing topsoil stockpiles to maintain seed reserves and microbial soil associations.</li> <li>Suitable areas in the final landform would be rehabilitation to a standard suitable for agricultural (or industrial) post-mining land use (including potential intensive land use areas).</li> <li>Potential agriculturally intensive land use areas would be identified based on proximity to nearby supporting infrastructure and/or water storage facilities.</li> <li>Geochemical testing to identify if any changes to existing waste management practices are required.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Social	Way of Life Community Accessibility Culture Surroundings Livelihoods	<p><b>Detailed</b> Social Impact Assessment prepared in accordance with the SIA Guideline (DPIE, 2021d), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate and/or monitor the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with relevant stakeholders as outlined in the SIA scoping report (Attachment B).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of strategies to increase local employment and support of local businesses.</li> <li>Community contributions by MCO.</li> <li>MCO would undertake negotiations with the Mid-Western Regional Council regarding any amended Planning Agreement for the Project.</li> </ul>
	Health and Wellbeing	<p><b>Detailed</b> Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment.</p> <p><b>Detailed</b> Noise and Blasting Assessment.</p> <p><b>Detailed</b> Social Impact Assessment.</p> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders concerned about potential impacts to health and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of feasible and reasonable mitigation measures on-site to minimise dust emissions and noise generation during construction activities and mining operations.</li> <li>Use of and extension to the existing noise and air quality monitoring network to maintain compliance with criteria.</li> </ul>

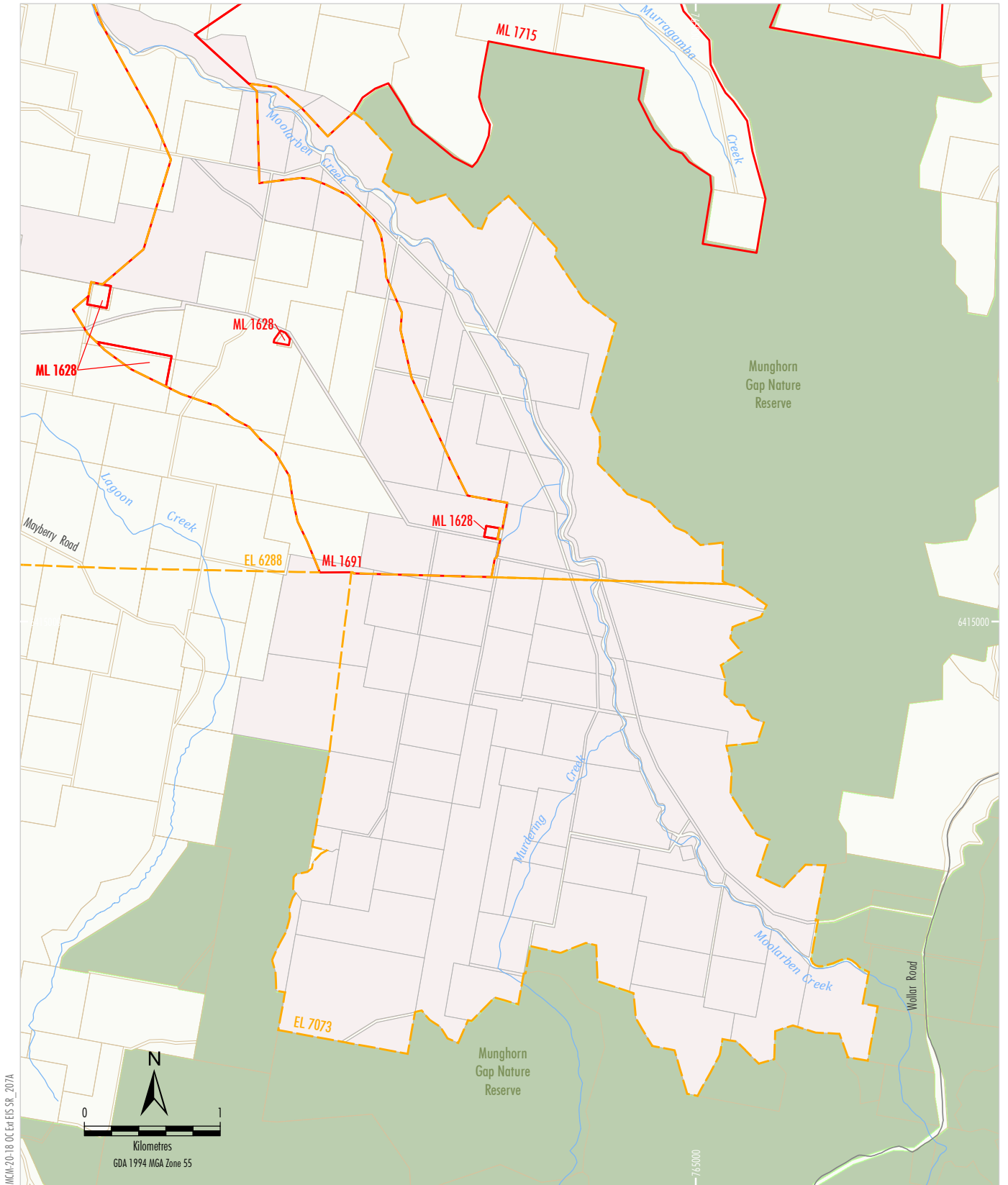
**Table 3 (Continued)**  
**Key Matters Requiring Further Assessment in the EIS**

Environmental/Social Matter		Proposed Level and Scope of Assessment	Preliminary Strategies to Address Potential Impacts (to be refined during detailed impact assessment)
Water	Water quality Water availability Hydrology	<p><b>Detailed</b> Groundwater Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the impacts of the Project on the quantity and quality of the region's water resources, connectivity between water sources, water-dependent assets and water-related infrastructure.</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines in accordance with the <i>NSW Aquifer Interference Policy</i> (NSW Government, 2012b) and relevant water sharing plans under the WM Act.</li> <li>Numerical groundwater modelling in accordance with the <i>Australian groundwater modelling guidelines</i> (Barnett et al., 2012).</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate, remediate, monitor and/or offset the potential impacts of the Project.</li> <li>Expert peer review of the groundwater assessment in accordance with the IESC Information Guidelines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Detailed</b> Surface Water Assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the impacts of the Project on the quantity and quality of the region's water resources, connectivity between water sources, water-dependent assets and water-related infrastructure.</li> <li>Assessment of potential <b>cumulative impacts</b> resulting from the Project, Moolarben Coal Complex and nearby developments and mines in accordance with the relevant water sharing plans under the WM Act.</li> <li>Detailed site water balance for the Project, incorporating development of a water management strategy for the life of the Project.</li> <li>Investigation of measures to avoid, mitigate, remediate, monitor and/or offset the potential impacts of the Project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focused engagement</b> with the local community and landholders concerned about potential impacts on water availability and water quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of open cut mining within 200 m of Moolarben and Murdering Creeks.</li> <li>Implementation of management measures to mitigate, monitor, remediate, manage and offset potential impacts on water resources.</li> <li>Use of and extension to the existing groundwater and surface water monitoring networks.</li> <li>Water management strategy for the Project based on regular reviews of the site water balance.</li> <li>Erosion and sediment control during construction and operation.</li> <li>Appropriate licensing in accordance with the legislative requirements of the WM Act.</li> <li>Mitigation or other contingency measures (including 'make good' measures such as compensatory water supply)c in the event that private groundwater users or surface water uses are adversely affected by the Project.</li> <li>Management of controlled water discharges in accordance with an Environment Protection Licence.</li> </ul>

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**ATTACHMENT A**  
**PROVISIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION AREA AND**  
**PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF LANDS**



MCM-20-18 OC-EIS SR\_207A

**LEGEND**

- National Parks/Nature Reserves
- Exploration Licence Boundary
- Mining Lease Boundary
- Provisional Development Application Area
- Cadastral Boundary

Source: MCO (2021); NSW Spatial Services (2021)



**MOOLARBEN COAL COMPLEX**  
 Lots within the Site Verification Certificate  
 Application Area

**Figure A-1**

**Table A-1  
Preliminary Schedule of Lands**

Tenure Type	Lot	Deposited Plan (DP)	Lot Owner/Description
Freehold	1	575167	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	1	1246895	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	2	575167	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	2	1246895	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	3	575167	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	4	575167	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	6	115031	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	10	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	11	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	16	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	17	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	18	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	21	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	22	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	50	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	51	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	52	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	58	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	59	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	63	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	64	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	65	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	66	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	67	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	68	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	69	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	70	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	74	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	76	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	77	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	78	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	79	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	88	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	97	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	99	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	100	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	101	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	102	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	103	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	104	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	105	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	107	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	108	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	110	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	116	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	118	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	141	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd

**Table A-1 (Continued)**  
**Preliminary Schedule of Lands**

Tenure Type	Lot	Deposited Plan (DP)	Lot Owner/Description
Freehold	142	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	143	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	144	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	146	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	150	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Crown	152	755442	Crown Land
Freehold	153	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	154	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	157	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	162	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	172	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	173	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	183	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	205	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	207	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	208	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	209	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	218	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	223	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	238	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Crown	239	755442	Crown Land
Freehold	247	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	248	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	250	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	264	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Crown	266	755442	Crown Land
Freehold	267	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	269	755442	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Freehold	289	704098	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
Crown	290	704098	Crown Land

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**  
**SCOPING REPORT**

Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd

# **Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project SIA Scoping Report**

24 November 2021

## Document status

Revision	Date issued	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date approved	Revision type
Rev 0	13/08/21	J Lette	J Nicholls	13/08/21	Draft
Rev 1	14/10/21	J Nicholls	J Nicholls	14/10/21	Draft
Rev 2	01/11/21	J Nicholls	J Nicholls	01/11/21	Draft
Rev 3	23/11/21	J Lette	J Nicholls	23/11/21	Draft

## Distribution of copies

Version	Date issued	Quantity	Electronic	Issued to
Rev 0	13/08/21	1	1	J. Steele
Rev 1	14/10/21	1	1	P. Goldberg
Rev 2	01/11/21	1	1	P. Goldberg
Rev 3	23/11/21	1	1	P. Goldberg

<b>Last Saved:</b>	2 December 2021
<b>File Name:</b>	1001047_CDMSmith_Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project SIA Scoping Report_23112021
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<b>Client:</b>	Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd
<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>1001047_Rpt_CDMSmith_Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project SIA Scoping Report_01112021 (RES01110379) MCO MD MM</b>
<b>Document Version:</b>	Rev 3
<b>Project Number:</b>	1000972

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Moolarben Coal Complex (MCC) is located approximately 40 kilometres (km) north of Mudgee in the Western Coalfields of New South Wales (NSW). The MCC is operated by Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd (MCO), on behalf of the Moolarben Joint Venture (Moolarben Coal Mines Pty Ltd [MCM], Yancoal Moolarben Pty Ltd [YM] and a consortium of Korean power companies). MCO, MCM and YM are wholly owned subsidiaries of Yancoal Australia Ltd.

MCO is proposing an extension of its existing operations at the MCC (the Project) through a development application under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (EP&A Act). The Project would include the development of supporting infrastructure and the use and augmentation of existing surface facilities at the MCC.

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Scoping Report has been prepared to support a request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements for the proposed Project. This SIA Scoping Report contains a preliminary analysis of potential Project social impacts and has been prepared in accordance with the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline For State Significant Projects* (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2021a).

### Social Locality

This SIA Scoping Report has identified three components that make up the **Social Locality** (geographic areas associated with stakeholder groups who may experience impacts) for the SIA, including:

- The *Local Vicinity* – an area within an approximately 10 km radius of the Project, which would generally align with potential social impacts related to amenity changes (such as noise, dust and visual amenity), as well as potential changes to sense of place, community composition and service delivery (some of which may also be experienced in the nearby centres of Gulgong and Mudgee).
- The *Mid-Western LGA* – surrounds the Project and houses where many of the workers would be retained for the Project. It would also provide many of the services and products required to support the Project and would likely benefit from a range of positive social impacts, such as ongoing employment, Council revenue, community contributions, and economic activity and diversity.
- *Wiradjuri Country* – the traditional nation of the Wiradjuri people within which the Project is located. This geographic area aligns with the Local Aboriginal Community stakeholder group and, as well as the site-specific scale, may be the scale at which Aboriginal people would prefer to engage.

### Social Baseline

Research was then undertaken to gain an understanding of the characteristics of the communities in the Social Locality (the social baseline). Following analysis of demographic trends in the Project's Social Locality, the key social, cultural and demographic trends include:

- **Mining is a large employer:** Mining is an important industry, with 15.0% of workers in the Mid-Western Local Government Area (LGA) employed in mining in 2016 (and slightly higher proportions in Mudgee, Gulgong and the Local Vicinity).
- **Low population growth:** Between 2020-2041, the population of the Mid-Western LGA is expected to increase by 2,552 people (around 10%).
- **More transient communities:** Mid-Western LGA had a slightly more transient population compared to NSW. This transiency suggests people moving into and out of the LGA for work opportunities. This could hold implications on the social fabric of the region and its sense of place.
- **Affordable housing:** Housing is more affordable in the Mid-Western LGA than NSW as a whole, with lower mortgage repayments and lower rents within the Mid-Western LGA. The LGA also has higher rates of home ownership and lower rates of home rental.

## Engagement to Support Scoping of the Social Impact Assessment

This SIA Scoping Report has drawn on engagement activities with stakeholders in the Social Locality to identify potential social impacts. It is noted some stakeholders were involved in multiple groups – for example, both as landholders and Community Consultative Committee (CCC) members. The engagement involved:

- 13 landholders from Cooks Gap, Cooyal, and Stoney Creek.
- Eight people representing the CCC members, including the Chair, one Mudgee Aboriginal Land Council delegate, two Mid-Western Regional Council delegates and four community representatives (one landholder).
- Nine representatives of organisations and agencies, including:
  - Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)
  - Mid-Western Regional Council, including two Councillors and one Council officer
  - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
  - Emergency services: NSW Police Mudgee, NSW Rural Fire Service, and NSW Department of Education
  - Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG).

## Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Key considerations in the initial assessment of potential social impacts of the Project included:

- The Project is largely situated within previously cleared land historically used for agriculture activities, including grazing.
- Moolarben owns all freehold land associated with the Project.
- No significant changes to existing surface infrastructure are anticipated.
- Mining in the proposed extension would progress within the valley surrounding Moolarben Creek, moving further away from private landholders west of the MCC in Cooks Gap.
- Mining activities would occur closer to the suburb of Cooyal, however the distance to the nearest private property would be greater than 2 km and there is significant intervening topography associated with the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve (elevation difference greater than 100 metres [m]).
- The Project would not change the approved mine life of the Moolarben Coal Complex of 31 December 2038.
- The Project would result in continued employment of the existing Stage 1 open cut workforce (a subset of the approved MCC workforce of 740 personnel) until 2036, which would otherwise be likely to decline from 2026 when mining activities are expected to be completed in the Stage 1 open cut mining areas (OC1, OC2 and OC3).
- The Project would involve no change to existing total coal production rates at the MCC.

In consideration of the above, the SIA Scoping Report has identified a range of potential issues that will be considered further in an SIA to be prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Statement in support of a development application for the Project. This includes:

- Within the context that there is no proposed increase to the existing mine life/workforce, identification of the influence of the Project on population levels/stability and the impact this has on social connections, community identity and service provision (social infrastructure).
- Further analysis of economic and employment conditions and whether there are any local labour market shortages that would be exacerbated by the Project.
- Further consultation to identify community attitudes to mining and the Project and assessment of the potential for changes to community cohesion, community identity and sense of place.

- Potential for nearby residents and businesses to experience stress and anxiety, including actual and perceived issues, such as uncertainty, lack of influence, amenity, and impacts to health and property values/saleability.
- Further consultation to identify the level of concern regarding the Project's contribution to climate change and any potential impacts to the enjoyment of nearby rural residential and natural areas.
- Identification of "vulnerable" / "marginalised" stakeholders and opportunities for improved training and employment for some of these stakeholders.
- Identification of opportunities for improved local community and business benefits, such as through local contracting arrangements, recruitment practices and/or further targeting of community contributions.
- Consideration of further opportunities to streamline communications and complaints processes for the Project if practicable.

This SIA Scoping Report has also identified the requirement for **other technical studies** to inform the SIA in relation to the extent of any amenity impacts for local residents and businesses, the extent of any impacts to water access and availability, and implications of the Project for Aboriginal People, including physical Aboriginal cultural heritage sites within the Project area, as well as connection to the broader area.

### Remaining Social Impact Assessment Tasks

The following steps are anticipated for the next phase of the SIA:

- Further develop the social baseline, including reviewing and confirming the Social Locality.
- Undertake SIA stakeholder engagement, including a gap analysis to identify any relevant outstanding stakeholders that have not been engaged for the Project thus far.
- Consider potential refinements to the Project in response to likely social impacts.
- Refine prediction and analysis of social impacts and evaluate the significance of impacts, including consideration of the findings of relevant technical studies for the EIS.
- Identify management measures and evaluate the significance of residual impacts.
- Develop a management and monitoring framework.
- Develop SIA report for the EIS.

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## Acronyms

Abbreviation	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CCC	Community Consultative Committee
CHPP	Coal Handling and Preparation Plant
DP&E	New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
Ha	<u>Hectares</u>
IRSD	<u>Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage</u>
Km	Kilometres
Km <sup>2</sup>	Square kilometres
LGA	Local Government Area
MCC	Moolarben Coal Complex
MCO	Moolarben Coal Operations
MIA	Mining Infrastructure Area
Mtpa	Million tonnes per annum
MW	Megawatt
NSW	New South Wales
PV	Photovoltaic
ROM	Run-of-mine
SA1	Statistical Area Level 1
SA2	Statistical Area Level 2
SSC	State Suburb Code
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Index for Areas
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
VPA	Voluntary Planning Agreement

# Section 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this Document

The Moolarben Coal Complex (MCC) is located approximately 40 kilometres (km) north of Mudgee in the Western Coalfields of New South Wales (NSW) (Figure 1-1). The MCC is operated by Moolarben Coal Operations Pty Ltd (MCO), on behalf of the Moolarben Joint Venture (Moolarben Coal Mines Pty Ltd [MCM], Yancoal Moolarben Pty Ltd [YM], and a consortium of Korean power companies). MCO, MCM and YM are wholly owned subsidiaries of Yancoal Australia Ltd (Yancoal).

MCO is proposing an extension of its existing operations at the MCC (the Project) through a Development Application under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (EP&A Act). The Project would include the development of supporting infrastructure.

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is required to be incorporated into the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project. This SIA Scoping Report has been prepared for the Project in accordance with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's (DPIE's) *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* (the SIA Guideline) (NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2021c).

Further information regarding the Project is provided in Section 2.

## 1.2 Document Scope and Structure

This SIA Scoping Report documents the scoping and initial assessment phase of the Project's SIA, and includes:

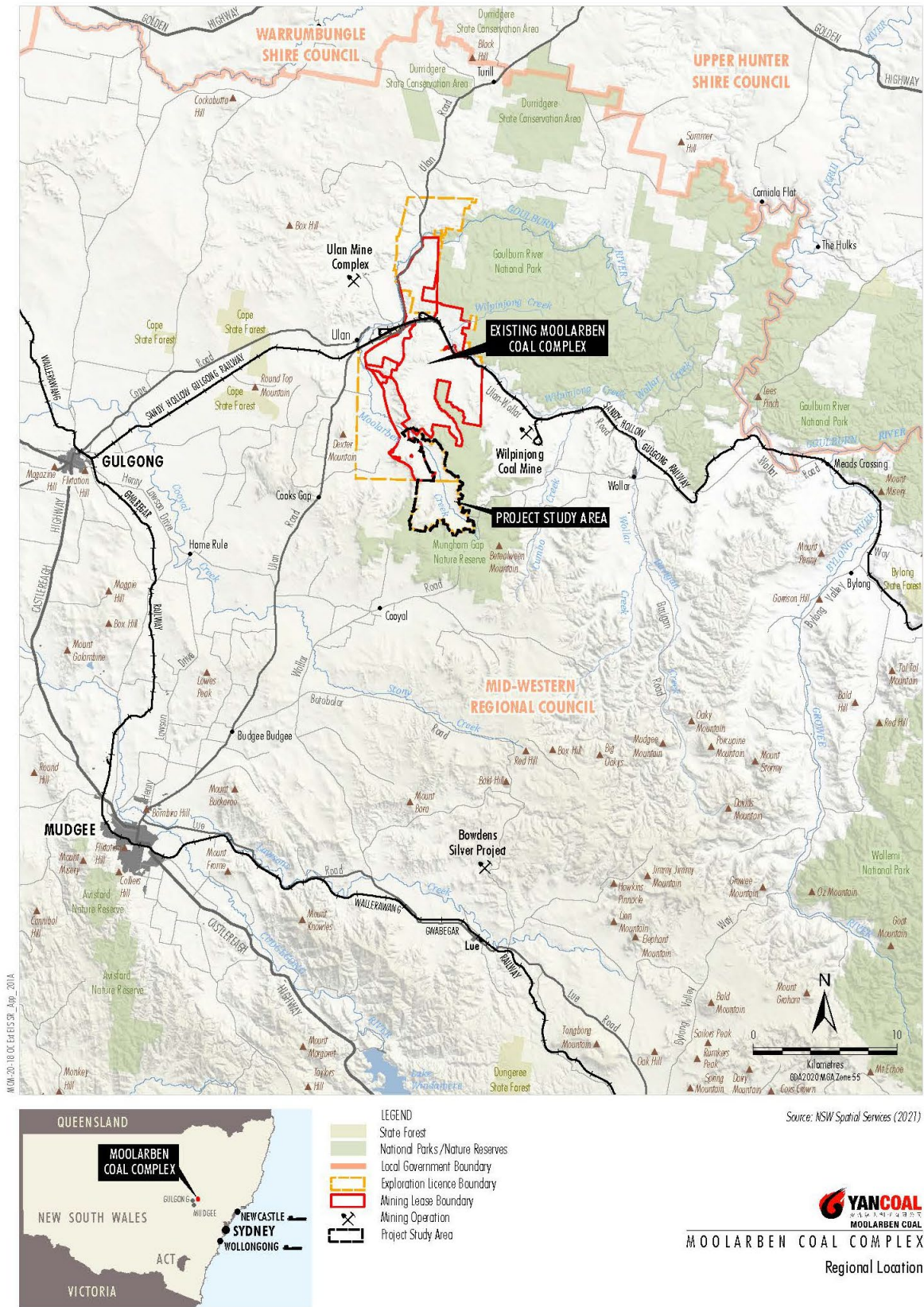
- Preliminary identification of the Project's area of social influence (referred to as Social Locality herein)
- Initial analysis of the characteristics of the communities within the Project's Social Locality (described as the social baseline)
- Initial evaluation of likely social impacts for different groups in the Social Locality and the level to which these impacts need to be assessed in the SIA
- Consideration of any potential refinements to Project development to respond to likely social impacts
- Proposed approach for undertaking the remainder of the SIA process.

## 1.3 Methodology

### 1.3.1 SIA Guideline

The SIA Guideline is intended to guide the preparation of an SIA as an input into a broader EIS. The SIA Guideline outlines a specified approach for the identification, prediction and evaluation of likely social impacts associated with State Significant projects. The SIA Guideline includes a Scoping Tool to guide the task of scoping potential impacts.

Figure 1-1 Regional Location



### 1.3.2 What are Social Impacts?

Social impacts are consequences experienced by people as a result of changes associated with a project. Social impacts could be experienced in relation to:

- Community – including composition, cohesion, character, resilience and sense of place
- Livelihoods – people’s capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business
- Way of life – how people live, get around, work, play and interact
- Accessibility – access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities
- Culture – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture
- Health and wellbeing – physical and mental health
- Surroundings – ecosystem services, access to and use of natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity
- Decision-making systems – having a say in decisions affecting lives, and have access to complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms.

Social impacts can be positive as well as negative. For example, a project may result in negative impacts such as increased noise or traffic. However, a project may also lead to positive impacts such as improved livelihoods from increased employment opportunities.

The SIA Guideline describes the characteristics of social impacts, including that social impacts may be:

- Physically observable or it may manifest as rational or justified fears (of negative impacts in the future) or aspirations (of positive impacts in the future)
- Experienced positively by some people, and negatively by others
- Experienced differently within a community, by different communities, and at different times/ stages of the project
- Tangible or intangible
- Direct or indirect, and/or cumulative
- Best assessed using quantitative and/or qualitative methods.

Cumulative social impacts can be considered as the incremental changes to the level of social impacts and the interactions between the impacts of multiple projects or existing operations in the vicinity of the Project. Impacts which arise from project activities or multiple projects may require similar resources.

### 1.3.3 Methodology of the SIA Scoping Report

The steps undertaken to develop this SIA Scoping Report included:

- Identification of a sub-set of representative stakeholders for initial consultation
- Analysis of existing information, including social characteristics and local community views on mining and the Project
- Consultation of stakeholders around existing conditions and the social impacts (positive and negative) they perceive may arise from the Project
- Analysis of the Project's Social Locality and the characteristics that could influence how impacts may be experienced
- Identification of potential social impacts and potentially affected stakeholders
- Documentation in a SIA Scoping Report, including key matters, likelihood of impacts occurring, potential for cumulative impacts, potential refinements to Project development, key issues to be assessed in the SIA and a plan for SIA Stakeholder Consultation.

## Section 2 Project Overview

### 2.1 Overview of the Moolarben Coal Complex

The MCC comprises four approved open cut coal mining areas (OC1 to OC4) and three underground mining areas (UG1, UG2 and UG4) and other mining related infrastructure (including coal processing and transport facilities). Mining operations at the MCC are approved until 31 December 2038 in accordance with Project Approval (05\_0117) (Moolarben Coal Project Stage 1) (as modified) and Project Approval (08\_0135) (Moolarben Coal Project Stage 2) (as modified) (Figure 2-1).

Main site access for the MCC is via the Ulan-Wollar Road, off Ulan Road. Product Coal is loaded onto trains and using a dedicated rail loop and rail load out facility, and transported via the Sandy Hollow-Gulgong Railway to the Port of Newcastle for export.

The main infrastructure area approved at the Moolarben Coal Complex is the coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP), coal stockpiles and rail loadout facility approved under the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117). All ROM coal from Stage 1 and Stage 2 mining operations is handled, processed and loaded to trains using the Stage 1 infrastructure.

Since the commencement of coal mining operations in 2010, open cut mining activities have occurred within OC1, OC2, OC3 and OC4, underground mining has occurred in UG1 and development has commenced in UG4.

In total, the MCC is approved to extract up to 16 Mtpa of ROM coal from open cut pits and a further 8 Mtpa of ROM coal from underground mining operations. Operations can be carried out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### 2.2 The Moolarben Coal Complex OC3 Extension Project

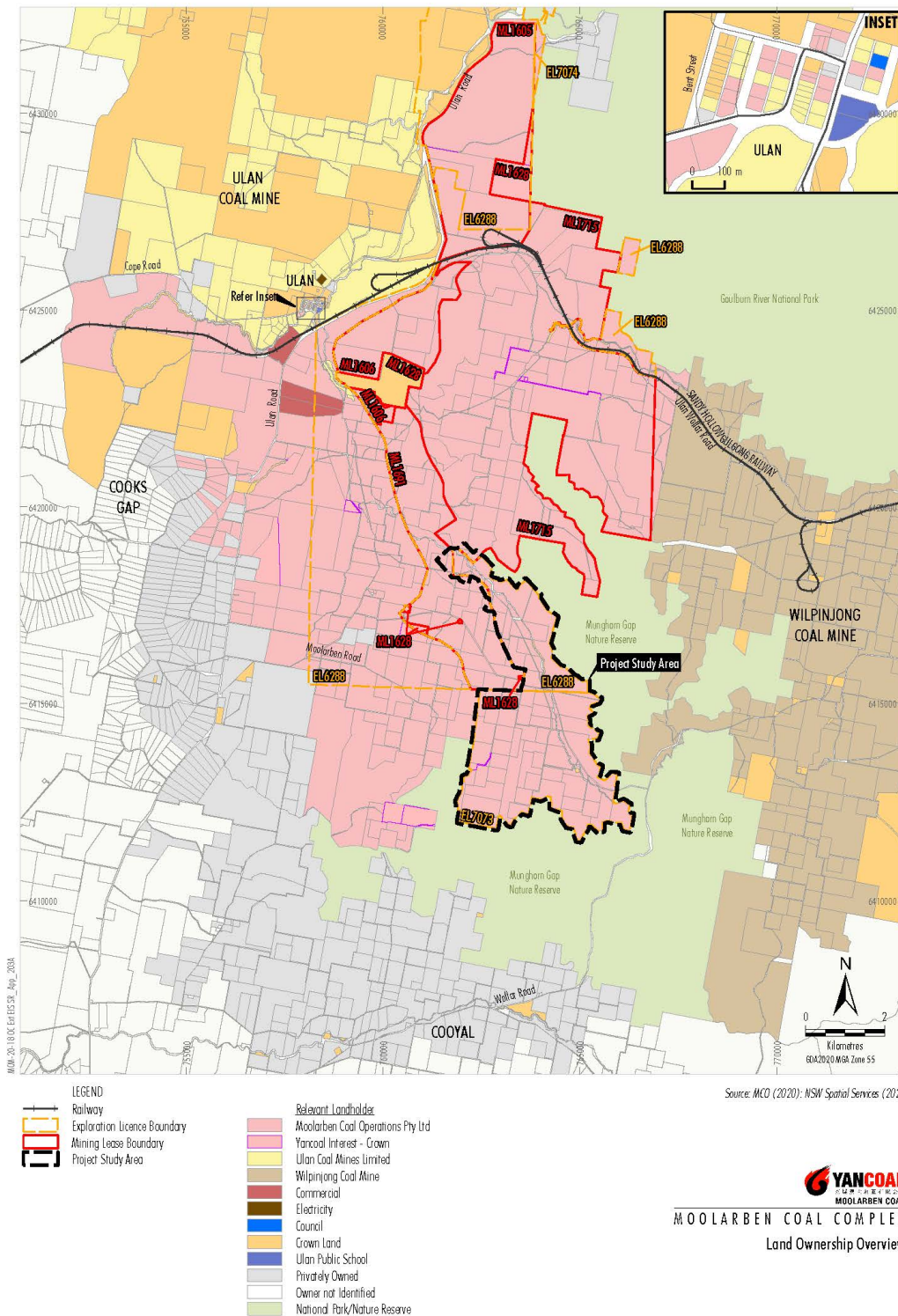
MCO is proposing an extension of its existing operations within Mining Lease (ML) 1691, and Exploration Licence (EL) 6288 and EL 7073 (Figure 2-1).

Key Project considerations in the initial assessment of potential social impacts of the Project included:

- The proposed extension area is largely situated within previously cleared land historically used for agriculture activities, including grazing.
- Moolarben owns all freehold land associated with the Project (Figure 2-2).
- No significant changes to existing surface infrastructure are anticipated.
- Mining in the Project area would progress within the valley surrounding Moolarben Creek, moving further away from private landholders west of the MCC in Cooks Gap.
- Mining activities would occur closer to the suburb of Cooyal, however the distance to the nearest private property would be greater than 2 km and there is significant intervening topography associated with the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve (elevation difference greater than 100 metres [m]).
- The Project would not change the approved mine life of the MCC of 31 December 2038.
- The Project would result in continued employment of the existing Stage 1 open cut workforce (approximately 317 personnel) until 2036, which would otherwise be likely to reduce from 2026.
- The Project would involve no change to the total annual product coal transported from the MCC via rail.



Figure 2-2 Land Ownership Overview



Moolarben owns all freehold land within the Project area. Privately owned dwellings located to the north in Ulan are approximately 7.5 km away, to the west in Cooks Gap approximately 5 km away, and to the south in Cooyal approximately 2.5 km away. While the properties in Cooyal are the closest private properties to the Project, Cooyal is physically separated from the OC3 extension area by Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve which has elevations between approximately 730 m and 665 m between the OC3 extension area and Cooyal properties (some 100 m in elevation above Cooyal) (Topographic-map.com, 2021). As such the Project would not be visible from Cooyal (and is unlikely to be visible from any private residence).

### 2.3 Project Workforce

The MCC has an existing approved peak operational workforce of 740 personnel with an average actual operational workforce of 667 across the life of mine.<sup>1</sup> The approved peak construction workforce is 250 personnel with an average construction workforce of 120 personnel. Approximately 78% of the existing workforce (excluding contractors) reside locally, predominately in Mudgee, Gulgong and the surrounds.

The Project would result in extension of the employment of the existing Stage 1 open cut workforce (of approximately 317 personnel) until 2036, which would otherwise reduce from 2026.

MCO preference is for employees to reside within 100 km of the MCC and would continue to source local employees to maintain employment levels where feasible. If new mine workers (i.e. to replace workers who have left the MCC) and their families relocating to the area to work at the MCC would require accommodation, it is expected that a mix of housing types would be needed. It is likely the majority of these would seek residence in Mudgee (80%) or Gulgong (20%) townships, due to the supply of established community, social, recreational, commercial, educational and religious facilities and services on offer in these towns. However, as noted above, no additional employees are likely to be required for the Project due to an extension of employment of the existing workforce.

### 2.4 Project Location and Nearby Local Communities

The MCC is located in the Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area (LGA), within the north-eastern section of the Central Tablelands region of NSW, on the lands of the Wiradjuri people (see Figure 1-1). The site is located within the Western Coalfields of NSW, in close proximity to two other coal mining projects: Ulan Mine Complex (Glencore) and Wilpinjong Coal Mine (Peabody).

The nearest urban locality is the town of Gulgong. It is located approximately 20 km to the west of the site with an estimated residential population of approximately 2,500 residents (ABS, 2016a). The town of Mudgee is located approximately 40 km south-west of the site with a population of approximately 11,000 residents in 2016 (ABS, 2016a) and is the major centre of the Mid-Western LGA.

The MCC is located close to the upper reaches of the Goulburn River, which then flows east, through the Goulburn River National Park, and joins the Hunter River near Denman. The site is located amongst rural agricultural land and nature reserves.

There are five Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1)<sup>2</sup> partly or wholly within an approximate 10 km radius of the MCC, containing 23 state suburbs. This catchment is referred to as the 'Local Vicinity' in this SIA Scoping Report (see Figure 2-3). The Local Vicinity covers the geographical communities closest to the Project and is provided to better provide an understanding of the demographic characteristics of these areas to inform the scoping process.

<sup>1</sup> MCC Open Cut Optimisation Modification Environmental Assessment (Stage 2)

<sup>2</sup> Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s) are an Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) geographic area category designed using multiple criteria, including population size. Whole SA1s aggregate to form Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s). SA1s are designed to maximise the geographic detail available for Census of Population and Housing data.

The 23 state suburbs within the Local Vicinity of the Project include:

- Bara
- Barigan
- Botobolar
- Bungaba
- Cooks Gap
- Cooyal
- Cope
- Cumbandry
- Cumbo
- Frog Rock
- Kains Flat
- Linburn
- Mogo (Mid-Western Regional - NSW)
- Moolarben
- Munghorn
- Stony Creek (Mid-Western Regional - NSW)
- Tichular
- Totnes Valley
- Turill
- Ulan
- Wilpinjong
- Wollar
- Yarrawonga (NSW)

The following summarises state suburbs of particular interest to the Project in terms of proximity and residential population. Some of the suburbs have no or low resident population. Kains Flat and Wollar do not fall within the 10km radius, however, are considered as part of the Local Vicinity of the Project as they are relevant to the wider mining precinct (including the Ulan and Wilpinjong Coal Mines).

Moolarben is the state suburb within which the Project is located. It has 17 residents and 12 residential dwellings predominantly on primary production land (ABS, 2017; Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019). Most of these dwellings are on land owned by MCO.

The small village of Ulan is located 6 km from the site to the north-west. Although the resident population is small, with fewer than 58 people recorded at the last census in 2016 (ABS, 2017; Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019). The village comprises larger lot rural residential type blocks, and offers some amenities, including a small primary school and Ulan Village Green workers accommodation facility with Council approval for 150 beds (currently estimated to have 64 rooms/beds operational, with an additional 40 rooms/beds planned in the immediate future) (Ulan Village Green Accommodation, 2021). Most properties within and around Ulan are owned by mining companies or are Crown/Council land. Only a small number of properties in Ulan and to the west and south of the village are privately owned (approximately nine properties).

Cooks Gap is directly west-southwest of the MCC and is home to 540 people in 258 dwellings, predominantly privately owned and located on large lot residential properties (ABS, 2017; Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019). Community amenities are limited in Cooks Gap except for a community hall and Rural Fire Service facility.

Cooyal, located to the south of the MCC, has 114 residents in 58 dwellings predominantly on large lot residential properties, as well as primary production land (ABS, 2017; Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019). The locality has a community hall and a hotel with accommodation. Ownership of dwellings in Cooyal are assumed to be privately owned. The Cooyal dwelling closest to the Project is approximately 2.5 km to the nearest boundary of the Project area. However, Cooyal properties are physically separated from the Project area by the intervening elevated topography of the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve between the Project area and Cooyal properties (Topographic-map.com, 2021).

Linburn is located south-west of the MCC. The locality has 64 residents in 24 private dwellings located on primary production land (ABS, 2017; Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019).

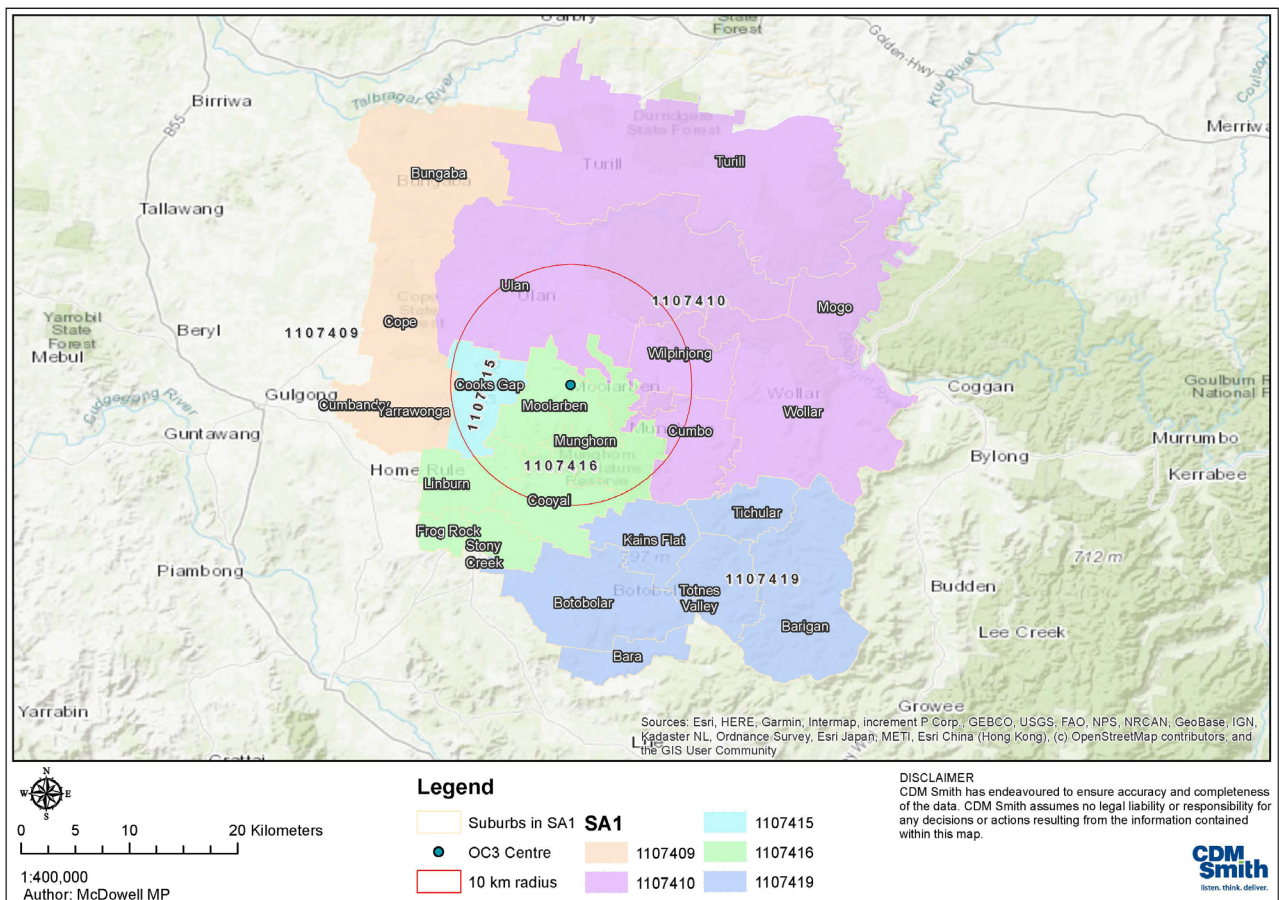
Combo is located to the east south-east of the MCC. It has 11 residents and 8 private dwellings located on primary production land (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2018).

Kains Flat is located south of MCC and has 165 residents and 91 private dwellings predominately on large lot residential properties (ABS, 2017; Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019).

Wollar is located to the east south-east of the MCC and comprises larger lot rural residential type blocks. It has 69 residents and 50 private dwellings located on primary production land (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2019).

All localities have a rural character with previously cleared land historically used for low-intensity agriculture activities, and are in close proximity to National Parks or nature reserves. Historical mining approvals (namely the Ulan Mine Complex, Wilpinjong Coal Mine and Moolarben Coal Complex) have resulted in the acquisition of the majority of private properties within Ulan and Wollar.

**Figure 2-3 Local communities**



## 2.5 Community Programs

### 2.5.1 Moolarben Coal Community Support Program

MCO actively supports communities throughout the Mid-Western LGA. The MCO website indicates that the company's economic contribution to the region's communities amounts to over \$1 million since 2010 (Yancoal, 2021a).

The 'Moolarben Coal Community Support Program' helps local initiatives across a variety of areas such as environment, education, the arts, health and safety, sport and research. MCO also delivers initiatives which provide training and employment opportunities for local community members, along with supporting local contractors and service providers.

Funding applications for MCO's Community Support Program are considered by an application committee comprising of MCO employees and independent community representatives (Yancoal, 2020a). The application committee's assessment and recommendations are carried out in a yearly, single round process, for the following year's program schedule.

The MCC Annual Review 2020 (Yancoal, 2020c) details the community programs that were supported by MCO in 2020. During 2020, MCO provided \$117,000 in community donations to 29 community groups and events as part of its Community Support Program and other MCO led programs (Yancoal, 2020c). Table 2-1 also details additional funds donated by MCO to other organisations within the region.

**Table 2-1 Community Support Programs**

Beneficiary	Project/Event
Community Support Programs	
Lue Public School	Pool enclosure upgrade
Mudgee Men's Shed	Members Gym at the Men's Shed
Mudgee Amateur Swim Club	Air-conditioning for the Clubhouse
Rylstone Hospital & Health	Swim School for children and First Aid course
Gulgong Showground	Main switchboard upgrade for the Showground
Hargraves / Hill End Pest Group	Purchase 10 x field cameras for Wild Dog monitoring
The Business Concierge	2020 Survivor Life Skills Program
Gulgong Show Society	2020 Gulgong Show
Mudgee Junior League	New defibrillator for Club House
Mudgee RSL	WWII plaque restoration on town clock
Mudgee Show Society	New PA system for the Mudgee Showground
Rylstone Kandos Show Society	2020 Rylstone Show
Rylstone Public P&C	Funding for raffle prizes
Cudgegong Cruisers	2020 Can Cruise event
Sculptures in the Garden	2020 Sculptures in the Garden Event
Gulgong Hospital Auxiliary	New crash cart for the Gulgong Hospital

Beneficiary	Project/Event
Mudgee District Hospital Operating Theatre	New Thrive Oxygen machine for the operating theatre
Gulgong Arts Society	2020 Scarecrow Stroll
Mudgee Community Pre-School	New children's fort at the pre-school
Educar	2020 Max Potential Program
Additional Regional Contributions	
Mudgee High School	Swimming Carnival Fundraiser
Clontarf Foundation	Tickets to the Charity Shield at Glen Willow - Mudgee
LifeSkills Plus Mudgee	PPE to help with COVID-19 precautions
Western Area Health – Mudgee Hospital	PPE to help with COVID-19 precautions
Western Area Health – Dunedoo Hospital	Palliative Carer's Chair for the Dunedoo Hospital
Kids & Carer's House - Kandos	New flooring for the Kids & Carer's House
Mudgee Respiratory & Fever Clinic	PPE to help with COVID-19 precautions
Mudgee Chamber of Commerce	Magnificent Mudgee Awards
Western Area Health – Mudgee Aged Care	Dignity of Risk training
Local Land Services – Central Tablelands	Wild Dog trapping program for the local regions
Watershed Landcare	Green Day event for local schools

Source: Yancoal (2021b)

MCO also invests in local and regional economic development, including procurement from local suppliers where they are able to meet MCO requirements for commercial viability, health and safety and environmental management as outlined in MCO's Procurement Policy. The Project would therefore also result in continued expenditure-induced indirect jobs.

### 2.5.2 Voluntary Planning Agreement (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

MCO has an existing Voluntary Planning Agreement with the Mid-Western Regional Council for the approved life of the MCC (i.e. 2038). Consistent with Condition 14, Schedule 2 of the Stage 1 Project Approval (05\_0117), MCO would continue to service the existing Voluntary Planning Agreement with the Mid-Western Regional Council. MCO would also continue to make community enhancement payments to the Mid-Western Regional Council in accordance with Condition 14, Schedule 2 of the Stage 2 Project Approval (08\_0135).

MCO would engage with the Mid-Western Regional Council regarding the requirements for a Planning Agreement for the Project.

### Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

Social Localities are geographic areas associated with stakeholder groups who may experience social impacts.

The following considerations have informed determination of the Project's Social Locality (as per Section 4.2 of the SIA Guideline):

- The scale and nature of the Project
- The history of the Project and the area
- Who may be affected and their characteristics
- Identification of any vulnerable or marginalised people who may be affected
- Relevant social, cultural and demographic trends
- Values associated with built or natural features that could be affected
- Cumulative impacts
- Impacts if Project is not approved.

#### 3.1 History and Experience of Mining

The Mid-Western Regional Council supports the continuation and expansion of mining in the region (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2015b). Council believes that the industry has been a strong economic driver for the region due to the employment and business opportunities it provides. Council is also cognisant of maintaining a diversity of industry types within the area by making sure the growth of the regional mining sector does not impede already established industries such as agriculture, tourism, viticulture and construction (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2018).

The three major coal mines operating within Mid-Western LGA, Ulan Mine Complex, Wilpinjong Coal Mine and the MCC (Table 3-1), have planning approvals to at least 2038, in addition to significant identified resources which could extend mining for many more years or decades depending on future demand and approvals (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2018).

Coal mining commenced in the Ulan area in the early 1920's, with a local family constructing underground panel and pillar mines, using pit ponies to extract the coal. Coal mining continued sporadically and supplied the Ulan Power Station from the 1940s until the late 1960s (Mining Data Solutions, 2020).

Since the early 2000s, the Mid-Western Regional LGA has experienced rapid growth in coal mining. This growth is attributed to the approval of the Wilpinjong Coal Mine in 2005, the MCC in 2007 (Stage 1) and 2015 (Stage 2) and the expanded Ulan Mine Complex in 2010

Key existing and proposed State significant projects in the Mid-Western Region LGA are summarised in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2.

## Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

**Table 3-1 Existing and proposed mining projects (Wells Environmental Services, 2007)**

Mine operation	Ownership	Description	Mine Life	Previously Assessed Workforce	Current Approx. employee no.
<b>Operating</b>					
Ulan	Glencore Coal Assets Australia	Open cut and underground mining operations Located north-west, adjacent to the MCC	Approved to 2033	931 employees and contractors (Eco Logical Australia, 2018)	680 (employees and contractors).
Moolarben	Yancoal	Open cut and underground mining operations	Approved to 2038	Peak operational workforce of 740 personnel and peak construction workforce of 250 personnel (NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2021a)	Average operational workforce of 667 personnel (employee and contractors)
Wilpinjong	Peabody Energy Aus. Pty Ltd	Open cut mining operations Located approximately 6 km south-east of the MCC	Approved to 2033	Peak operational workforce of 625 personnel and peak construction workforce of up to 100 personnel (NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2021b)	560 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Total</b>				<b>2,296 (peak operational workforce)</b>	<b>1,907</b>
<b>Proposed</b>					
Bowdens Silver Project <sup>4</sup>	Bowdens Silver Pty Limited.	open cut mining operations	23 years total (16.5 years for extraction/processing, 7 years rehabilitation).	Peak workforce of approximately 320 personnel in 18 month site establishment stage. Operations workforce to vary between approximately 190 to 228 personnel (R.W. Corkery & Co, 2021).	N/A

**Table 3-2 Other existing and proposed State significant projects**

Project	Description	Project life	Employment
Beryl Solar Farm	95 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic (PV) solar farm and associated infrastructure. 5 km west of Gulgong	Commenced construction	150 construction 3 operational
Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Project	Up to 77 wind turbines Located 45 km south of Mudgee	Approved 2016 Nearing end of construction Project life to 2034	240 <sup>5</sup> construction

<sup>3</sup> Latest information of employee numbers is contained in the Wilpinjong 2020 Annual Review (March 2021):

[https://www.peabodyenergy.com/Peabody/media/MediaLibrary/Operations/Australia%20Mining/New%20South%20Wales%20Mining/Wilpinjong%20Mine/2020%20WCPL%20AR/Annual-Review\\_2020\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.peabodyenergy.com/Peabody/media/MediaLibrary/Operations/Australia%20Mining/New%20South%20Wales%20Mining/Wilpinjong%20Mine/2020%20WCPL%20AR/Annual-Review_2020_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Mineral exploration has been carried out around the mine site since 1989 by Bowdens Silver Pty Limited. The proposed Bowden's Silver Project will have a different design to previously used methods of extraction (R.W. Corkery & Co, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Latest information of employee numbers is contained in the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm Community Newsletter July 2021: <https://mailchi.mp/372c2ab0696d/crudine-ridge-wind-farm-july-2020-newsletter-13479719>

## Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

Project	Description	Project life	Employment
Ungula Wind Farm Project	400 MW wind farm with up to 97 wind turbines Located 32 km north-west of Mudgee	Approved 2021 Project life of 30 years to 2031	240 construction 12 operational
Stubbo Solar Farm	10 km north of Gulgong 400 MW grid-connected PV solar farm with 200 MW-hour battery energy storage	Approved 2021 Construction to commence in 2022 with a two-year construction period Project life of 30 years to 2031	400 construction 10 operational
St Matthews Catholic College	Development of new secondary school comprising five buildings and landscaping works Spring flat/ Mudgee	Approved 2020 Anticipated to be operational by January 2023	104 construction 59 operational Further 22 support staff
Wollar Solar Farm Project	Located approximately 7 km south of Wollar Village, the proposed Wollar Solar Farm was approved in 2020. The solar farm project would involve approximate 922,432 PV solar panels to deliver 290 MWs.	Currently under construction Solar farm itself not yet commenced construction Construction period of 12-18 months Project life of 30 years to 2050	Approved construction workforce of 320 during 12-18 month construction period
Valley of the Winds Farm	55 km north-west of the MCC (proposed Electricity Transmission Line [ETL] corridor 7 km north)	EIS preparation phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	400 construction

### 3.2 Potentially Affected Stakeholders

Potential stakeholders that may be affected by the Project are included in Table 3-3 below. Groups affected by the Project may include:

- Nearby residents and businesses to the MCC
- Surrounding Local Communities – Local Vicinity and townships
- Mine Workforce and their families
- Local Aboriginal Community – Wiradjuri People
- Mid-Western LGA Community
- Mid-Western Regional Council
- Service Providers eg emergency, health, school and childcare
- Local and Regional Suppliers and Businesses
- People of NSW / Australia

## Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

**Table 3-3. Potentially affected stakeholders**

Stakeholder Group	More Detail	Potential Impacts (High Level)
Surrounding Local Communities – Local Vicinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local communities within around 10 km from the existing mine site and Project areas. These include the suburbs identified in Section 2.4. Key communities include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ulan</li> <li>– Cooks Gap</li> <li>– Cooyal</li> <li>– Linburn</li> <li>– Moolarben</li> <li>– Cumbo</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All freehold land required for the Project is currently owned by the proponent. It is not anticipated that additional properties would need to be acquired to mitigate amenity impacts, however this would be identified as part of the EIS studies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impacts would not be evenly distributed within this stakeholder group, with some residents in closest proximity to existing mine site and the Project area impacted to a greater extent.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders in this group would continue to experience current impacts.</li> <li>• The Project may result in new amenity impacts as the geographic area of the mine changes.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders in this group may experience less impact as open cut operations in OC3 are extended to the south.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders in this group may experience new or higher intensity impacts as open cut operations in OC3 are extended to the south.</li> <li>• Potential impacts for these stakeholders would be in the form of amenity impacts (noise, light, air quality and odour impacts), as well as potential changes to sense of place, and health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• No property acquisition is proposed at this stage, however if the Project entails property acquisition a range of social impacts could occur.</li> <li>• The Project may support service provision in the LGA for the benefit of the local community.</li> <li>• The Project may alter the sense of place experienced by existing residents (such as from rural / agriculture focus to mining focus), although the Project is isolated within a valley.</li> <li>• Workforce numbers are not expected to alter, but any increase of mine workers could influence property prices or other costs of living.</li> </ul>
Surrounding Local Communities – Townships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is understood that 78% of the workforce live locally (excluding contractors) in the two closest townships of Mudgee, Gulgong and surrounds, with</li> <li>• This information will be confirmed during the SIA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Project would continue to provide direct and indirect employment and training for LGA residents, supporting local population stability and economic activity, but also potentially impacting the rural character, sense of place and community cohesion both positively and negatively (discussed in following sections and will be further assessed in SIA). The mine workforce would continue to be localised.</li> <li>• Further potential impacts associated with health determinants, housing demands and business opportunities for this area will be assessed in more detail in the SIA.</li> </ul>
Mine Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mine workforce, including regular contractors, and their household members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Project would provide ongoing employment for workers, enabling them and their families to remain within their communities.</li> </ul>

## Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

Stakeholder Group	More Detail	Potential Impacts (High Level)
Local Aboriginal Community – Wiradjuri People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project is located on the lands of the Wiradjuri People.</li> <li>Members of the local Aboriginal communities are represented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council</li> <li>Murong Gialinga Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation</li> <li>North-East Wiradjuri Company Ltd</li> <li>Warrabinga Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project would extend the existing extents of the MCC into areas which may contain Aboriginal cultural heritage items, places and/or values. The Projects' EIS will include an assessment of the Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Project area. Management of identified sites will be developed in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders, which may include salvage of sites that would be impacted by the Project.</li> <li>More broadly, natural features and connections to Country may be impacted due to the nature of the Project (i.e. open cut mining).</li> </ul>
Mid-Western LGA Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents, workers and business-people of the Mid-Western Regional Council area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project would provide for continued direct and indirect employment, supporting local economic activity.</li> </ul>
Mid-Western Regional Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service provision, staff and elected officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project would continue to provide revenue to Council through payment of rates and Voluntary Planning Agreement contributions.</li> <li>The Project, and through its locally residing employee base, would continue to directly and indirectly require Council to provide infrastructure and services.</li> </ul>
Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community service providers including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency services – ambulance, fire and rescue, rural fire service, police, and emergency departments.</li> <li>Health services.</li> <li>Community services, education, and early learning providers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project does not propose increasing employee numbers, and therefore would not increase or decrease the requirement for supporting infrastructure and community services.</li> <li>Emergency services would continue to respond to emergency situations at the existing MCC and the Project area.</li> </ul>
Local and Regional Suppliers and Businesses	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct suppliers of materials and services to the Project</li> <li>Accommodation providers and real estate agents supporting mine workers and contractors that are not locally based</li> <li>Local businesses benefiting from stable MCC local resident population, temporary contractors and workforce with higher incomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCO would continue to provide contracts for suppliers and support local businesses. This would continue to support economic activity and employment.</li> <li>Suppliers and businesses may be located locally or in geographically dispersed locations throughout the region, NSW and Australia.</li> </ul>
People of NSW / Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project would increase the total royalties and company tax paid to State and federal governments and therefore benefit the people of NSW and Australia more broadly.</li> <li>The Project would generate greenhouse gas emissions thereby contributing to total Australian and global greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Built and Natural Features

The MCC is located in a rural area and surrounded primarily by rural properties, national parks and reserves. Land use in the area is mainly focused on agricultural and extractive industries. The surrounding national parks and reserves are part of the Great Dividing Range. The topography is dominated by the ridges with native vegetation and several enclosed valleys with bordering cliff lines (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021). Table 3-4 describes the local features surrounding the MCC and further information on the key areas of interest are provided in Sections 203.3.1 to 3.3.4.

There are no noteworthy built features in the Project area, other than Moolarben Road, which has already been closed to the public for the existing operations. Built features surrounding the MCC are unlikely to experience any impacts from the Project. The transportation network is unlikely to be impacted by the Project, as there is no change to workforce or production volumes. The closure of Moolarben Road is not an impact of the Project, having been previously approved and implemented for the existing MCC. The school sites located in the villages of Ulan and Wollar will not be considered as they have been declared to be in 'recess' by the Department of Education.

**Table 3-4 Description of Features**

Area of Interest	Details	Social Value
Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve is adjacent to the Project area on the eastern and southern sides.</li> <li>Second oldest nature reserve in Australia.</li> <li>Published trails are to the south of Wollar Road, away from the Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature - 164 species of birds (endangered Regent Honeyeater), natural rock formations.</li> <li>Social - Bird watching, walking, barbeques / social activities, scenic views.</li> <li>Aboriginal cultural values - Wiradjuri people.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Moolarben Picnic Area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 1 km south of the Project.</li> <li>The site itself does not overlook the Project area, but areas that do can be accessed from it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A place for social activities.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Castle Rocks Walk and Lookout</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The walk is approximately 2 km south of the Project at its nearest point at the lookout is approximately 5 km south of the Project.</li> <li>Scenic views of the sandstone pagoda features found at Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.</li> <li>Orientated away from the Project, viewing to the south.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking trail for people to experience the local flora and fauna which leads to the Castle Rock Lookout. A place of exercise in nature and experience the local natural character.</li> <li>Aboriginal cultural heritage site.</li> </ul>
Goulburn River National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 7 km northeast of the Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Park known for its hiking trails, camping, natural features and wildlife and cultural heritage values.</li> </ul>

## Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

Area of Interest	Details	Social Value
	<p><u>The Drip</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 13.5 km north of the Project.</li> <li>Significant Aboriginal cultural heritage site.</li> <li>Tourist attraction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant natural attraction with Aboriginal heritage values.</li> <li>Part of the Drip walking trail, which provides people with health and wellbeing, sense of belonging and tourism benefits.</li> <li>Aboriginal cultural heritage site.</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Hands on Rock (Aboriginal rock art)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 15 km north of the Project.</li> <li>Significant Aboriginal cultural heritage site.</li> <li>Tourist attraction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal cultural heritage site</li> </ul>
Rural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surrounding farming land and rural townships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rural residential communities and agricultural land uses in the area providing people with a sense of place, community cohesion and sense of belonging.</li> </ul>
Natural character – views, topography and land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View sheds from main roads, rural properties and townships.</li> <li>The Project area is in a valley adjoining the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve to the east and south, and would be mostly shielded from public views from the west due to the location and surrounding topography (to be confirmed/assessed in EIS).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rural lifestyle of the area provides a sense of place and community cohesion.</li> </ul>

Source: (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021).

### 3.3.1 Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve

Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve borders the southern perimeter of the Project area. The nature reserve is a location known for recreational purposes such as birdwatching, bush walking, picnicking and scenic views of the sandstone pagoda features. Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve is a significant Aboriginal cultural heritage area for the Wiradjuri people (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021). It comprises prominent natural rock formations and scenic lookouts. Over 160 species of birds (including the endangered Regent Honeyeater) have been recorded in the reserve along with other species of native fauna such as the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Emu, and Red-necked Wallaby (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021).

#### *Moolarben Picnic Area and Castle Rocks Walk and Lookout*

Moolarben Picnic Area is located approximately 1 km south of the Project area. The picnic area is a recreational destination used for social activities by the local community, bushwalking clubs and birdwatching enthusiasts.

Castle Rocks Walk is a popular hiking trail which has sandstone pagoda features and scenic views at the end of the trail. This walking route includes eucalypt and native pine bushland with an abundance of birdlife (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021).

### 3.3.2 Goulburn River National Park

#### *The Drip*

The Drip is located approximately 13.5 km north of the Project. The Drip is a significant place for the local Wiradjuri People (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021). The Drip is also a recreation destination for sightseeing and the bushwalking trail.

### 3.3.3 Aboriginal Rock Art (Hands on Rock)

Hands on Rock is located approximately 15 km from the Project area in Turill near Ulan. Hands on Rock is hand stencil rock art created by the Wiradjuri people. It is a significant heritage site for the local Wiradjuri People (National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2021).

### 3.3.4 Rural Character

The rural character of the area surrounding the Project consists mainly of rural properties used for agricultural purposes. The built environment in the villages of Wollar and Ulan mainly consists of older residential properties and minimal services.

## 3.4 Key Demographic Findings for SIA

Key social, cultural and demographic trends determined from desktop research undertaken to date include:

- **Mining is a large employer:** Mining is an important industry, with 15% of workers in the Mid-Western LGA employed in mining in 2016 (and slightly higher proportions in Mudgee, Gulgong and the Local Vicinity).
- **Low population growth:** Between 2020-2041, the population of the Mid-Western LGA is expected to increase by 1,552 people (around 10%).
- **More transient communities:** Mid-Western LGA had a slightly more transient population compared to NSW. This transiency suggests people moving into and out of the LGA for work opportunities. This could hold implications on the social fabric of the region and its sense of place.
- **Affordable housing:** Housing is more affordable in the Mid-Western LGA than NSW as a whole, with lower mortgage repayments and lower rents within the Mid-Western LGA. The LGA also has higher rates of home ownership and lower rates of home rental.

### 3.4.1 Vulnerable/ marginalised stakeholders

An analysis of social indicators suggests that potentially “vulnerable” or “marginalised” stakeholders include:

- **Stakeholders that are disadvantaged or have lower incomes amongst those not employed in the mining sector:** Whether costs of living in the Mid-Western LGA may have increased as a result of mining activity and the higher incomes of the employed mine workers will be considered in the SIA.
- **Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander people:** Employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had similar household incomes to the total population in the Mid-Western LGA in 2016. However, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was higher in 2016 when compared to the unemployment rate for population of Mid-Western LGA. The population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is also very young, with young adults who need training and employment opportunities likely to remain in the LGA. Mining activity provides opportunities for this group. These opportunities will be explored in more detail in the SIA as well as their needs as a more vulnerable group.

- **Women:** Women were employed in mining in much lower numbers than men in 2016, and therefore were receiving less opportunity to access mine employment and benefit from its higher incomes. Mining supports many families and workers through economic activity, however, a more balanced gender profile across all industries would provide more equal outcomes for women. This will be explored in more detail in the SIA.
- **Lone-person households:** 28.9% of households were lone-person households in the Mid-Western LGA in 2016. Lone-persons households may be vulnerable to fluctuations in accommodation availability and cost of living pressures. This statistic may indicate other trends, such as mine workers living alone, or perhaps an older population (to be further investigated in the SIA). People living alone may be more socially isolated and experience social impacts differently.

The SIA will provide additional analysis of the impacts on vulnerable or marginalised stakeholders, including disaggregating data (where relevant), as the impacts experienced by these groups may be different to the general population.

### 3.4.2 Further demographic investigations required for the SIA

Based on the demographic analysis undertaken for this SIA Scoping Report, further investigation will be required for the following indicators of interest in the SIA:

- Historical population trends between 2006-2011 in rural communities where mining has since become established.
- Economic and employment trends associated with other industries such as primary production, tourism and services in consideration of mining sector trends.
- The characteristics of vulnerable and disadvantaged populations in the Mid-Western LGA and Local Vicinity.
- Industry migration characteristics and trends.

## 3.5 Preliminary Identification of Social Infrastructure/Service Provision

The areas of interest investigated for social infrastructure facilities relevant to the Project's Social Locality have been identified as the major centres of Mudgee and Gulgong, and the smaller villages of Ulan and Wollar. Cooyal and Cooks Gap are also considered due to their proximity to the Project but have no or limited community services.

### 3.5.1 Transport Connections

Gulgong and Mudgee are located on the Castlereagh Highway which runs north to south. Road networks connecting the region to major population centres are not particularly direct, for example, access to Dubbo, Orange or Bathurst. The MCC is located along the most direct route between Gulgong and Muswellbrook.

There are currently no passenger rail services to Gulgong or Mudgee. The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) operates the rail line between Ulan and Newcastle which is utilised for transporting coal from the MCC (part of the Hunter Valley Corridor) (ARTC, 2021). A number of rail projects are currently being investigated to upgrade or reinstate rail networks in the region, for example, the Kandos to Gulgong Line reinstatement (NSW Government, 2020b) and Gulgong to Maryvale completion (NSW Government, 2020a).

Pelican Airlines provides flights between Sydney and Mudgee three times per week (at time of writing which may be impacted by pandemic restrictions) (Pelican Airlines, 2021). Gulgong is a further 30-minute drive from the airport north along Castlereagh Highway. The MCC is also around 30-minutes from the Mudgee Airport along Ulan Road.

### 3.5.2 Facilities and Services

There are a range of community services present, playing a range of roles in the service hierarchy (catchment and capacity of services). The strategic centre of Mudgee and the town of Gulgong are where facilities such as major medical services and emergency services headquarters are located.

Gulgong services a wide rural catchment. The Gulgong health service catchment area determined by NSW Health during its planning for the recently constructed Gulgong HealthOne facility (based on “*historic and existing health service utilisation patterns*”) encompasses surrounding villages, including Ulan, Goolma and Birriwa.

Servicing Gulgong is Mudgee, which is an important strategic regional service, commercial and tourism centre for the Central Tablelands of NSW. These facilities service a wide catchment area including other townships in the Mid-Western LGA. Some services operate an outreach model, visiting Ulan and Wollar residents, for example, the mobile library, meals on wheels and aged homecare services.

Higher order services which are not available in Mudgee are accessed in Dubbo, or Sydney.

The following list summarises the key social infrastructure and services identified. The SIA will consider these in more detail and verify the comprehensiveness of the list through stakeholder engagement.

#### Children’s services

- Mudgee – 12 childcare centres with 525 approved places, two pre-schools with 80 approved places, one after school care with 155 approved places
- Gulgong – one childcare centre with 39 approved places, one pre-school with 36 approved places

#### Education services (Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst, 2020; NSW Department of Education, 2021)

- Mudgee – two primary schools with a total of 1,250 enrolments, two high schools (one is K-12) with a total of 1,798 enrolments (NSW Department of Education, 2021)
- Gulgong – two primary schools with a total of 443 enrolments, one high school with 283 enrolments (Catholic Education Diocese of Bathurst, 2020).
- Mudgee TAFE

#### Medical facilities (NSW Department of Health, 2021)

- Mudgee hospital with 28 beds, emergency department, inpatient unit, operating theatres, maternity unit and outpatient services including community health, physiotherapy, mental health, occupational therapy, oral health (dental clinic), renal dialysis and oncology (NSW Department of Health, 2021)
- Mudgee Medical Centre - GP services including skin cancer clinic, pre-employment medicals, minor operations, obstetric and anaesthetic care, and home visits
- Gulgong Multi-Purpose Health Centre - considered to be a hospital service for Gulgong offering primary and community care and an emergency care service (open 24hrs), sub-acute beds, six high-care residential aged care beds including provision for dementia services, clinical and operational support services, and a specialised nursing home care unit
- South Mudgee Surgery

### **Aged care services (Kanandah Aged Care, 2021)**

- Mudgee Grove Care Community (Mudgee) offering permanent, respite, dementia and palliative care (Opal Health Care, 2020)
- Kananda (Mudgee) - Hostel with 57 single bedrooms, offering both low care and high care residential accommodation; Duoro Lodge offers a memory support facility with 23 single bedrooms, Mortimer Cottage offers low and high care residential accommodation; as well as a low care secure unit with 10 ensuite bedrooms; and a self-care retirement village containing eight one-bedroom units
- Wenonah Lodge and Wenonah Community Care (Gulgong) – 25 rooms, one of which is reserved for respite care (Wenonah, 2017)

### **Police (NSW Police Force, 2021)**

- Mudgee Police Station (24 hours)
- Gulgong Police Station

### **Rural Fire Service (NSW Rural Fire Services, 2021).**

- Cudgegong District Headquarters (Mudgee)
- Gulgong Rural Fire Service - on-call firefighters are not rostered on-duty at the station but employed to respond to emergency incidents when notified by pager or mobile phone call
- Cooks Gaps (Ulan) Rural Fire Service - volunteer brigade supporting Cudgegong district
- Cooks Gap (Wollar) Rural Fire Service - volunteer brigade supporting Cudgegong district

### **Ambulance (NSW Ambulance, 2021).**

- NSW Ambulance – located in Mudgee, servicing the Mudgee region
- Ambulance Station Gulgong - servicing the Gulgong region

### **State Emergency Service (NSW State Emergency Service, 2021).**

- State Emergency Service (SES) Mudgee Unit - services Mudgee region which is outside the Rylstone SES unit's catchment

### **Libraries (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2015a).**

- Mudgee Library - library catalogue, computer and internet access, meeting rooms, event zones, children's programs
- Gulgong Library - library catalogue, computer and internet access, meeting rooms, event zones, children's programs
- Mobile Library Service - visits primary schools, nursing homes, housebound residents and outlying villages across the region once every three weeks, including Cooks Gap, Ulan and Wollar

## Section 3 Social Locality Investigations

### **Main nearby community halls/ community spaces (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2015a)**

- Cooks Gap Community Hall - small rural hall
- Cooyal Hall - small rural hall
- Cooyal Hotel - currently experiencing coal dust impacts from existing mines
- Ulan Community Centre - hall licensed to external organisation
- Ulan Post Office Hotel
- Wollar Hall - small rural hall
- Wollar General Store
- Gulgong Memorial Hall - variety of facilities, used for regular dance classes and an annual eisteddfod, meetings, and birthday parties
- Gulgong Bowling and Sporting Club
- Gulgong RSL Club
- Mudgee Town Hall Theatre - multifunctional cultural space which hosts live theatre, shows, balls, meetings, weddings, exhibitions and movie screenings
- The Stables Community & Cultural Centre Mudgee - a meeting room and gallery, both suitable for art exhibitions, with adjoining kitchen. Tables and chairs are available for use in both rooms

### **Social support services and community groups (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2015a)**

- St Vincent de Paul Society, Gulgong
- Arts Council of Gulgong – non-profit organisation supporting art community
- Henry Lawson Centre, Gulgong – small heritage museum dedicated to Henry Lawson’s works staffed mainly by volunteers
- Carmel Croan Community Centre, Mudgee – provides Community Transport, Meals on Wheels, family day care, community development officers, healthy communities, cultural services, affordable living workshops (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2015a):
- Lifeskills Plus Inc, Mudgee - disability support organisation that provides first class services to people with disabilities and their families in Mudgee, Dunedoo, Gulgong, Rylstone, Kandos and the surrounding villages
- Challenge Community Services, Mudgee - disability support service
- Mudgee Community Transport - non-profit organisation which provides transport for the frail aged, disabled and their carers, as well as those in the community at a disadvantage due to limited public transport services
- Mudgee Disability Support Service - registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider which provides support services for people with a disability
- VERTO, Mudgee - not-for-profit organisation which helps clients (including people who are on a low income, are experiencing poverty, are long-term unemployed)
- Meals on Wheels, Mudgee - for eligible people living in rural and remote areas around Mudgee.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Based on this analysis, the Project's Social Locality has been determined to encompass the following:

- **Mid-Western LGA:** The Mid-Western LGA is home to many of the workers that would be retained for the Project. Many of the services and products required to support the MCC and the Project are drawn from this area. This area would likely benefit from a range of social impacts, such as employment, Council revenue, community contributions, and economic activity and diversity.
- **Local Vicinity:** The area in an approximate 10 km radius of the Project. Residents of this geographic area are generally more likely to experience social impacts related to potential changes to sense of place, community composition and service delivery. Amenity impacts may be experienced by only a small part of the Local Vicinity community, immediately adjacent to the Project. This will be better understood once the amenity assessments have been undertaken for the EIS. The Local Vicinity will be further refined at that stage as part of the SIA. Localities within this Local Vicinity are somewhat different, and therefore analysis at the suburb level within the Local Vicinity will also be included in the SIA to inform the assessment of impacts.
- **Wiradjuri Country:** The Project is located within the traditional nation of the Wiradjuri people. The Wiradjuri nation holds deep connections for the Wiradjuri people who feel the responsibility to care for country. The Project would extend the existing extents of the MCC which may impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage items and values and connections to Country.

## Section 4 Social Baseline

The following analysis is intended to provide insight into the social, cultural and demographic trends for the Project's Social Locality. It provides further detail to the key social, cultural and demographic trends summarised in Section 3.4. Establishing these existing trends (without the Project) will assist with identifying potential Project-related social impacts.

### 4.1 Demographic Research

The following table presents a range of social indicators to inform an understanding of the Project's social locality Table 4-1. Housing and health data has been retrieved for Mid-Western LGA and is benchmarked to NSW, as shown in Table 4-2 and Table 4-3. Unless otherwise stated, data has been drawn from ABS Census data or NSW Government databases.

**Table 4-1. Social indicators 2016**

Social Indicators	Local Vicinity	Gulgong UCL <sup>6</sup>	Mudgee UCL	Mid-Western LGA	New South Wales
<i>Current Population and Age</i>					
Estimated resident population 2020 (ERP estimate at 30 June 2020) (NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2020).	NA	NA	12,518 (2019)	25,367	8,167,532
Resident population 2016 (based on place of usual residence on census night)	2,130	1,956	10,966	24,076	7,480,228
Median age	44	41	37	42	38
Gender balance <sup>7</sup>	47.1% Female / 52.8% Male	51.0% Female / 49.0% Male	51.2% Female / 48.8% Male	49.7% Female / 50.3% Male	50.7% Female / 49.3% Male
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People</i>					
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	5.7% (121)	7.6% (149)	6.1% (673)	5.4% (1,307)	2.9% (216,176)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander median age	20	22	19	21	22
<i>Cultural Diversity</i>					
Language other than English spoken at home	2.9% (61)	1.9% (37)	3.3% (366)	2.7% (651)	25.2%
Poor English language proficiency	0.2% (4)	0.4% (7)	0.5% (52)	0.3% (82)	4.5%
<i>Disability</i>					
Disability (need for assistance)	5.0% (107)	5.6% (110)	5.5% (605)	5.3% (1,286)	5.4%

<sup>6</sup> Urban Centre and Locality (UCL)

<sup>7</sup> The ABS only collects data on binary gender categories.

## Section 4 Social Baseline

Social Indicators	Local Vicinity	Gulgong UCL <sup>6</sup>	Mudgee UCL	Mid-Western LGA	New South Wales
<i>Household Types (primary household only)</i>					
Couple households	32.6% (237)	25.5% (187)	25.1% (1,004)	28.7% (2,514)	25.8%
Couple households with children	29.5% (214)	24.3% (178)	29.3% (1,171)	28.2% (2,471)	33.6%
Single parent households	9.5% (69)	13.5% (99)	11.9% (478)	10.5% (919)	11.4%
Lone person households	25.2% (183)	34.4% (252)	29.2% (1,167)	28.9% (2,531)	23.8%
Group households	1.9% (14)	2.2% (16)	3.4% (135)	2.8% (248)	4.2%
<i>Disadvantage (ABS, 2018b)</i>					
2016 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index for Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) Score <sup>8</sup>	NA	NA	NA	960	NA
2016 SEIFA IRSD State Percentile	NA	NA	NA	41	50
<i>Income</i>					
Median weekly household income	NA	\$1,039	\$1,258	\$1,131	\$1,486
Median weekly household income (households with at least one Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander person)	NA	\$1,178	\$1,284	\$1,232	\$1,214
Median weekly personal income	NA	\$522	\$624	\$547	\$664
Household income below \$650 per week	21.9% (159)	26.3% (192)	21.1% (846)	23.8% (2,088)	17.7%
Equivalised household income below \$650 per week	40.1%	43.4%	36.5%	40.6%	31.9%
<i>Employment</i>					
Unemployment rate March Quarter 2021 (ABS, 2021b)	NA	NA	NA	4.1% (544)	6.4%
Labour force participation	50.6% (869)	50.9% (781)	58.0% (4,949)	54.1% (10,371)	59.2%
Unemployment rate	7.6% (66)	9.2% (71)	5.8% (289)	6.5% (678)	6.3%
Unemployment rate – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People	0% (0)	29.3% (17)	12.9% (31)	15.0% (70)	15.3%
<i>Education</i>					
Education – Completed Year 11 or 12 equivalent (population 15+ years, and no longer at school)	34.5% (570)	35.2% (522)	44.7% (3,677)	40.4% (7,461)	58.8%

<sup>8</sup> The SEIFA are indices that are measures developed by the ABS that rank areas in Australia according to IRSD by using various census-based statistics (for example income, skills, unemployment and educational attainment, etc).

Social Indicators	Local Vicinity	Gulgong UCL <sup>6</sup>	Mudgee UCL	Mid-Western LGA	New South Wales
Education levels – Non-school qualifications (population 15+ years) (excludes Certificate (not further defined) to be consistent across all geographies)	36.5% (626)	34.0% (521)	42.8% (3,653)	40.9% (7,833)	48.1%
<i>Economic Diversity / Industry of Employment</i>					
Employment in <u>mining</u> by place of residence (employed workers 15+ years)	17.8% (142)	7.5% (147)	7.2% (790)	15.0% (1,455)	0.4% (31,735)
Employment in <u>coal mining</u> (as a proportion of mining) by place of residence (employed workers 15+ years) <sup>9</sup>	93.7% (133)	92.5% (135)	92.9% (734)	99.1% (1,323)	60.3% (19,156)
<i>Resident Stability</i>					
Residents with same usual address as preceding 1 year (population 1+ years)	76.1% (1,611)	72.1% (1,388)	72.5% (7,829)	74.6% (17,757)	77.4%
Residents with same usual address as preceding 5 years (population 5+ years)	54.5% (1,098)	50.9% (912)	44.3% (4,448)	51.0% (11,432)	53.8%

Sources (where not otherwise specified):(ABS, 2017). Note: Where inconsistency between Census sources, Quickstats, Community Profiles (Time Series, Community, Indigenous), then TableBuilder used in order.

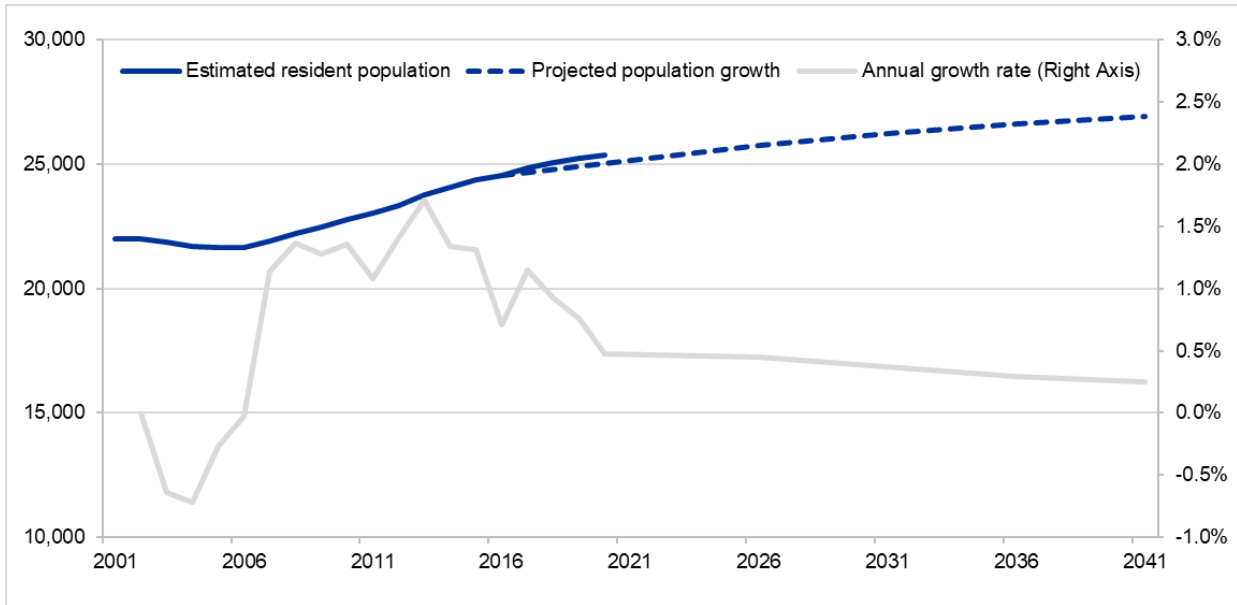
### 4.1.1.1 Current and projected population

In 2020, Mid-Western LGA had an estimated resident population of 25,367 people (Table 4-1). The NSW Government forecasts that the population of the Mid-Western LGA will increase to 26,919 people by 2041 (Figure 4-1) (ABS, 2021a). This is an increase of 1,552 people over 21 years (around 74 people per year on average). There are currently between 250 and 300 births each year in the LGA, and around 220 deaths per year, suggesting that a small amount of in-migration is expected each year (NSW Department of Health, 2021).

Between 2001 and 2020, the population of the Mid-Western LGA increased at an average annual rate of 0.8%. This growth rate is expected to decline to approximately 0.4% between 2016 and 2041 (NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2020). It is noted that these projections were made prior to COVID-19, which, anecdotally, is impacting migration patterns to regional NSW. This will be further explored in the SIA.

<sup>9</sup> Breakdown of people working within the coal mining industry within the mining industry participation.

Figure 4-1. Estimated resident population, past growth and future projections, Mid-Western LGA, 2001-2041



Source: (NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment, 2020) Notes: includes preliminary and revised estimates. These will change in future years.

Age and Gender

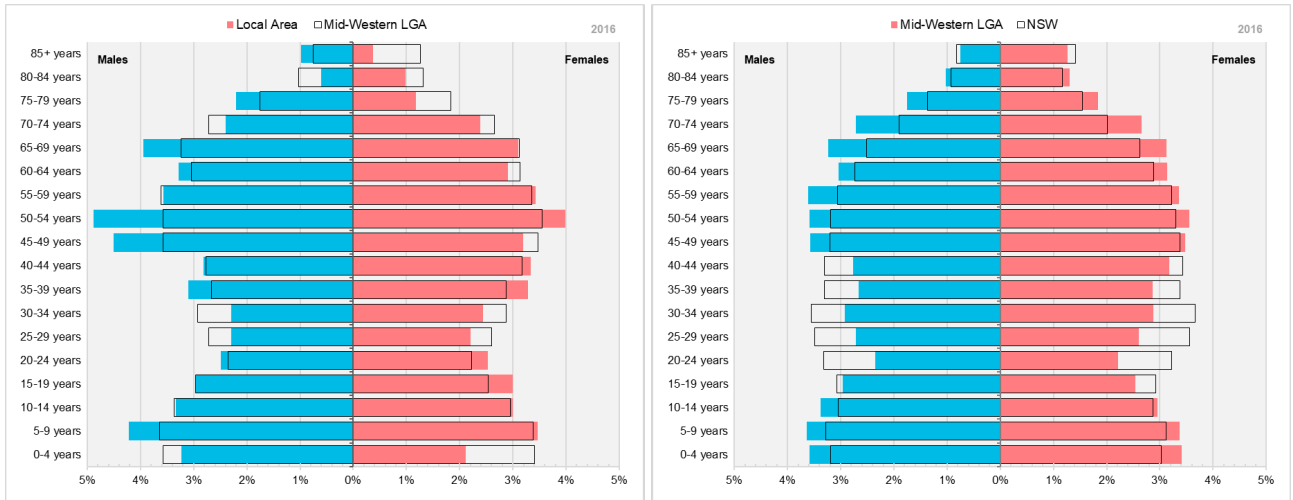
In 2016, the people of Mid-Western LGA had a median age of 42 years (Table 4-1). This was slightly higher than the median age for NSW, at 38 years. The population within the Local Vicinity had a slightly higher median age of 44 years. The population within the Local Vicinity also had a slightly higher proportion of males than females (47.1% female to 52.8% male), while the other areas had a more balanced gender mix.

In 2016, the population of Mid-Western LGA had lower proportions of young adults from around 20 to 44 years of age, and higher proportions of older adults from around 45 years of age and older, compared to NSW (Figure 4-2). In the same year, Mid-Western LGA also had a higher proportion of young children (0-9 years) compared to NSW.

In 2016, the Local Vicinity population had particularly low proportions of young adults aged 25 to 34 years and children aged 0 to 4 years compared to Mid-Western LGA. In comparison, Mid-Western LGA had a higher proportion of adults aged 50-54 years for both males and females compared to NSW.

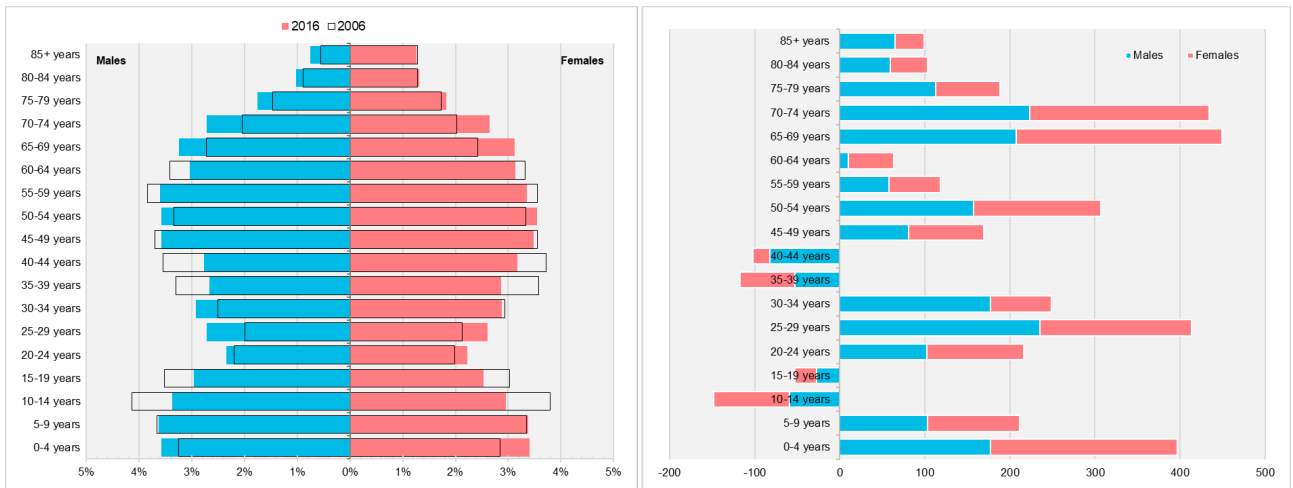
The population of the Mid-Western LGA is generally ageing. Between 2006 and 2016, the population experienced higher growth in the number of people older than 65 years of age (1,273 persons) (Figure 4-3). However, there was also an increase in the number of children aged 0 to 9 years and young adults aged 20 to 34 years during this time, while a decrease in the number of persons 10-19 years and those 35-44 years of age. The largest changes in the age structure in this area between 2006 and 2016 were in the age groups of 0 to 4 (approximately +395 persons), 25 to 29 (approximately +420 persons), 65 to 69 (approximately +450 persons), and 70 to 74 (approximately +440 persons) (Figure 4-3).

Figure 4-2. Age pyramids, Local area, Mid-Western LGA, and NSW, 2016



Source: (ABS, 2017)

Figure 4-3. Age pyramid 2006 (outline) and 2016 (solid) and population change 2006-2016, Mid-Western LGA



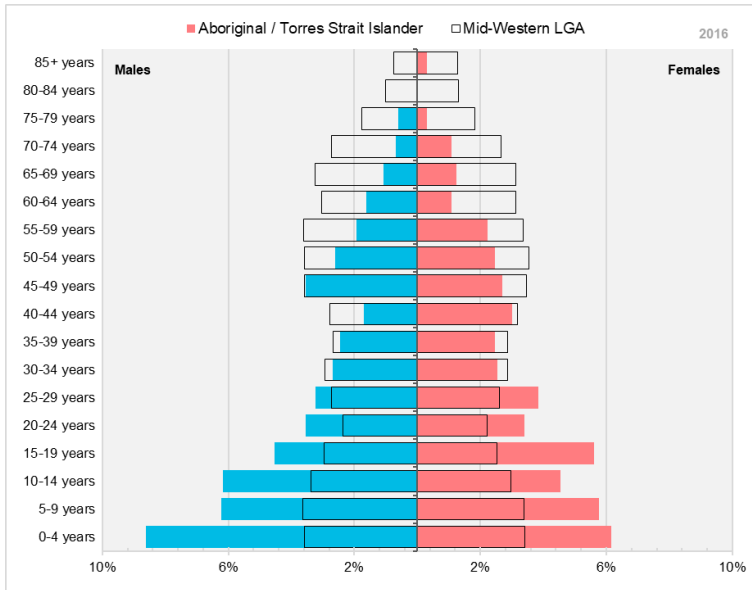
Source: (ABS, 2017)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

In 2016, Mid-Western LGA had a relatively large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (1,307 residents, making up 5.4% of the population, compared to 2.9% for NSW) (Table 4-1). The population within the Local Vicinity, as well as the Mudgee and Gulgong townships had a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than Mid-Western LGA (5.7% for the Local Vicinity, 7.6% for Gulgong and 6.1% for Mudgee).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Mid-Western LGA had a similar median age in 2016 compared to the median age of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of NSW (21 and 22 years). However, the figure for the median age of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the Mid-Western LGA was much lower than the total median age of Mid-Western LGA (42 years). More than a quarter of the LGAs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were under 10 years of age, compared to around 15% for the total population (Figure 4-4) (ABS, 2016b).

**Figure 4-4. Age pyramid, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (solid), compared to total Mid-Western LGA population (outline), 2016**



Source: (ABS, 2017).

#### 4.1.1.2 Cultural diversity

In 2016, a very small proportion of residents in Mid-Western LGA spoke a language other than English at home (2.7% for Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW 25.2%) (Table 4-1). In Mudgee, the proportion of residents who spoke a language other than English at home was slightly higher compared to Mid-Western LGA, at 3.3%, though the population within the Local Vicinity and Gulgong continued to have much lower proportions of residents who spoke a language other than English at home compared to NSW (2.9% for the Local Vicinity and 1.9% for Gulgong compared to 25.2% for NSW) (ABS, 2017).

Similarly, there were relatively few people who identified as having poor English language proficiency in Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW (0.3% for Mid-Western LGA and 4.5% for NSW). This also remained similar for both the population within the Local Vicinity, Gulgong and Mudgee townships (0.2% for the Local Vicinity, 0.4% for Gulgong and 0.5% for Mudgee compared to 4.5% for NSW) (Table 4-1) (ABS, 2017).

#### 4.1.1.3 Disability

The proportion of residents requiring assistance with core activities was similar in Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW (5.3% for Mid-Western LGA and 5.4% for NSW) (Table 4-1). Gulgong and Mudgee townships had a similar, albeit slightly higher proportion of residents requiring need for assistance with core activities, at 5.6% and 5.5% respectively. Conversely, the population within the Local Vicinity had the lowest proportion of residents requiring need for assistance (5.0% of the Local Vicinity compared to 5.3% for Mid-Western LGA) (ABS, 2017).

#### 4.1.1.4 Household types

In 2016, 28.9% of households were lone person households in the Mid-Western LGA (Table 4-1), compared to 23.8% of households in NSW. This is likely driven by the LGAs older age structure. Gulgong township had the highest proportion of lone person households, at 34.4%, though this was closely followed by Mudgee township, at 29.2%. The population within the Local Vicinity had the lowest proportion of lone person households, at 25.2% with the majority of residents living in a couple household arrangement (32.6%) (ABS, 2017).

4.1.1.5 Economic diversity/industry of employment

Mid-Western LGA’s economy is dominated by the Mining, Construction, Real Estate, Agriculture and Manufacturing sectors (see Figure 4-5).

Mining contributes almost half of the LGAs economic output each year. The annual value of Goods and Services Production from mining is \$2,437 million (M). The next largest industry is construction (\$417M) and real estate (\$315M).(Mid-Western Regional Council, 2021b)

Figure 4-5 Mid-Western LGA economic output by industry type

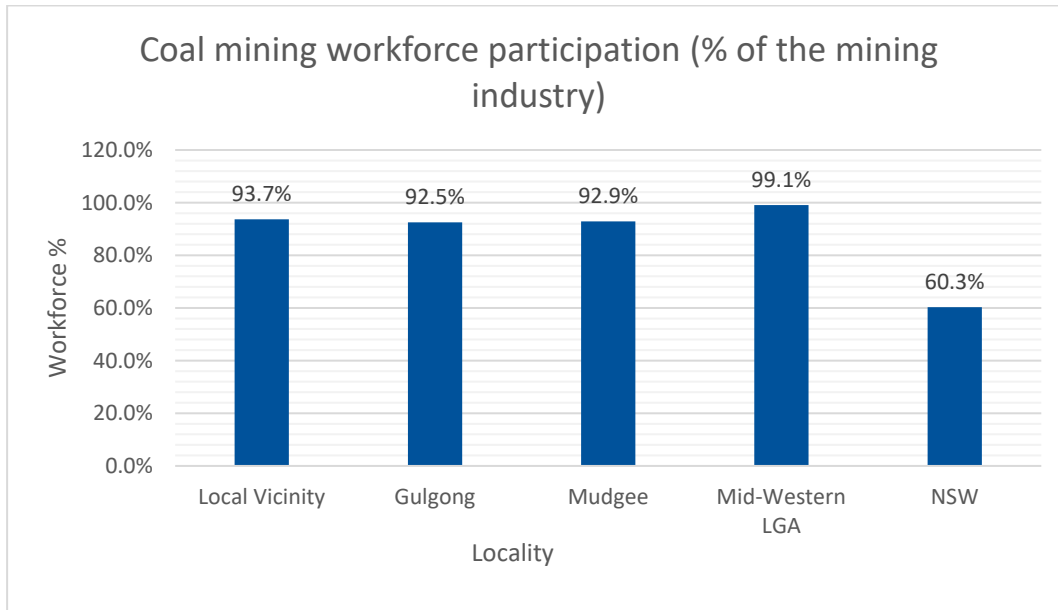


Source: (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2021b)

Mining is a significant industry of employment in the Mid-Western LGA (Figure 4-6). In 2016, 15.0% of workers in the Mid-Western LGA, 7.5% of workers in Gulgong, 7.2% of workers in Mudgee and 17.8% of workers in the Local Vicinity worked in the mining industry. In comparison, only 0.4% of the population of NSW were employed in mining (see Table 4-1).

Coal mining employs the majority of the workforce in the mining sector (comprising 99.1% in the Mid-Western LGA, 92.5% in Gulgong, 92.9% in Mudgee and 93.7% in the Local Vicinity in 2016) (see Table 4-1). In comparison, 60.3% of mining industry workers in NSW were employed by the coal mining sector in 2016 (see Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-6 Coal mining workforce participation (% of the mining industry)



The mining industry in 2016 was heavily dominated by men in Mid-Western LGA, with 90.7% of the mining workforce being male (Figure 4-7). Women dominated health care and social assistance; education and training; and accommodation and food service industries in Mid-Western LGA (Figure 4-7).

Between 2006 and 2016, the manufacturing industry experienced the greatest decline in employment, declining by around 340 jobs (Figure 4-8). This was followed by the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (decline of around 260 jobs) and the retail trade industry (decline of around 140 jobs). The mining industry grew by around 860 jobs in this period.

More than 600,000 people are estimated to visit Mid-Western LGA annually. Council reports indicate that Tourism employs 11% of full-time equivalent jobs in Mid-Western LGA, accounts for 67% of wages in the Accommodation and Food Services sector, and provides 28% of jobs in the Retail Trade sector (Mid-Western Regional Council, 2021a).

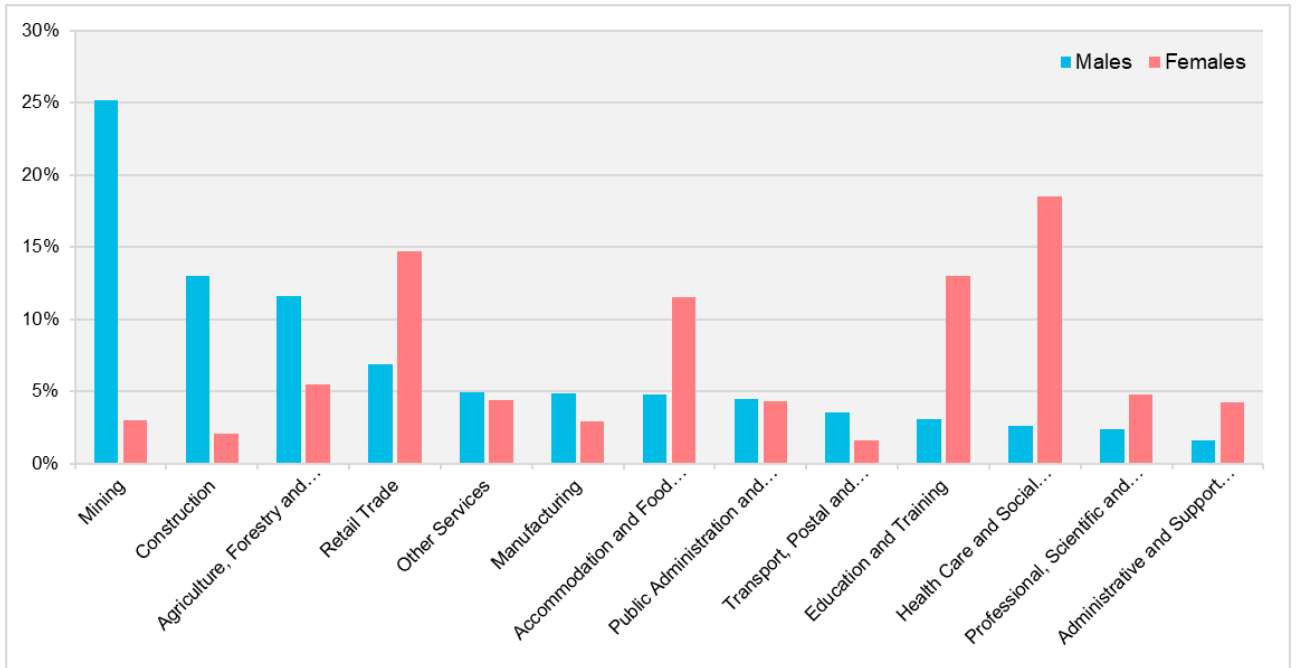
**4.1.1.6 Disadvantage**

The ABS SEIFA Index for Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD)<sup>10</sup> score for Mid-Western LGA in 2016 was 960, lower compared to the Australian benchmark of 1,000. The Mid-Western LGA population had a state percentile of 41, putting it slightly below average when compared to other LGAs in NSW<sup>11</sup>. More disadvantaged residents tend to be located in the areas of Mudgee, Gulgong and Kandos. Conversely, the suburb of Cooyal (south of the Project) was slightly more advantaged than Mid-Western LGA as a whole (see Figure 4-9) (ABS, 2018a).

<sup>10</sup> The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) are indices that are measures developed by the ABS that rank areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic disadvantage (IRSD) by using various census-based statistics (for example income, skills, unemployment and educational attainment, etc).

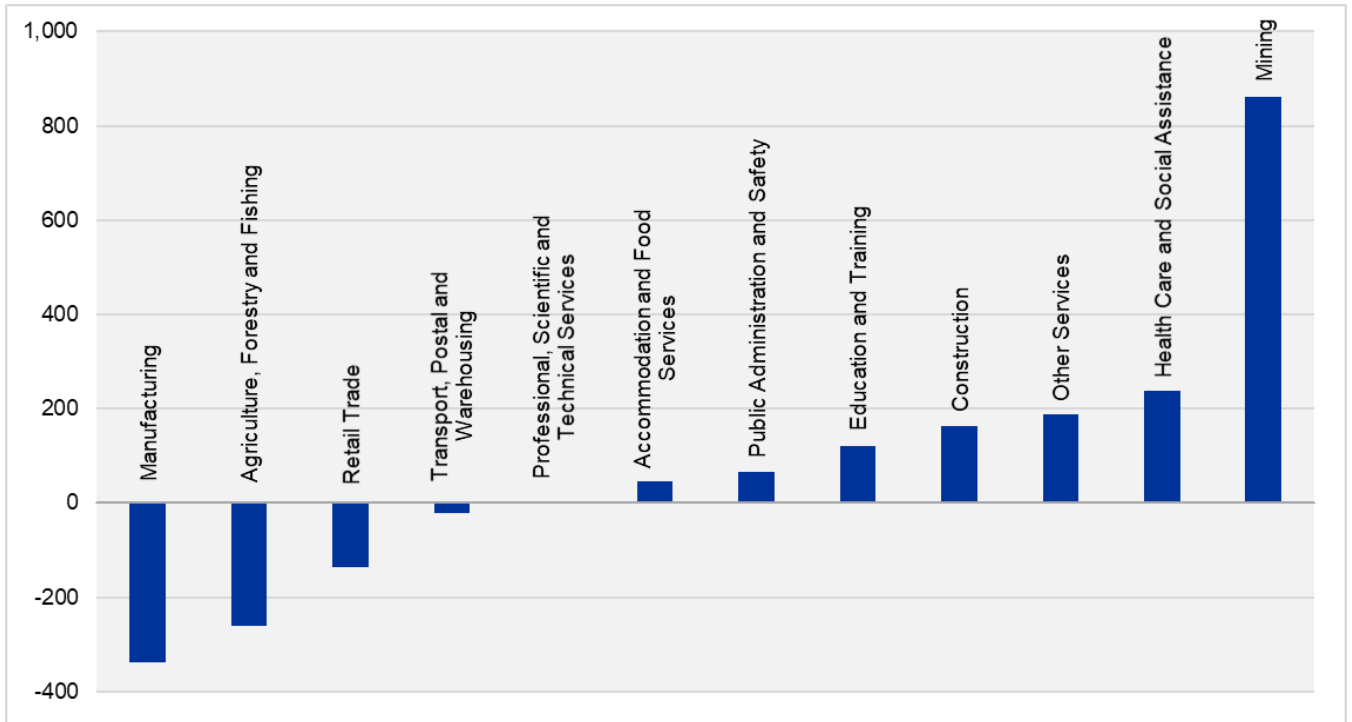
<sup>11</sup> Percentiles divide a distribution into 100 equal groups. The lowest 1% of areas are given a percentile number of 1, while the highest 1% of areas are given a percentile number of 100.

Figure 4-7. Top industries of employment by gender, Mid-Western LGA, 2016



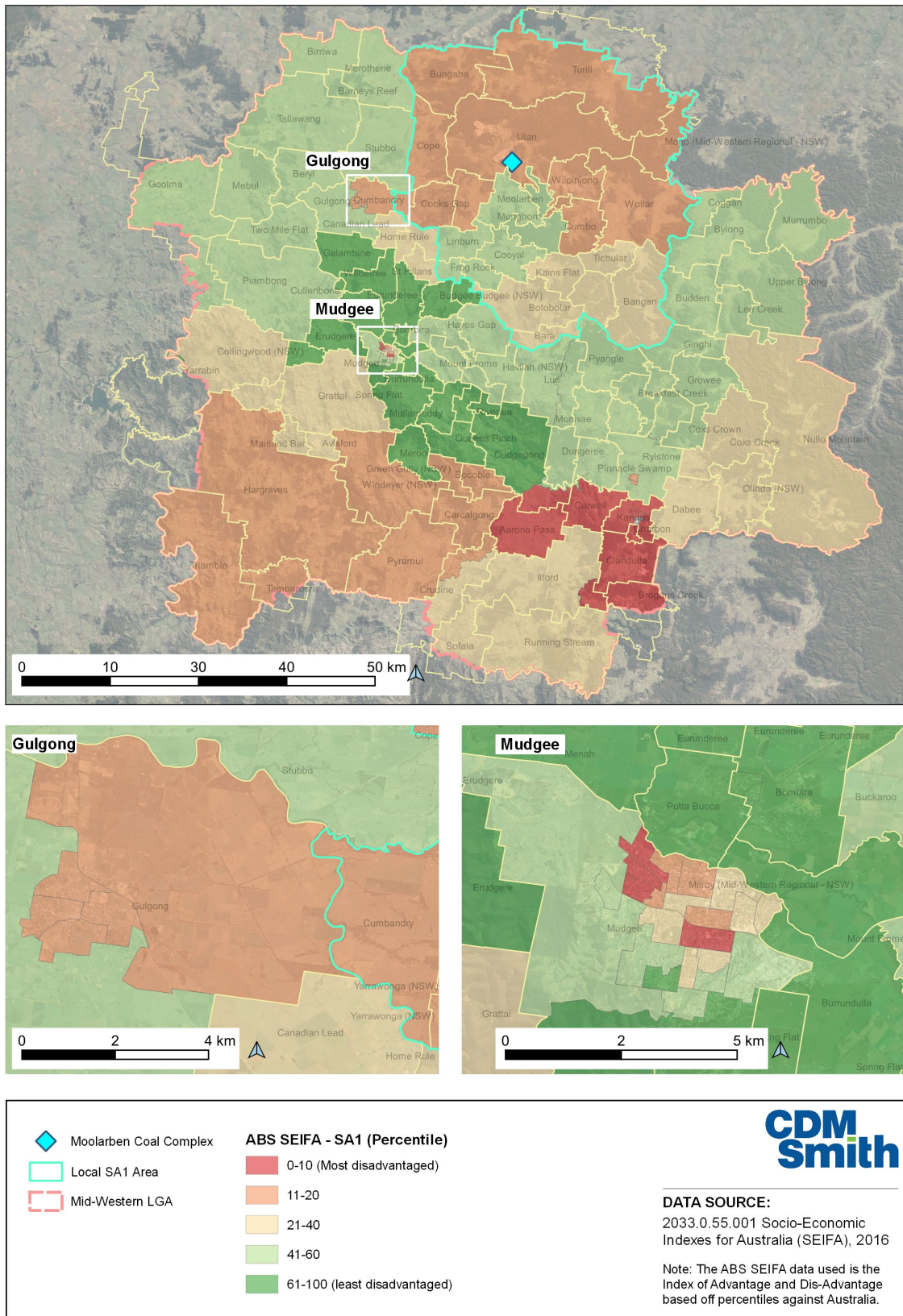
Source: (ABS, 2017) Note: Only those industries with minimum 3% of each gender workforce shown.

Figure 4-8. Employment change by industry of employment, Mid-Western LGA, 2006 to 2016



Source: (ABS, 2016a)

Figure 4-9. SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Mid-Western LGA, 2016



Source:(ABS, 2016c). Note: Based on national percentiles for SA1 areas (ABS, 2018a).

4.1.1.7 Income

The Mid-Western LGA population had a lower median weekly household income in 2016 than NSW, at \$1,131 per week compared to \$1,486 per week for NSW (Table 4-1). Median weekly household income was also lower in Mudgee and Gulgong townships, at \$1,258 and \$1,039 respectively.

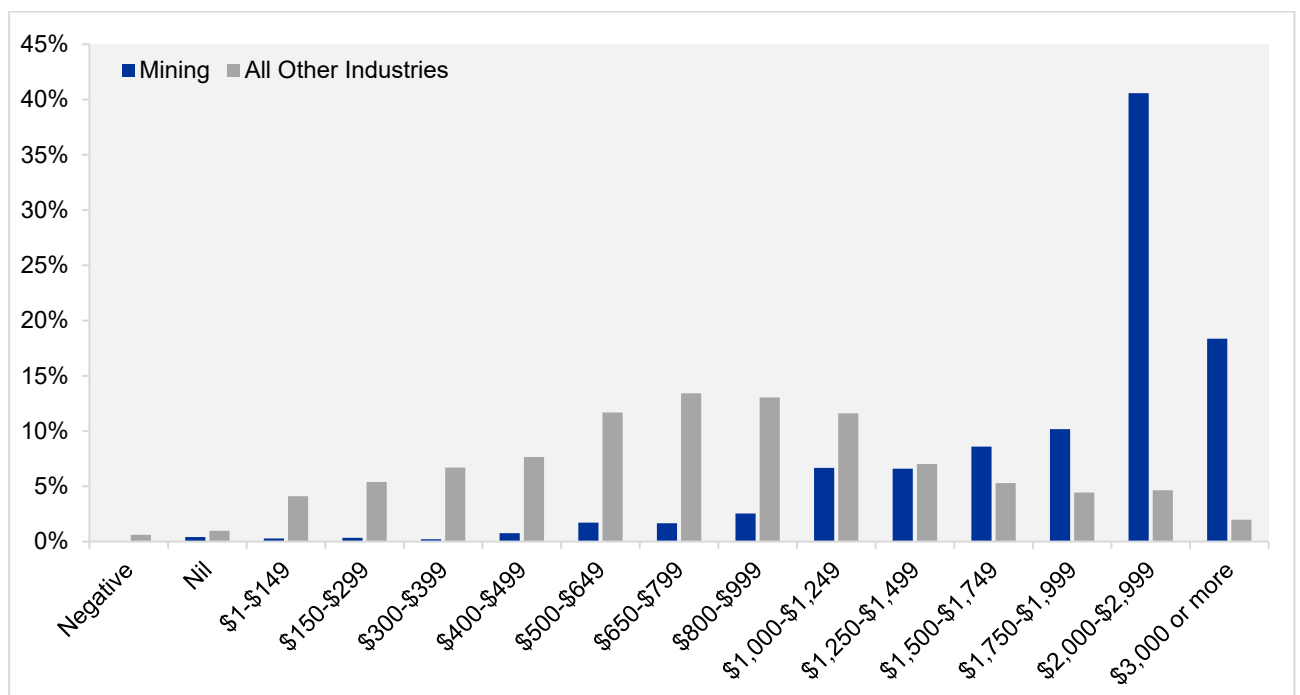
Similarly, median weekly personal income was lower for the Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW (\$547 for Mid-Western LGA and \$664 per week, for NSW). Median weekly personal income was also lower in Mudgee and Gulgong, compared to NSW at \$624 and \$522 respectively.

Gulgong township had the highest proportion of households with incomes below \$650 per week, at 26.3% compared to 21.1% for Mudgee, 23.8% for Mid-Western LGA and 17.7% for NSW. Median weekly household income was slightly higher for households with at least one Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander person in the Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW (\$1,232 for Mid-Western LGA compared to \$1,214 for NSW).

Figure 4-10 shows personal income for mine workers versus other industries, which indicates that mine workers tend to have higher personal incomes compared to workers in other industries.

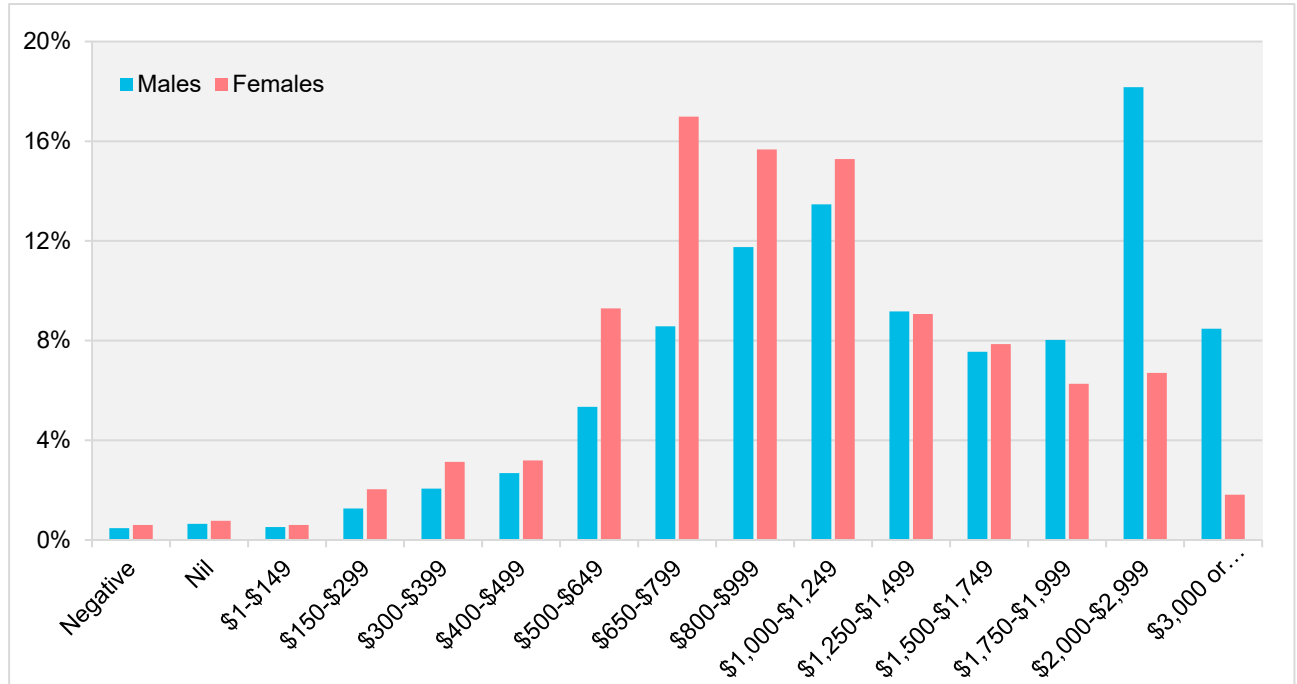
Figure 4-11 shows that men working full-time in the Mid-Western LGA in 2016 received higher incomes than women. A range of factors contribute to these differences, including the dominance of male employment in mining, but it highlights the importance of breaking down traditional gender-based occupations / industries of employment to support gender income distribution equality (ABS, 2017).

Figure 4-10. Personal income distribution by industry of employment, All workers, Mid-Western LGA, 2016



Source:(ABS, 2017).

Figure 4-11. Personal income distribution by gender (gross weekly), Full-time workers only, Mid-Western LGA, 2016



Source: (ABS, 2017).

4.1.1.8 Employment

In 2021, the Mid-Western LGA had a lower unemployment rate at 4.1% compared to 6.4% for NSW (Table 4-1). It is typically assumed that 5% is an indicator of ‘full’ employment in 2016, the unemployment rate across the Mid-Western LGA for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was similar to NSW, (15.0% for Mid-Western LGA and 15.3% for NSW) (ABS, 2017). Within Mid-Western LGA in 2016, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Gulgong was the highest, at 29.3% compared to 12.9% for Mudgee (ABS, 2017).

The labour force participation rate in 2016 was lower for Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW (54.1% and 59.2% respectively). Comparatively, the labour force participation rate was even lower for Gulgong and the Local Vicinity, at 50.9% and 50.6% respectively (ABS, 2017).

4.1.1.9 Education

The Mid-Western LGA had lower school completion levels in 2016, with 40.4% of residents having completed Year 11 or 12 equivalent, compared to 58.8% for NSW (Table 4-1). Similarly, this proportion remained lower than NSW for the Local Vicinity, and Mudgee and Gulgong townships (34.5% for the Local Vicinity, 35.2% for Gulgong and 44.7% for Mudgee). This statistic excludes people under 15 years of age and those who are still studying at primary or secondary school. Older populations whose career was in agriculture generally have lower educational completion levels so this may to some extent reflect the older age profile of the Mid-Western LGA (ABS, 2017).

Mid-Western LGA also had a lower proportion of residents who had a certificate or degree qualification compared to NSW (40.9% and 48.1% respectively). This proportion was marginally higher in Mudgee, at 42.8%, though was significantly lower in the population within the Local Vicinity and Gulgong township when compared to NSW (36.5% for the Local Vicinity, 34.0% for Gulgong and 48.1% for NSW) (ABS, 2017).

### 4.1.1.10 Resident stability

The Mid-Western LGA had a somewhat more transient population in 2016 compared to NSW. The proportion of residents who were living at the same address one year prior for Mid-Western LGA was 74.6%, compared to 77.4% for NSW. Similarly, the proportion of residents in Mid-Western LGA who were living at the same address five years prior was also lower, at 51.0% compared to 53.8% for NSW. The population within the Local Vicinity, however, had a more stable population, with 76.1% of residents who were living at the same address one year prior to 2016 compared to 72.1% for Gulgong and 72.5% for Mudgee. A total of 54% of residents in the Local Vicinity were also living at the same address five years prior to the 2016 Census compared to 50.9% for Gulgong and 44.3% for Mudgee (ABS, 2017).

Additional analysis will be undertaken in the SIA to understand the characteristics of new residents (in-migrants), for example, whether a high proportion of new residents work in the mining industry.

### 4.1.1.11 Housing

In 2016, the Mid-Western LGA had a lower proportion of occupied dwellings compared to NSW (84.1% for Mid-Western LGA and 90.1% for NSW) (Table 4-2). The Local Vicinity had the lowest proportion of occupied dwellings, at 76.3%, while Mudgee had the highest proportion of occupied dwellings, at 88.4%. Average household size was also slightly lower for the Mid-Western LGA, at 2.4 people compared to 2.6 people for NSW. Average household size was the lowest in Gulgong, at 2.3 persons.

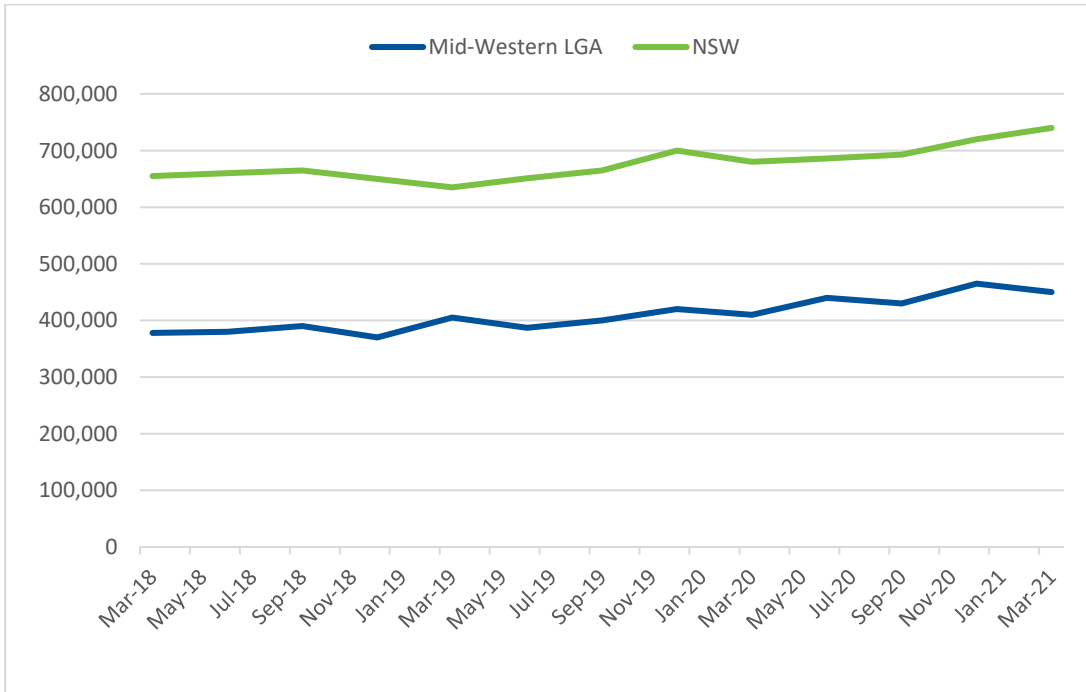
Mid-Western LGA had a higher proportion of housing owned outright compared to NSW (38.0% for Mid-Western LGA compared to 32.2% for NSW). The proportion of housing rented in Mid-Western LGA was lower than NSW, at 27.4% and 31.8% respectively, while for the population within the Local Vicinity it was the lowest, at 15.4%. The population within the Local Vicinity, however, had a higher proportion of housing owned with a mortgage compared to NSW (36.2% for the Local Vicinity compared to 32.3% for NSW).

Median monthly mortgage repayments were lower in Mid-Western LGA compared to NSW, at \$1,690 and \$1,986, respectively. Similarly, median weekly rent was lower in Mid-Western LGA, at \$270 compared to \$380 for NSW. Gulgong township recorded the lowest median weekly rent, at \$250.

Median dwelling sale prices have increased slightly over the last three years, generally in line with average NSW movements (Figure 4-12). Median rent prices have increased over the last three years, converging with the NSW average (Figure 4-13) (ABS, 2017).

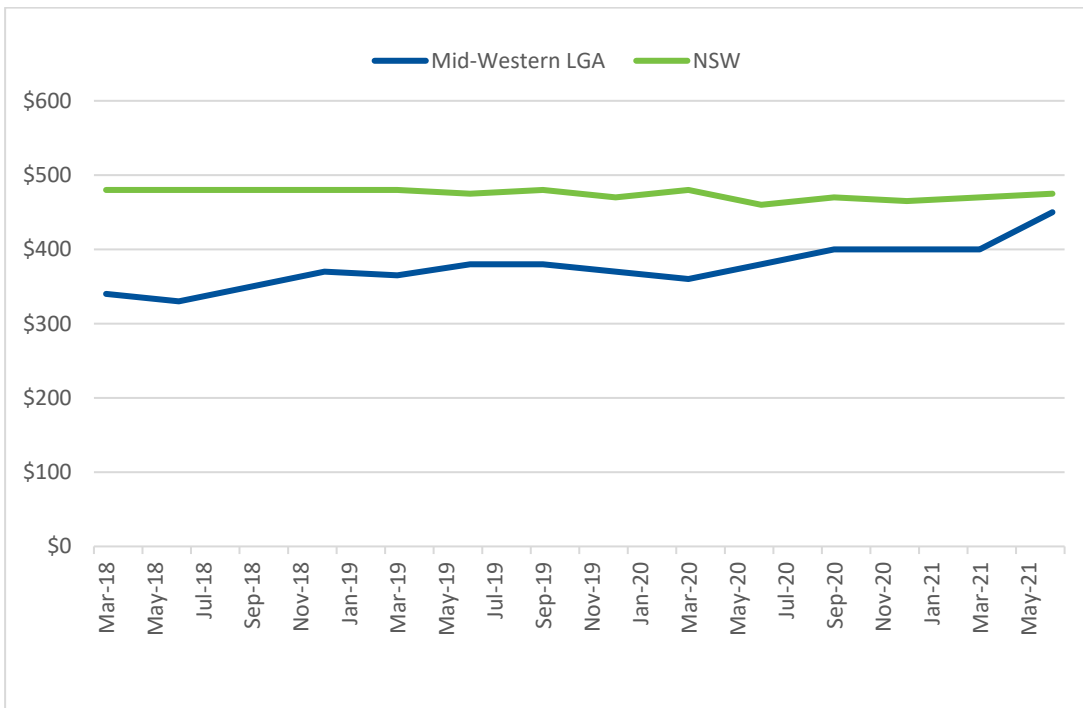
Table 4-2 indicates that there remains housing availability in the Social Locality, while Figures 4-12 and 4-13 indicate that there has been no significant housing/rental boom within the Mid-Western LGA during 2018 to 2021 notwithstanding the ongoing operations at the three major coal mines operating within the Mid-Western LGA (namely the Ulan Mine Complex, Wilpinjong Coal Mine and Moolarben Coal Complex).

Figure 4-12. Median Dwelling Sale Prices, Mid-Western LGA and NSW, 2018-2021



Source: (ABS, 2021a)

Figure 4-13. Median Rent Prices, Mid-Western LGA and NSW, 2018-2021



Source: (ABS, 2021a).

**Table 4-2. Housing indicators**

Housing Indicators	Local Vicinity	Gulgong	Mudgee	Mid-Western LGA	New South Wales
General housing indicators 2016					
Occupied dwellings	76.3% (726)	87.9% (728)	88.4% (3,998)	84.1% (8,760)	90.1%
Average household size	NA	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.6
Housing tenure – Owned outright	44.1% (320)	36.0% (264)	28.2% (1,129)	38.0% (3,332)	32.2%
Housing tenure – Owned with mortgage	36.2% (263)	28.2% (207)	31.5% (1,262)	30.6% (2,681)	32.3%
Housing tenure – Rented	15.4% (112)	30.6% (224)	36.4% (1,455)	27.4% (2,402)	31.8%
Median mortgage repayment (monthly)	NA	\$1,484	\$1,733	\$1,690	\$1,986
Median rent (weekly)	NA	\$250	\$300	\$270	\$380

Sources (where not otherwise specified):(ABS, 2017). Note: Where inconsistency between Census sources, Quickstats, Community Profiles (Time Series, Community, Indigenous), then TableBuilder used in order.

### 4.1.1.12 Health

Between 2016-2019, Mid-Western LGA had higher hospitalisation and death rates for the following health conditions compared to NSW (Table 4-3) (NSW Department of Health, 2021)<sup>12</sup>.

- Alcohol attributed deaths (2017-2018)
- Injury and poisoning deaths (2016-2018)
- Overweight and obesity attributable deaths (2017-2018)
- Smoking:
  - Attributable hospitalisations (2017-2019)
  - Attributable deaths (2017-2018)
- Stroke hospitalisations (2017-2019)
- Potentially preventable hospitalisations (2017-2019)
- Potentially avoidable deaths (2017-2018).

<sup>12</sup> This data has some limitations, including large confidence intervals, and should be treated with caution.

Table 4-3. Health indicators, Mid-Western LGA and NSW, 2016-2019

Health Indicators	Mid-Western LGA	New South Wales
<i>Adjusted rate per 100,000 population</i>		
Alcohol attributed hospitalisations (2017-2019)	423.4	514.0
Alcohol attributed deaths (2017-2018)	22.7	22.0
Asthma hospitalisations (2017-2019)	110.4	142.1
Injury and poisoning hospitalisations (2018-2019)	1940.4	2147.2
Injury and poisoning deaths (2016-2018)	48.8	35.6
Intentional self-harm hospitalisations (2017-2019)	64.8	93.0
Overweight and obesity attributable hospitalisations (2017-2019)	713.6	752.2
Overweight and obesity attributable deaths (2017-2018)	46.7	41.9
Smoking attributable hospitalisations (2017-2019)	766.0	658.9
Smoking attributable deaths (2017-2018)	79.7	67.0
Stroke hospitalisations (2017-2019)	141.0	134.9
Potentially preventable hospitalisations (2017-2019)	2361.6	2160.7
Potentially avoidable deaths (2017-2018)	121.2	99.4

Source: (NSW Department of Health, 2021).

## Section 5 Preliminary Consultation

### 5.1 Review of Previous Approvals Engagement

Engagement records from the planning approval process for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 projects and a summary of the engagement findings from these past approvals is outlined below.

#### 5.1.1 Stage 1 Engagement Findings, 2005

Table 5-1 is a summary of engagement findings associated with the Stage 1 Project (Wells Environmental Services, 2005).

**Table 5-1. Summary of engagement findings (Wells Environmental Services, 2005)**

Issue/Concern	Opportunities/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal heritage</li> <li>• European Heritage</li> <li>• local economy</li> <li>• regional economy</li> <li>• proponent’s taxes/royalties</li> <li>• air quality</li> <li>• blasting</li> <li>• chemicals</li> <li>• creeks and river systems</li> <li>• fauna</li> <li>• flora</li> <li>• future of Ulan village</li> <li>• global warming</li> <li>• land acquisition</li> <li>• lighting</li> <li>• noise</li> <li>• property values</li> <li>• rail movements</li> <li>• roads</li> <li>• salinity</li> <li>• surface and ground waters</li> <li>• traffic, subsidence, and</li> <li>• transgrid power lines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural and recreational improvements to the district</li> <li>• direct and indirect employment opportunities</li> <li>• investment in the local area and in Mudgee</li> <li>• property acquisitions and road improvements.</li> </ul>

### 5.1.2 Stage 2 Engagement Findings, 2008

Table 5-2 is a summary of engagement associated with the Stage 2 Project (Wells Environmental Services, 2008).

**Table 5-2 Stage 2 - Summary of engagement findings (Wells Environmental Services, 2008).**

Issue/Concern	Opportunities/Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• noise</li> <li>• dust</li> <li>• groundwater</li> <li>• creeks and river systems</li> <li>• traffic and road quality</li> <li>• visuals and lighting</li> <li>• vibration</li> <li>• Aboriginal heritage</li> <li>• clearing of native vegetation</li> <li>• rehabilitation</li> <li>• proximity to residences</li> <li>• land acquisition</li> <li>• property values</li> <li>• rail movements</li> <li>• global warming</li> <li>• general quality of life, and</li> <li>• cumulative impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct and indirect employment opportunities,</li> <li>• cultural and recreational improvements to the district</li> <li>• investment in the local area and in Mudgee</li> <li>• property acquisitions, and</li> <li>• road improvements.</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Ongoing Engagement

### Moolarben Coal Complex Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

The CCC provides a mechanism for ongoing communication between MCO and the local community. CCC meetings are held approximately every three months. These meetings provide a forum for the exchange of information between MCO and the members of the CCC, including providing information on ongoing site activities and approvals, and providing a mechanism for MCO to address questions from CCC members as representatives of the broader community.

The CCC's membership consists of:

- Five local community representatives
- Two Mid-Western Regional Council delegates
- One Local Aboriginal Land Council delegate
- Three company representatives; and
- One Independent Chairperson.

CCC meeting minutes are made available on MCO's website (<http://www.moolarbencoal.com.au/>).

A review of the CCC meeting minutes from March 2019-September 2021 indicates that the following issues have been raised the most frequently during the CCC meetings:

- Noise impacts – comments that blasting has been more noticeable, expectations for noise levels, and how MCO is dealing with noise complaints.
- Spontaneous combustion – concern that hot and dry climatic conditions have the potential to increase the risk of spontaneous combustion.
- Offsets – location/ type of biodiversity offsets, total area of offsets, and potential impact from the mining operations on offsets.
- Concerns of impacts to Goulburn River e.g. water quality impacts.

### Newsletters/news page

Community newsletters are available on MCO's website. MCO provides an overview of the ongoing and future on-site activities, similar to those presented at the CCC meetings. The last newsletter available on the website is from June 2021 (Yancoal, 2021c).

There is also a news page on the website, which provides for more recent updates on events and operations.

### Community contact and complaints line

MCO provides a free Community Response Line (Phone number 1800 556 484) which is publicly advertised through MCO's website, local media and community newsletters. The Community Response Line operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

An overview of the community complaint response process is provided in Figure 5-1.

#### 5.2.1 MCO's Complaints Process

MCO follows a set procedure for managing and responding to community complaints through the Environment and Community Department (E&C Department) which is overseen by Environment and Community Manager (E&C Manager). An internal complaints management database is used to record and manage community complaints. Within 24 hours of receiving a community complaint, investigations commence to determine the likely cause of the complaint. This information is used by MCO to develop suitable mitigation measures, and the actions taken are then communicated to the complainant. Where requested, initial contact regarding a complaint is generally made within 48 hours of receiving the complaint.

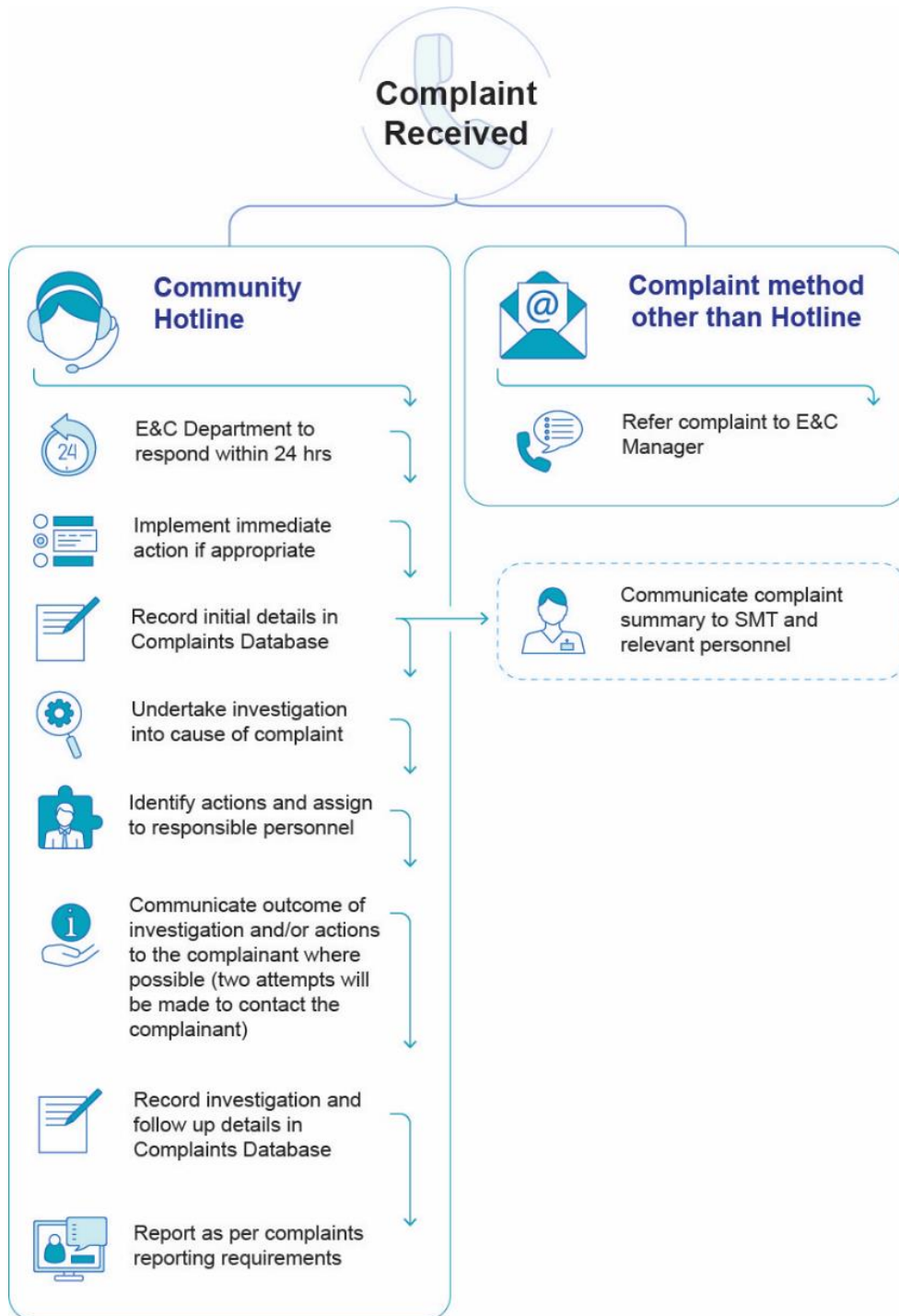
An internal complaints register is maintained by MCO, with a summary published to the MCO's website. The published complaints register generally outlines the date, location, type of complaint and response for each complaint. The complaints register summary for 2020 (and 2021 interim records) only include a count summary of the complaints by the type of complaint and month received.

The Community Complaints Procedure requires a record of the following information to be captured:

- the nature of the complaint;
- method of the complaint;
- relevant monitoring results and meteorological data at the time of the complaint;
- site investigation outcomes;
- any necessary site activity and activity changes;
- any necessary actions assigned; and
- communication of the investigation outcome(s) to the MCO Stakeholder Management Team (SMT), relevant personnel and complainant.

An overview of the community complaint response process is provided in Figure 5-1.

**Figure 5-1 MCC's Complaints Process (Yancoal, 2020b)**



### 5.2.2 Complaints Received

A summary of complaints with the associated complaint categories between January 2018 to July 2021 is outlined in Table 5-3. Approximately 80% of all complaints received during this period were associated with noise. The majority of complaints are from local residents. Notably, there has been a significant reduction in total and noise-related complaints since 2018.

**Table 5-3 Complaints Summary (2018-2021) (Yancoal, 2021b).**

Year	Air	Water	Noise	Blast	Other	Total
2018	0	0	54	10	1	<b>65</b>
2019	4	0	33	1	0	<b>38</b>
2020	1	0	12	3	0	<b>16</b>
2021 (Ongoing)	1	0	11	1	4	<b>17</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>136</b>

### 5.3 SIA Scoping Report Consultation

A selection of representative stakeholders were contacted and consulted in June and July 2021 to obtain initial opinions, concerns, and comments regarding the Project and inform preparation of this SIA Scoping Report. The following sections provide a summary of this preliminary stakeholder engagement.

#### 5.3.1 Overview

Table 5-4 provides a summary of stakeholder contact by type, location, method of engagement and number of stakeholders consulted. It is noted some stakeholders were involved in multiple groups – for example, both as a local landholder and CCC member. The engagement involved:

- Thirteen (13) private landholders from Cooks Gap, Cooyal, and Stoney Creek<sup>13</sup>.
- Eight (8) CCC members, including the Chair, one Mudgee Aboriginal Land Council delegate, two Mid-Western Regional Council delegates and four community representatives (one landholder).
- Nine (9) representatives of organisations and agencies<sup>14</sup>, including:
  - Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)
  - Mid-Western Regional Council, including two Councillors and one Council officer
  - NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
  - Emergency services: NSW Police Mudgee, NSW Rural Fire Service, and NSW Department of Education
  - Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG).

Table 5-4 provides a summary of stakeholders engaged for this Scoping SIA. A more comprehensive engagement program has been developed to inform the SIA for the Project.

<sup>13</sup> No residents were available/contactable for engagement in Ulan during the engagement period.

<sup>14</sup> NSW Communities and Justice – CDM Smith received a call from a representative on Tuesday 27 July stating no assets in jurisdiction or interest to comment as part of scoping report.

**Table 5-4 Summary of stakeholders engaged as part of the Scoping SIA**

Type	Location	Engagement Method	Number
<b>Landholder</b>	Cooks Gap	Face to face, phone call and online tele/videoconference	6
	Cooyal	Phone call and online tele/video conference	5
	Stoney Creek	Online tele/video conference	1
	Ulan (outside of the village)	Face to face	1
<b>CCC Members</b>	Various	Face to face, phone call and online tele/video conference	8
<b>Organisations and Agencies</b>	N/A	Face to face, online tele/video conference	9

### 5.3.2 Engagement Method

As a part of broader Project-specific engagement, MCO prepared and distributed a newsletter setting out initial Project information and a map of the Project area for context, in particular identifying existing operations and the Project location. The newsletter was distributed in June 2021 via the following methods, and included a description of engagement for the Project SIA and contact details to register interest in engagement:

- Local letterbox drop (Cooyal, Moolarben, Ulan, Cumbo, Linburn and Cooks Gap).
- Local businesses – up to approximately 30 businesses.
- On-site distribution for employees/contractors.
- Distribution in the Mudgee Guardian newspaper.
- Mudgee Council building.

Landholders and CCC members were also contacted via telephone and sent the newsletter via email, with an invitation to discuss their views or technical knowledge for input into this SIA Scoping report.

Engagement was subsequently conducted by senior specialists from CDM Smith or Molino Stewart, and a representative from Resource Strategies, each independent of MCO. Resource Strategies were involved to aid stakeholders in answering questions about the Project, such as questions regarding the Project workforce, mine life and approval processes.

The following consultation method was implemented for discussions with the potential stakeholders:

- First contacts with landholders and CCC representatives were made by MCO. Once the stakeholders confirmed their interest in participating in the SIA engagement process, CDM Smith made contact with the stakeholders to arrange the engagement. CDM Smith contacted other types of stakeholders (e.g. organisations and agencies) directly. Those stakeholders that could not be reached initially via phone (no answer or no option to leave a voicemail) were contacted again at a later time/date.
- Nine face to face meetings were conducted between Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June to Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (inclusive).
- Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and the preference of many stakeholders, the remaining engagement was undertaken via phone or online conferences (Microsoft Teams and Zoom), between Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021.

- This consultation period was then extended in an effort to engage more landholders from the Cooyal area, given this area is closest to the Project. Three (3) additional stakeholders were consulted in the week ending Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, being two (2) landholders in Cooyal (inclusive of the Cooyal Pub's owner) and one landholder (1) in Stoney Creek.
- Efforts were made to engage with NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), and NSW Department of Health (Local Health District) (DH), but responses have yet to be received. They will be engaged further during preparation of the SIA.

All potential stakeholders were informed of future opportunities to participate in engagement as part of the SIA phase of the Project.

It is considered a broad spectrum of views has been obtained and is considered sufficient to inform this SIA Scoping Report.

### 5.3.3 Key Engagement Findings

Table 5-5 outlines the key impact categories identified, with comments frequently mentioned from engagement findings. Comments from stakeholders are a mix of experienced and perceived/potential impacts associated with current operations and the Project. The perceived and potential impacts identified by stakeholders during the Scoping SIA engagement process are largely consistent with the concerns raised during Stage 1 and Stage 2 engagement (Table 5-1 and 5-2).

It is noted that at the time of consultation, the scope of the Project included an extension to the mine life to 2045. Since then, MCO have determined that a mine life extension is not required for the Project and, therefore, comments made by stakeholders in relation to a mine life extension have not been included in this report. In addition, MCO is also investigating options to extend open cut mining operations in OC4. This will form a separate EIS and planning approval process, and therefore comments made by stakeholders in relation to extension of OC4 are not included in this report.

**Table 5-5 Summary of stakeholder comments on perceived and potential impacts**

Impact Category	Comments from Stakeholders (Summarised)
<b>Positive Impacts</b>	
<b>Economics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mining operations contribute 45% of total rate base to the Mid-Western Regional Council which is a significant financial contribution to improve public infrastructure, assets and operations.</li> <li>Mining positively contributes towards the local economy directly as a significant provider of employment and expenditure in local business.</li> <li>Mining also contributes indirectly through increased investment into the local housing market and increased use of local businesses (e.g. workforce and families use of accommodation, eating locally, train/bus drivers, medical facilities etc).</li> <li>Increased awareness and popularity of “The Drip” due to potential impacts from mining activity.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities &amp; Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions/grants to local hospitals, Lifeskills Plus, and sporting organisations and facilities.</li> <li>Mining is a significant employer, and therefore families of mine employees generate demand for local schools.</li> <li>MCO supports a TAFE course offered to the North-East Wiradjuri Group.</li> </ul>
<b>Community values and Public Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Mid-Western LGA does not feel like a mining dominated area (particularly Mudgee) and the Project is not expected to change this, but numerous stakeholders seek to enforce mine Social Impact Management Plans (SIMPs) provisions around community cohesion measures (e.g. no mining clothing worn in towns).</li> <li>Many landholders noted Moolarben has been a “good neighbour”, practices good land management (e.g. weed control) and responds to complaints.</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in using any biodiversity credits from the Project to increase the size of existing conservation reserves (i.e. using adjacent land).</li> <li>Seeking consideration of impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage values from biodiversity offsets.</li> <li>Seeking continued management of feral animals (e.g. bating program, noxious weeds management).</li> </ul>
<b>Visual Amenity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple stakeholders (landholders and Councillors) noted the positive appearance of rehabilitation works completed on site to date, commenting that the rehabilitated land appears to be in a better condition than it was before the mine was developed. Stakeholders seeking a continuation of progressive rehabilitation to reduce visual sight of works.</li> </ul>
<b>Traffic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A representative of the Mudgee Police indicated the mine’s drug/alcohol testing of employees has seen an improvement in road behaviours over last 12 months.</li> </ul>
<b>Amenity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project activities are located at a further distance from private residences such as those in Cooks Gap.</li> </ul>
<b>Negative impacts</b>	
<b>Economics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern around impacts to tourism industry (i.e. seek to enforce mine SIMPs provisions around community cohesion measures, such as no mining clothing worn in towns).</li> <li>One landholder in Cooyal was concerned with potential amenity issues (audibility, night-time glow) due to extension of OC3 south toward Cooyal impacting success of bed and breakfast business.</li> <li>Concern around impacts to communities in proximity to the mine - attention was drawn to Wollar, which no longer has an operational fuel station, post office, general store, or public school (in ‘recess’).</li> </ul>

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Impact Category	Comments from Stakeholders (Summarised)
<b>Facilities and Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community concern over Ulan Public School that has gone into 'recess', potentially due to increased transport links to Gulgong and Mudgee. Community perception that reduction in enrolments at Ulan Public School is due to mine operations acquiring a lot of nearby residential properties, thereby reducing demand.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Values and Public Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern over loss of neighbours and community due to acquisition of properties. It was believed that these acquisitions had, for example, caused Wollar and Ulan schools to go into 'recess'.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Supply</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern with existing reduction in availability and affordability of properties (especially 3-4 bed houses) in proximity to the Ulan Public School, due to mines acquiring local properties, and in general due to mine employees typically having a higher wage and being able to pay a higher price for housing.</li> <li>Concern around availability of short-term accommodation for construction workers cumulatively with other projects in the region (i.e. if construction phases coincide). It was noted Mid-Western Regional Council is currently undertaking a \$5-6 M caravan park expansion project to increase availability of short-term accommodation.</li> </ul>
<b>Cumulative Effects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The large number of infrastructure and mining projects in the LGA has raised concerns about planning approval assessment process fatigue, and the need to assess cumulative impacts to, for example, housing, cultural heritage, groundwater and surface water (use and discharge).</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered Aboriginal culture is being lost due to loss of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites from mine expansions and modifications. The Mudgee LALC seek assessment of impacts to both tangible (e.g. women's sites, meeting places) and intangible sites, and to survey entire areas rather than just along transects.</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern raised about potential impacts on biodiversity values, including importance of habitat in the adjacent Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve for bird species, the Koala and the Regent Honeyeater.</li> </ul>
<b>Groundwater and Surface Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern over impact from any mines reducing groundwater supply that would otherwise be accessed by bores on properties, particularly during droughts (it was suggested that previous EIS testing was undertaken during drought)</li> <li>Majority of landholders have bores (one natural spring) as their source of potable water and indicated they were happy for their bores to be included in an assessment of groundwater supply and monitoring for the Project. Some landholders which did not have bores indicated they are hesitant to invest in bores as they believe supply may be reduced by mining needs/consumption and it's not worth the investment.</li> <li>Concern raised over potential impacts to groundwater (modelling of potential drawdown following mine closure and consideration of climate change in modelling) and surface water (impact of reduced discharge into Goulburn River when mining ceases).</li> </ul>
<b>Amenity (Noise and Visual)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landholders raised various concerns about amenity impacts, with some very concerned about current operations (particularly landholders in Cooks Gap). Current issues included feeling vibrations, hearing machinery, blasting, traffic noise and rail maintenance at midnight. Issues were apparent during good weather, on clear nights, with breezes prevailing from the mining operation.</li> <li>It was noted by the majority of landholders in Cooks Gaps that the visual impact of the existing operations was more of a concern than the Project, as the existing operation is located closer and the Project is expected to be obscured by the natural topography. Some landholders in Cooyal, however, raised concern over potentially increasing amenity impacts (night glow, noise, dust) with OC3 extension to the south, despite the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve being located between Cooyal and the Project area. One landholder in Cooyal raised concern over potential amenity impacts to their bed and breakfast business.</li> </ul>

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Impact Category	Comments from Stakeholders (Summarised)
<b>Air quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One stakeholder in Cooks Gap raised that they occasionally experience an acrid coal burning smell as a result of the existing mine, and several land holders in Cooks Gap and Cooyal noted they have experienced occasional black dust and associated health concerns. One stakeholder raised that contribution of exposed open cut pits to dust storms should be considered.</li> <li>Concerns raised over air emissions and coal dust from the existing operations settling on the roofs of houses which are then collected into rainwater tanks for potable water.</li> <li>While the existing operations are located closer to landholders in Cooks Gap, and are therefore not expected to experience additional impacts from the Project relative to the existing operation, landholders in Cooyal expressed concern over potential air quality impacts from the extension of OC3 south toward Cooyal.</li> </ul>
<b>Traffic (Road and Rail)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many stakeholders were concerned by increased traffic, however were less concerned after hearing the Project does not include an increase to the existing production rates or workforce size. Residents seek continued upgrades of roads where the condition is of sub-standard quality.</li> <li>One stakeholder sought greater consideration to road safety policies and work procedures for staff given past fatal accidents involving mining employees.</li> <li>One stakeholder raised that existing train movements associated with product transport is very loud. It was noted that Sandy Hollow Railway Line is often down for maintenance (hardly coping with demand). Rail grinding during night has resulted in sleep disturbance impacts. Requested that if the Project results in production rate increases, the EIS noise model should consider increased train movements.</li> </ul>
<b>Property</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some landholders raised that the Project creates uncertainty around saleability of property/livelihoods for landowners/businesses (agriculture and tourism) located close to the Project area.</li> </ul>
<b>Feelings of Powerlessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time and effort required to review and provide submissions on multiple development applications and modifications for the MCC over the years, as well as various other projects in the region.</li> <li>Some landholders noted feelings of powerlessness regarding impacts/complaints as perception that these are not taken seriously or resolved.</li> </ul>

### Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

#### 6.1 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are those that result from the impacts of an action added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of which agency or person undertakes them (ICPGSIA, 2003). Cumulative social impacts can arise from proposed activities (such as dust and noise), or multiple projects needing similar resources (e.g. skilled labour, housing or water) (NSW Government, 2021c).

Potential cumulative social impacts of the Project will be assessed as part of the SIA phase of the Project.

Employees, contractors and deliveries would access the Project area via the existing MCC site access (via Ulan-Wollar Road for Stage 1) and internal MCC roads.

The Project is an extension of the existing MCC and is located within an existing mining precinct along with the Ulan Mine and Wilpinjong Mine. If approved, the Project would form a new component of the overall MCC.

The following would be considered in the assessment of the potential cumulative social impacts with the currently approved MCC:

- The Project would involve no change to the previously assessed peak workforce cumulatively at the MCC (i.e. likely no change to the current cumulative impacts associated with employment experienced as part of the MCC).
- The Project would involve no change to the total annual ROM coal production rate (i.e. likely no change to the current cumulative amenity impacts experienced as part of the MCC).
- The Project would involve no change to the total annual product coal transported from the MCC via rail (i.e. likely no change to the current cumulative impacts associated with product coal transport and rail movements experienced as part of the MCC).
- The Project would involve no change to site access to the MCC and no direct interaction with the public road network (i.e. likely no change to the current cumulative impacts associated with traffic movements experienced as part of the MCC).

The analysis of the potential cumulative social impacts relevant to the Project will also take into consideration:

- Existing and planned nearby projects (as outlined in Section 3.1) and their relevance to the Project and impacts
- Potential opportunities to manage cumulative impacts.

Potential cumulative social impacts associated with the Project may include impacts on:

- Way of life matters, such as noise, dust, lighting, and disruptions
- Community matters, such as sense of place and character
- Access matters, such as housing affordability and availability and access to infrastructure and services
- Health and wellbeing matters, such as health impacts and fears about health impacts of noise, dust, lighting etc.
- Surroundings matters, such as access to water supply and visual amenity

Table 6-1 outlines the matters that will include a cumulative impact assessment.

### 6.2 Impacts of the Project Not Being Approved

A review of the impacts arising should the Project not be approved will be undertaken during the SIA. The Project not progressing would result in the existing Stage 1 open cut workforce (a subset of the approved MCC workforce) reducing from 2026. Regardless of whether the Project proceeds, MCO's operations are approved to continue until 2038.

Should the Project not proceed, potential Project impacts such as amenity and health issues associated with noise, air quality, light and odour would not occur for those people continued to be affected and those newly affected. Furthermore, potential changes to amenity associated with the natural environment and the enjoyment of natural values in surrounding areas would not occur. However, existing approved MCC impacts would continue.

The loss of direct jobs may result in impacts to local businesses from any reduction to local spend from the redundant Project workforce and their families. Additional indirect job losses may occur in the LGA and impact the regional economy as a consequence.

If replacement employment was not available, the population of the LGA may decline as these workers leave to find work.

This scenario will be further explored in the SIA, and the SIA will consider the potential impacts of population decline upon services, such as schools, hospitals, etc. The SIA will also consider whether these jobs could be replaced locally in other industries.

### 6.3 Key Issues to be Assessed in the SIA

Key issues to be assessed in the SIA include:

- Within the context that there is no proposed increase to the existing mine life/workforce, the influence of the Project on population levels/stability and the impact this has on social connections, community identity and service provision (social infrastructure).
- Further analysis of economic and employment conditions and whether there are any local labour market shortages related to mining activity.
- Further consultation to identify community attitudes to mining and the Project and assessment of the potential for changes to community cohesion, community identity and sense of place.
- Potential for nearby residents and businesses to experience stress and anxiety, including actual and perceived issues, such as uncertainty, lack of influence, amenity, and impacts to health and property values/saleability.
- Further consultation to identify the level of concern regarding the Project's contribution to climate change and any potential impacts to the enjoyment of nearby rural residential and natural areas.
- Identification of opportunities for improved training and employment for some of the identified "vulnerable" / "marginalised" stakeholders.
- Identification of opportunities for improved local community and business benefits, such as through local contracting arrangements, recruitment practices and/or further targeting of community contributions.
- Consideration of further opportunities to streamline communications and complaints processes for the Project, if practicable.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

The SIA will be informed by other technical studies:

- The extent of any amenity impacts for local residents and businesses. The SIA will focus on residual amenity impacts that are not mitigated through the technical assessments and mitigation strategies, such as nuisance and cleaning impacts, reduced enjoyment of rural lifestyle and natural environment, changes to sense of place, etc.
- The extent of any impacts to water access and availability. The SIA will focus on residual water impacts, which might include concern about future water availability and access.
- Implications of the Project for Aboriginal People, including physical sites on the Project area, as well as connection to the broader area. The SIA will focus on residual impacts for Aboriginal cultural heritage that are not mitigated through the technical assessments and mitigation strategies.

Additional issues may arise during additional baseline and stakeholder research to be conducted for the SIA.

### 6.3.1 Possible Mitigation/ Enhancement Measures

The SIA will identify possible measures that could be implemented to mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. A preliminary review of anticipated impacts and possible measures has identified the following:

Investigate need to adjust recruitment practices to prioritise Aboriginal people and young people and offer additional training and support.

Ongoing communication / engagement with Council, stakeholders and community to ensure community contributions are going towards valued projects.

Investigate need to adjust recruitment practices to prioritise residents of the Local Vicinity and therefore retain them in the immediate area.

- Investigate need to adjust recruitment practices to prioritise women and offer additional training and support.
- Ongoing communication with stakeholders and community in relation to:
  - uncertainty about acquisitions, Project impacts, timing and future expansions;
  - actual and perceived health impacts
  - possible community changes.
- Investigate options to reduce visibility of Project from public locations.
- Review policies/practices to ensure local employment, mine worker behaviour, community involvement and community contributions demonstrate the value of mining to the Mid-Western LGA Community.
- Investigate the option to reduce potential traffic impacts.
- Consider further opportunities to streamline complaints process and communications between the mine and stakeholders and the community, if practicable.
- Ensure engagement undertaken relating to approvals provides clear information and focus on relative impacts to reduce time/effort taken to provide input.

### 6.4 Initial Evaluation

The SIA Guideline provides a Scoping Worksheet to record and classify potential social impacts. Each impact is assigned a level of assessment to be undertaken in the SIA.

The Scoping Worksheet was used to complete an initial evaluation of the potential social impacts of the Project and to inform Table 6-1 below, which summarises the potential social impacts requiring detailed assessment. These potential social impacts will be specifically assessed through the SIA. It is emphasised that this assessment is in its preliminary stages, and the full impact of the Project has not yet been determined. They may therefore be adjusted in the SIA.

Definitions of the dimensions of social impact magnitude included in the assessment table, as described in the SIA Guidelines, are as follows:

- **Extent:** Which location(s) is/are affected (e.g. near neighbours, local, regional)
- **Duration:** Will the impact be time-limited (e.g. over particular project phases) or permanent
- **Severity or scale:** The likely scale or level of change (e.g. mild, moderate, severe)
- **Sensitivity or importance:** How sensitive/vulnerable (or how adaptable/resilient) people are to the impact, or (for positive impacts) how important is it to them.
- **Level of interest or concern:** How concerned/interested people are, according to the findings from research and engagement.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

**Table 6-1. Social impacts requiring detailed assessment**

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
<b>Neutral Social Impacts</b>								
Continuation of mining employment trends	Community	The Project may result in a small increase in population (if more jobs are localised) contributing to minor changes to community composition in Mid-Western LGA and service demand.	No - Mid-Western LGA	No - Life of Project	Small change to baseline	Not significantly disadvantaged / vulnerable to this issue	No evidence of concern, potentially positive reception	Assessment required in SIA
<b>Positive Social Impacts</b>								
Continuation of mining employment trends	Community	Continuation of training and employment may assist with maintaining young adult population in Mid-Western LGA which may otherwise decline.	Yes - Mid-Western LGA	No - Life of Project	Small change to baseline	Gap in young adult population	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Continuation of mining employment trends	Livelihoods	Continuation of employment as well as training opportunities for workers and residents of the Mid-Western LGA, supporting these residents and their households, in addition to indirect employment benefits.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	No – Small change to baseline	Yes (moderate) – Employment is strong, but currently supported by mine/mining	Yes (high) – Livelihoods a high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Continuation of mining	Livelihoods	Continuation of business contracts, and mine workers buying locally, supporting Mid-	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	No – Small change to baseline	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Yes (high) – Livelihoods a high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Contractor/ supply trends		Western LGA businesses, their employees, and the local economy generally. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>						To be informed by the EIS Economic Assessment
Continuation of mining employment trends	Livelihoods	Continuation of training and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Mid-Western LGA Community, who were identified as 'vulnerable' stakeholders.	Yes – Aboriginal People	No – Life of Project	No – Small change to baseline	Moderate) – Unemployment higher for Aboriginal people, but wages are average	Yes (high) – Livelihoods a high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Continuation of mining employment trends	Livelihoods	Continuation of improved economic diversity and economic resilience within the Mid-Western LGA while mines are operational, with an economy less reliant on agriculture, retail services and manufacturing.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	No – Small change to baseline	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Continuation of mining employment trends	Accessibility	Potential increase in workforce localisation may support service provision in the Mid-Western LGA Community (particularly Gulgong and Mudgee) due to population stability / growth.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	No - Small change to baseline	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Continuation of community contributions	Accessibility	Continued community contributions and payment of rates to local council improving social infrastructure and service provision for Mid-Western LGA Community.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	No – Small change to baseline	Unknown – to be assessed in SIA	Unknown – to be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA
<b>Negative Social Impacts</b>								
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Community	Impacts (noise etc) are unlikely to necessitate any property acquisition within surrounding areas. Land utilised for the extension of OC3 is owned by the proponent.	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	None proposed at this stage – No change to baseline	Yes (moderate) – additional aspects include potential local disadvantage and past experience Unknown – to be assessed in SIA	Yes (moderate) – Some evidence of concern in the Local Vicinity.	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Community	The Project contributes to a change to general community identity, sense of place and connection to place in Mid-Western LGA community related to general change from an agricultural region towards a mining region, and due to amenity impacts (such as visual impacts from public vantage points or noise).	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Continuation of mining employment trends	Community	Ongoing attention to community cohesion between higher income mine workers and others within Mid-Western LGA Community. Potential division between those supportive and unsupportive of mining projects.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Continuation of mining employment trends	Livelihood	Ongoing labour market competition resulting from local workers in the Mid-Western LGA being attracted to higher wages in the mining industry and causing hiring difficulties for other businesses.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Way of Life	Potentially new amenity impacts for Nearby Residents and Businesses to Cooyal impacting quality of life and change to experience of rural lifestyle, including noise, air quality, light and odour impacts. Direct views of the Project area would not be visible due to intervening topography (Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve).  <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS	Yes (moderate) – Some evidence these households value rural amenity which may potentially experience change (e.g. light, noise)	Yes (high) – Amenity a high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS Noise Assessment and Air Quality Assessment Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Continuation of mining employment trends	Way of Life	Continuation of potential traffic safety issues on Ulan Road related to MCC workers, potentially impacting safety of Local Vicinity residents and workers.  <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (traffic assessment)	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	No –Some evidence traffic safety is an issue of concern	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS Road Transport Assessment Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Continuation of mining employment trends	Way of Life	Ongoing demand for housing (purchase and rent) within Mid-Western LGA, and potentially increased housing affordability impacts if increased localisation of workforce.  Current trends suggest housing is available and significant price increases have not been experienced in the Mid Western LGA.	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA, also influenced by land supply	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Unknown – To be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Continuation of mining employment trends	Way of Life	Continuation of disparity in economic outcomes for men and women in Mid-Western LGA Community due to prevalence of men employed in mining and thus disparity	Yes – Mid-Western LGA	No – Life of Project	Unknown – to be assessed in SIA	Unknown – to be assessed in SIA	Unknown – to be assessed in SIA	Detailed assessment required in SIA Will include consideration of potential

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
		between agency and independence.						cumulative impacts.
Project approval process Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Way of Life	Required time and effort for interested and/or impacted stakeholders to provide input into Project engagement/approval processes – for residents throughout the Mid-Western LGA, but specifically for Nearby Residents and Businesses.	No – Local Vicinity	No – During approval process	Yes – Moderate change to baseline	Yes (moderate) – Some evidence this is significant time and effort given multiple projects	Yes (moderate) – Some evidence this is an issue of concern	Detailed assessment required in SIA Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Way of Life	Disturbance of surface development areas during construction and operation activities would result in the generation of dust, impacting on air quality which may lead to health impacts and perceived health impacts. It may have a cumulative effect on people already impacted by dust from multiple projects. Potential increase in time associated with cleaning living areas or water tanks for nearby landholders.  <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (air quality assessment)	Unknown	Yes (moderate) – Some evidence this is an issue of concern.	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS Air Quality Assessment Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Culture	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) for the EIS may potentially identify previously unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage items/values resulting in their protection/preservation. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	Yes – Aboriginal People	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (ACHA)	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (ACHA)	Yes	Yes (high) – Aboriginal People sensitive to cultural heritage values	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS ACHA
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Culture	Surface disruption on Project area may impact Aboriginal cultural heritage items, and also values and connection to Country, impacting culture, sense of identity, and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Wiradjuri Country. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	Yes – Aboriginal People	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (ACHA)	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (ACHA)	Yes	Yes (high) – Aboriginal People sensitive to cultural heritage values	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS ACHA Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Surroundings	Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions contributing to social impacts related to climate change. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	Yes Regional / National Population	Yes – Life of Project / Potentially permanent	No – Small change to baseline	Unknown – to be quantified in EIS	Yes (high) – Interest in social impacts of climate change increasing	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS Greenhouse Gas Assessment

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Surroundings	Potential or perceived impact to short-term and long-term groundwater and surface water access from Project use (ongoing security of water supplies). This includes potential impacts to Moolarben Creek and Goulburn River. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	Yes – Local Vicinity	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (hydrology assessments)	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (hydrology assessments)	Yes (high) – Water users sensitive to water access, particularly during drought	Yes (high) – Livelihoods a high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Surroundings	Potential changes to amenity and natural environment impacting enjoyment of natural values (mainly in the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve), including due to noise, air quality, light, odour, habitat and visual impacts while bushwalking, bird watching, enjoying picnic areas, etc. This may be felt particularly by residents, Aboriginal people, bird watchers, and tourists visiting the region to experience these places. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	Yes Aboriginal People Mid-Western LGA Regional / National Population	No – Life of Project	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (various assessments)	Yes (moderate) – Aboriginal People sensitive to these impacts, but other populations may be less so	Yes (moderate) – Community interest in natural areas	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS Noise Assessment and Air Quality Assessment Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Surroundings	Potential or perceived impacts to Moolarben Creek, Goulburn River, and below groundwater flows impacting enjoyment of Goulburn River National Park. This may be felt particularly by Aboriginal people, but also the broad Mid-Western LGA and regional communities. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	Yes Aboriginal People Mid-Western LGA Regional / National Population	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (water assessments)	Unknown – To be assessed in EIS (water assessments)	Yes (moderate) – Aboriginal People sensitive to these impacts, but other populations may be less so	Yes (moderate) – Community interest in natural areas	Detailed assessment required in SIA  To be informed by the EIS Surface Water Assessment, Groundwater Assessment and ACHA
Project approval process Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Health and Wellbeing	Stress and anxiety for Nearby Residents and Businesses related to uncertainty about acquisitions, Project impacts, timing and future expansions.	No – Local Vicinity	No – During approval process	Yes – Moderate change to baseline	Yes (high) – Residents have unequal power in discussions	Yes (high) – Property / livelihoods are high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA  Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Health and Wellbeing	Actual and perceived health impacts related to dust and coal dust (asthma, breathing difficulties, drinking water), lighting and noise from mining equipment, blasting (sleep disturbance) etc. for Nearby Residents and Businesses. <i>Actual impacts to be investigated in EIS technical studies.</i>	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	Yes – Moderate change to baseline	Unknown – to be assessed in SIA Some evidence of poorer health outcomes in Mid-Western LGA	Yes (high) – Health is high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA To be informed by the EIS Noise Assessment, Air Quality Assessment and Visual Assessment Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Health and Wellbeing	Stress and anxiety for Nearby Residents and Businesses related to the perception of the saleability of their properties and ongoing livelihoods (livelihoods related to small amount of rural tourist accommodation).	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	Yes – Moderate change to baseline	Yes (high) – Residents have unequal power in discussions	Yes (high) – Property / livelihoods are high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## Section 6 Initial Evaluation of Social Impacts

Activity	Category	Potential Impact	Material Impact?					Assessment Implication
			Extent	Duration	Severity	Sensitivity	Level of Concern / Interest	
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Health and Wellbeing	Concern about the Project's cumulative impact to climate change, environmental damage and water availability/access.	Yes – Aboriginal People Mid-Western LGA Regional/ National Population	No – During approval process	No – Small change to baseline	Yes (moderate) – Aboriginal People sensitive to these impacts, but other populations may be less so	Yes (moderate) – Community interest in natural areas	Detailed assessment required in SIA  Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Project approval process	Decision Making Systems	Perceived limited power to influence Project approval process leading to feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness for the Mid-Western LGA community, in particular Nearby Residents and Businesses.	No – Local Vicinity	No – During approval process	Yes – Moderate change to baseline	Yes (high) – Residents have unequal power in discussions	Yes (high) – Property/ livelihoods are high priority	Detailed assessment required in SIA  Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
Extension of open cut mining activities into the Project area	Decision Making Systems	Feelings of frustration and powerlessness for Nearby Residents and Businesses could be generated if they experience negative experiences during complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms related to the Project	No – Local Vicinity	No – Life of Project	Yes – Moderate change to baseline	Yes (high) – Residents have unequal power in discussions	Yes (moderate) – Some evidence this is of concern	Detailed assessment required in SIA  Will include consideration of potential cumulative impacts.

## 6.5 Stakeholder Engagement for SIA

A stakeholder engagement program has been prepared for the SIA phase of the Project. Key objectives of this program will be to:

- Engage with government and public stakeholders about the Project;
- Seek input from key stakeholders, including individual landholders, on elements of the Project;
- Recognise and respond to local interest or concerns regarding the Project; and
- Continue the ongoing dialogue between the MCC and stakeholders initiated through the development and operation of the MCC.

Table 6-2 provides a summary of the recommended SIA engagement approach by stakeholder and engagement mechanism.

Capturing the views and experience of local community members serves as a critical input towards the development of the SIA, as well as broader strategies to best mitigate or enhance social impacts. Interested local community members include both people who may be directly affected by the Project, as well as individuals or groups who have an interest in community and environmental issues. The SIA requires a structured process which produces both quantitative and qualitative data.

The outcomes of previous consultation and SIA scoping consultation has been considered in identifying the nature of likely impacts. However, it is important that further engagement with key stakeholders is undertaken in order to ensure all potential issues and concerns are appropriately identified and addressed.

**Table 6-2. Recommended SIA Engagement Approach**

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Engagement techniques				
		Information session (single)	Meeting/ Phone/ Video	Survey	Newsletter	Website Information
Adjacent and nearby landholders (Local Vicinity)	Landholders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mid-Western Regional Council and community	Residents			✓	✓	✓
	Organisations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Community Consultative Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aboriginal representatives	Mudgee Local Aboriginal Land Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Murong Gialinga Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Warrabinga Native Title Claimants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Engagement techniques				
		Information session (single)	Meeting/ Phone/ Video	Survey	Newsletter	Website Information
	Aboriginal Corporation					
	North-East Wiradjuri Company Ltd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	RAPs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Government	Mid-Western Regional Council		✓		✓	✓
State Government	NSW Health – Local Health District		✓		✓	✓
	NSW Police Force - Mudgee		✓		✓	✓
	NSW Ambulance		✓		✓	✓
	Fire and Rescue NSW and NSW Rural Fire Service – Cudgegong district		✓		✓	✓
	NSW Family and Community Services		✓		✓	✓
	NSW Department of Education		✓		✓	✓
	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service – Mudgee Office		✓		✓	✓
Education and community	TAFE NSW – Mudgee		✓		✓	✓
Community organisations	Housing Plus		✓		✓	✓
	VERTO Mudgee		✓		✓	✓
Industry and Business Sector	Mudgee Chamber of Commerce		✓		✓	✓
	Gulgong Chamber of Commerce		✓		✓	✓
	Local businesses		✓ (sample)	✓	✓	✓

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Engagement techniques				
		Information session (single)	Meeting/ Phone/ Video	Survey	Newsletter	Website Information
	Real-estate agents		✓		✓	✓
	Mudgee Wine Association		✓		✓	✓
	Mudgee Region Tourism Inc.		✓		✓	✓
Environmental Groups	Mudgee District Environment Group	✓	✓		✓	✓

## 6.6 Project Refinements

The Project is in the initial scoping phase and the Project description (to be included in the EIS) would be informed by the outcomes of environmental assessment and ongoing stakeholder engagement. Key avoidance and minimisation measures for the Project, considering initial stakeholder feedback, are described in the Project Scoping Report.

Further consideration of the key avoidance and minimisation measures for the Project in response to any potential impacts will be undertaken as part of the EIS, including avoidance and mitigation measures for potential negative social impacts and enhancement measures for potential positive social impacts.

## Section 7 Next steps

The following steps are anticipated for the next phase of the SIA:

- Further develop social baseline, including reviewing and confirming the Social Locality
- SIA stakeholder engagement, including engaging further stakeholders in certain locations, or engaging those that informed they were not interested in participating in the Scoping phase (as discussed in Section 5.3)
- Consider suitable refinements or other early responses to avoid negative social impacts and enhance benefits
- Refine prediction and analysis of social impacts and evaluate the significance of impacts
- Identify suitable management and enhancement measures for the assessed potential social impacts and evaluate the significance of residual social impacts
- Develop a preliminary social impact management and monitoring framework
- Develop SIA report for the EIS.

## References

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**ATTACHMENT C**  
**CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**  
**SCOPING TABLE**

**Table C-1  
Cumulative Impact Assessment Scoping Table**

Future Projects	Approximate Distance from Project	Indicative Timing/Overlap	Potential Overlap Between Impacts of the Project on Environmental Matters and Impacts of Other Project on the Same Environmental Matter							
			Amenity (Air, Noise and Human Health)	Groundwater	Surface Water	Social	Road Transport	Rail Access and Rail Noise	Visual, Landscape and Final Landform	Biodiversity and Heritage
Moolarben Coal Complex Stage 1	Immediately north	Operational (approval for open cut and underground mining up to 2038).	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Standard	Standard	Detailed	Detailed
Moolarben Coal Complex Stage 2	Immediately north	Operational (approval for open cut and underground mining up to 2038).	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Standard	Standard	Detailed	Detailed
Ulan Coal Mine	7 km north	Operational (approval for open cut and underground mining up to 2033).	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Standard	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Standard
Wilpinjong Coal Mine	4 km east	Operational (approval for open cut mining up to 2033).	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Standard	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Standard
Bowdens Silver Project	25 km south	Response to Submissions phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected
Beryl Solar Farm	30 km west	Operational (30-year duration: 2049)	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected
Stubbo Solar Farm	20 km north-west	Approved but yet to commence (operational lifespan of 30 years).	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected
Wollar Solar Farm	27 km south east	Approved but yet to commence (operational lifespan of 30 years).	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected

**Table C-1 (Continued)**  
**Cumulative Impact Assessment Scoping Table**

Future Projects	Approximate Distance from Project	Indicative Timing/Overlap	Potential Overlap Between Impacts of the Project on Environmental Matters and Impacts of Other Project on the Same Environmental Matter							
			Amenity (Air, Noise and Human Health)	Groundwater	Surface Water	Social	Road Transport	Rail Access and Rail Noise	Visual, Landscape and Final Landform	Biodiversity and Heritage
Barneys Reef Wind Farm	30 km north-west	EIS Preparation phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected
Tallawang Solar Farm	30 km north-west	EIS Preparation phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected
Valley of the Winds Wind Farm	55 km north-west (proposed ETL corridor 7 km north)	EIS Preparation phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Standard	Standard	Limited interaction expected	Limited interaction expected	Standard
Birriwa Solar Farm	35 km north-west	EIS Preparation phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	Not anticipated to interact with the Project.							
Wollar Substation Upgrade	10 km east	EIS Preparation phase at time of Scoping Report lodgement.	Not anticipated to interact with the Project.							
Wollar Allocation Area	10 km east	Under assessment for potential coal exploration licences.	Not a relevant future project at this time.							
Hawkins-Rumker Preliminary Regional Issues Assessment	20 km south	Under Assessment for potential coal exploration licence.	Not a relevant future project at this time.							

**Table C-1 (Continued)**  
**Cumulative Impact Assessment Scoping Table**

Future Projects	Approximate Distance from Project	Indicative Timing/Overlap	Potential Overlap Between Impacts of the Project on Environmental Matters and Impacts of Other Project on the Same Environmental Matter							
			Amenity (Air, Noise and Human Health)	Groundwater	Surface Water	Social	Road Transport	Rail Access and Rail Noise	Visual, Landscape and Final Landform	Biodiversity and Heritage
Bylong Coal Project	30 km south-east	Application refused by the IPC in September 2019. No new application lodged.	Not a relevant future project at this time.							
Dunedoo Solar Farm	50 km north-west	Approved but yet to commence (operational life of 30 years).	Not anticipated to interact with the Project.							
Uungula Wind Farm	50 km west	Approved but yet to commence (operational life of 30 years).	Not anticipated to interact with the Project.							

**ATTACHMENT D**

**PRE-CONDITIONS TO GRANTING CONSENT AND  
MANDATORY MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Table D-1  
Pre-conditions to Granting Consent**

<b>Statutory Reference</b>	<b>Pre-condition</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 (EP&amp;A Regulation)</i>		
clause 49(2)	The consent of the owner of the land is not required for a development application for public notification development, if the applicant instead gives notice of the application by publishing a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the development is to be carried out, no later than 14 days after the application is made.	The Project is public notification development as it falls within Item 5 of Schedule 1 of the State and Regional Development SEPP and no part of the Project would be carried out on land that is a State Conservation Area reserved under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> . The Development Application will be notified in accordance with clause 49(2)(b) of the EP&A Regulation.
<i>State Environmental Planning Policy No.55 – Remediation of Land (SEPP 55)</i>		
clause 7(1)	A consent authority must consider whether the land is contaminated and be satisfied that, if the land is contaminated, the land is suitable in its contaminated state (or will be suitable after remediation) for the purpose of the Project.	SEPP 55 would be considered for the Project and a Land Contamination Assessment would be included in the EIS.
<i>Mining Act 1992</i>		
section 380AA	An application for development consent to mine for coal cannot be made or determined unless the applicant is the holder of an authority that is in force in respect of coal for the relevant land, or the applicant has the written consent of the holder of such an authority to make the application.	Written consent from the holder or authorised representative of ML 1691, EL 6288 and EL 7073 will be provided with the EIS for the lodgement of a Development Application for the Project.
<i>Mid-Western Regional Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Mid-Western Regional LEP)</i>		
clause 5.10(7)	If applicable, a consent authority must, before granting consent to the carrying out of development on an archaeological site, notify the Heritage Council of its intention to grant consent, and take into consideration any response received from the Heritage Council within 28 days after the notice is sent.	An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment and Non-Aboriginal Heritage Assessment will be prepared for the Project as part of the EIS.
clause 6.5(4)	Development consent must not be granted for development on land identified as “Moderate Biodiversity Sensitivity” or “High Biodiversity Sensitivity” on the Sensitivity Biodiversity Map unless the consent authority is satisfied that:  (a) the development is designed, sited and will be managed to avoid any significant adverse environmental impact; or  (b) if that impact cannot reasonably be avoided – the development is designed, sited and will be managed so as to minimise that impact; or  (c) if that impact cannot be minimised – the development will be managed to mitigate that impact.	A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report will be prepared for the Project as part of the EIS.

**Table D-1 (Continued)**  
**Pre-conditions to Granting Consent**

Statutory Reference	Pre-condition	Relevance
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i>		
section 131AB	Before deciding whether or not to approve the taking of an action that involves a large coal mining development that the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment believes is likely to have an adverse impact on water resources and may have an adverse impact on a matter protected by a provision of Part 3 of the EPBC Act, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment must obtain the advice of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Mining Development (IESC).	The Project will be referred to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment for consideration as to whether the Project meets the criteria of a 'Controlled Action' and requires approval under the EPBC Act.

**Table D-2  
Mandatory Matters for Consideration**

Statutory Reference	Mandatory Consideration
<i>Considerations under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&amp;A Act)</i>	
section 1.3	<p>Relevant objects of the EP&amp;A Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Facilitate ecologically sustainable development (ESD) by integrating relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment.</li> <li>• Promote the orderly and economic use and development of land.</li> <li>• Protect the environment, including the conservation of threatened and other species of native animals and plants, ecological communities and their habitats.</li> <li>• Promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage).</li> <li>• Promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning and assessment between the different levels of government in the State.</li> <li>• Provide increased opportunity for community participation in environmental planning and assessment.</li> </ul>
section 4.15	<p>Relevant environmental planning instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007</i> (Mining SEPP).</li> <li>• <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No 33: Hazardous and Offensive Development</i> (SEPP 33).</li> <li>• SEPP 55.</li> <li>• <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007</i> (Infrastructure SEPP).</li> <li>• Mid-Western Regional LEP.</li> <li>• Any planning agreement or draft planning agreement that a developer has entered into under section 7.4 of the EP&amp;A Act.</li> <li>• The EP&amp;A Regulation (to the extent that it prescribes matters for the purposes of section 4.15(1)(a)(iv) of the EP&amp;A Act).</li> </ul> <p>The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality; the suitability of the site for the development; any submissions made in accordance with the EP&amp;A Act or the EP&amp;A Regulation; the public interest.</p>
<i>Considerations under the EP&amp;A Regulation</i>	
clause 92(b)	For the demolition of a building, the consent authority must consider the provisions of AS 2601-1991: <i>The Demolition of Structures</i> .
clause 92(d)(ii)	For State Significant Development on land less than 200 km from the Siding Springs Observatory, the consent authority must consider the requirements of the <i>Dark Sky Planning Guideline</i> (NSW Department of Planning and Environment [DP&E], 2016)

**Table D-2 (Continued)**  
**Mandatory Matters for Consideration**

Statutory Reference	Mandatory Consideration
<i>Considerations under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	
section 136(1)	<p>In deciding whether or not to approve the taking of an action, and what conditions to attach to an approval, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment must consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• matters relevant to any matter that the Minister has decided is a controlling provision for the action; and</li> <li>economic and social matters.</li> </ul>
section 136(2)	<p>In considering the matters referred to in section 136(1), the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment must take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the principles of ESD; and</li> <li>• the assessment report (if any) relating to the action.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, section 136(2) (ca) to (g) specify the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment must take into account, if applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the finalised EIS;</li> <li>• the recommendation report relating to the action;</li> <li>• if a relevant inquiry was conducted, the report of the commissioners;</li> <li>• any other information the Minister has on the relevant impacts of the action;</li> <li>• any relevant comments given to the Minister;</li> <li>• relevant advice obtained by the Minister from the IESC; and</li> <li>• notices or relevant comments provided in accordance with the EPBC Act.</li> </ul>
section 139(1)	<p>In deciding whether or not to approve the taking of an action with respect to threatened species and endangered communities, and what conditions to attach to such approval, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment must not act inconsistently with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australia's obligations under: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the Convention on Biological Diversity; or</li> <li>– the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific; or</li> <li>– the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; or</li> </ul> </li> <li>• a recovery plan or threat abatement plan.</li> </ul>
section 139(2)	<p>If the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment is considering whether to approve the taking of an action and the action has or will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a particular listed threatened species or a particular listed threatened ecological community the Minister must, in deciding whether to so approve the taking of the action, have regard to any approved conservation advice for the species or community.</p>

**Table D-2 (Continued)  
Mandatory Matters for Consideration**

Statutory Reference	Mandatory Consideration
<i>Considerations under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>	
section 7.14(2)	The consent authority is to take into consideration the likely impact of the proposed development on biodiversity values as assessed in the Project BDAR.
section 7.16(3)	<p>If the consent authority is of the opinion that the Project is likely to have serious and irreversible impacts on biodiversity values, the consent authority is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take those impacts into consideration; and</li> <li>• determine whether there are any additional and appropriate measures that would minimise those impacts if consent or approval is to be granted.</li> </ul>
<i>Dams Safety Act 2015</i>	
Section 48(4)	A consent authority must, before granting development consent for mining operations within a notification area of a declared dam, refer the application to Dams Safety NSW and take into consideration any matters raised by Dams Safety NSW. It is not expected that there will be any declared dams within the Project area.
<i>Considerations under the Mining SEPP</i>	
clause 12	<p>Before determining an application for consent for the purposes of mining the consent authority must:</p> <p>(a) consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the existing uses and approved uses of land in the vicinity of the development;</li> <li>(ii) whether or not the development is likely to have a significant impact on the uses that, in the opinion of the consent authority having regard to land use trends, are likely to be the preferred uses of land in the vicinity of the development;</li> <li>(iii) any ways in which the development may be incompatible with any of those existing, approved or likely preferred uses; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) evaluate and compare the respective public benefits of the development and the land uses referred to in paragraph (a)(i) and (ii); and</p> <p>(c) evaluate any measures proposed by the applicant to avoid or minimise any incompatibility, as referred to in paragraph (a)(iii).</p>
clause 12A	Before determining an application for consent for the purposes of mining the consent authority must consider relevant provisions of the <i>Voluntary Land Acquisition and Mitigation Policy</i> (NSW Government, 2018a).
clause 13	Before determining an application for development in the vicinity of mining, petroleum or extractive industry, the consent authority must (among other things) consider whether or not the development is likely to have a significant impact on current or future extraction or recovery of minerals, petroleum or extractive materials (including by limiting access to, or impeding assessment of, those resources), and any ways in which the development may be incompatible with any of those existing or approved uses or that current or future extraction or recovery.

**Table D-2 (Continued)**  
**Mandatory Matters for Consideration**

Statutory Reference	Mandatory Consideration
<i>Considerations under the Mining SEPP (continued)</i>	
clause 14	Before determining an application for consent for the purposes of mining the consent authority must consider whether or not the consent should be issued subject to conditions aimed at ensuring that the development is undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner (including conditions to ensure that impacts on significant water resources, including surface and groundwater resources, are avoided, or are minimised to the greatest extent practicable, that impacts on threatened species and biodiversity, are avoided, or are minimised to the greatest extent practicable, and that greenhouse gas emissions are minimised to the greatest extent practicable). This includes considering an assessment of greenhouse gas emissions (including downstream emissions) having regard to any applicable State or national policies, programs of guidelines concerning greenhouse gas emissions.
clause 15	Before determining an application for consent for the purposes of mining the consent authority must consider the efficiency of the development in terms of resource recovery and whether or not the consent should be issued subject to conditions aimed at optimising the efficiency of resources recovery and the reuse or recycling of material.
clause 16	Before determining an application for consent for the purposes of mining the consent authority must consider whether or not the consent should be issued subject to conditions regarding transport of materials.
clause 17	Before determining an application for consent for the purposes of mining the consent authority must consider whether or not the consent should be issued subject to conditions regarding rehabilitation, including the particular considerations set out in clause 17(2).
<i>Considerations under SEPP 33</i>	
clause 13	A consent authority must consider current circulars or guidelines published by the DPIE relating to hazardous or offensive development, whether to consult with relevant public authorities regarding any environmental or land use safety requirements, a preliminary hazard analysis prepared by the applicant, feasible alternatives to the development and likely future use of surrounding land.
<i>Considerations under the SEPP 55</i>	
clause 7(1)	A consent authority must consider whether the land is contaminated and be satisfied that, if the land is contaminated, the land is suitable in its contaminated state (or would be suitable after remediation) for the purpose of the Project.
<i>Considerations under the Infrastructure SEPP</i>	
clause 104(3)(b)	If applicable, before determining a development application for development to which clause 104 applies, the consent authority must take into consideration: (ii) the accessibility of the site concerned, including the efficiency of movement of people and freight to and from the site and the extent of multi-purpose trips, and the potential to minimise the need for travel by car and to maximise movement of freight in containers or bulk freight by rail; and (iii) any potential traffic safety, road congestion or parking implications of the development.

**Table D-2 (Continued)**  
**Mandatory Matters for Consideration**

Statutory Reference	Mandatory Consideration
<i>Considerations under the Mid-Western Regional LEP</i>	
clause 2.3 (2)	A consent authority must have regard to the objectives for development in a zone when determining a development application in respect of land within that zone.
clause 5.10(4)	If applicable, a consent authority must, before granting consent under clause 5.10 in respect of a heritage item or heritage conservation area, consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item or area concerned.
clause 5.10(8)	If applicable, a consent authority must, before granting consent under clause 5.10 to the carrying out of development in an Aboriginal place of heritage significance, consider the effect of a proposed development on the heritage significance of the place and any Aboriginal object known or reasonably likely to be located at the place by means of an adequate investigation and assessment.
clause 6.3 (3)	If applicable, a consent authority must, before granting development consent for earthworks, consider the effect of proposed earthworks on drainage patterns, soil stability, quality of fill, likely amenity impacts, likelihood of disturbing relics and proximity to and potential impacts on water courses.