

A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a high-visibility yellow safety vest over a dark blue shirt, is smiling and looking towards the left. She is sitting at a desk in a control room, with her hand on a computer mouse. In front of her are two large computer monitors displaying various data and graphs. Behind her, a wall of smaller monitors shows multiple camera feeds of an industrial site. A silver water bottle is on the desk. The image has a dark blue diagonal overlay in the top right corner.

Section 5

Engagement

Narrabri Underground Mine Stage 3 Extension Project

Environmental Impact Statement

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5 ENGAGEMENT

This section describes the consultation undertaken prior to and during the preparation of this EIS, and the ongoing community initiatives and consultation programs that NCOPL has established in the region. Where relevant, references are provided to the EIS sections and/or specialist appendices where the issues raised are considered and addressed.

5.1 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The consultation undertaken during preparation of this EIS is in accordance with the SEARs (Attachment 1) and is adequate and appropriate for an SSD under Part 4 of the EP&A Act.

Open communication with stakeholders has been encouraged during consultation. The key objectives of NCOPL's ongoing consultation with stakeholders are to:

- engage with government and public stakeholders about the Project;
- seek input from key stakeholders on elements of the Project; and
- recognise and respond to local interest or concerns regarding the Project.

Consultation conducted during the preparation of this EIS has provided the opportunity to identify issues of concern or interest to stakeholders and to consider these issues within the EIS.

5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONSULTATION

5.2.1 State Government Agencies

NCOPL has consulted with relevant State Government agencies in relation to the EIS to obtain feedback on the proposed assessment approach, potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures for the Project.

NCOPL continues to consult with relevant NSW State Government agencies on a regular basis in relation to the Project and the current operations at the Narrabri Mine.

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

The application for the Project SEARs was lodged with the DPIE (formerly DP&E) in March 2019 and the SEARs were issued on 28 May 2019. Supplementary SEARs were issued by the DPIE on 20 November 2019.

The DPIE has been consulted regularly during preparation of this EIS. A summary of the consultation with the DPIE regarding the Project is provided in Table 5-1, including references to relevant sections of the EIS where issues raised have been considered and addressed.

Mining, Exploration and Geoscience

NCOPL presented a Conceptual Project Development Plan (CPDP) to Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG) (formerly Division of Resources and Geoscience) on 28 June 2017 prior to the lodgement of the request for SEARs. MEG raised that rejects geochemistry would require assessment in the EIS (Appendix N).

MEG provided input to the SEARs on 23 April 2019. The input from MEG has been considered in this EIS.

NCOPL has provided information to MEG to assist with MEG's independent assessment of the Project resource.

A briefing on the Project's resource and economics particulars was undertaken with MEG on 25 September 2019. An underground tour of the Narrabri Mine was subsequently undertaken on 26 September 2019. No relevant issues were raised during the site visit.

A Project summary letter was sent to MEG on 10 June 2020. The letter included a summary of the findings of the Project Economic Assessment, in addition to information on biodiversity offsets, cumulative impact assessment with the Narrabri Gas Project and mining lease requirements.

NSW Resources Regulator

A summary of consultation conducted with the NSW Resources Regulator is provided in Table 5-2.

Table 5-1
Consultation Summary – NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS Reference
6 September 2017	Project initial briefing meeting, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of proposed changes to the Narrabri Mine. Outline of proposed approval process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groundwater modelling and the need for empirical data to support key assumptions.
26 March 2018	Briefing to provide an update regarding the Gateway Application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant issues raised.
1 November 2018	Project update and scoping meeting, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatives considered in the Project design and updates to mine plan. Justification for the Project. Information on assessments being completed as part of the Gateway Application and Request for SEARs. Timing of Request for SEARs, Application for a Gateway Certificate and Referral under the EPBC Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration in the EIS of a range of brine storage options (including brine management options) (Appendix B). Underground mine subsidence calibration borehole/height of fracture (Appendix B).
6 February 2019	Submission of Application for a Gateway Certificate to the Mining and Petroleum Gateway Panel.	
26 March 2019	Submission of the Request for SEARs supported by a Scoping Report.	
28 May 2019	SEARs issued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised in November 2019 (refer below).
4 June 2019	Gateway Certificate issued by the Mining and Petroleum Gateway Panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions of the Mining and Petroleum Gateway Panel have been addressed in the EIS, particularly the Agricultural Impact Statement (Appendix G), Subsidence Assessment (Appendix A) and the Groundwater Assessment (Appendix B).
26 July 2019	Letter to DPIE seeking confirmation that the DPIE is satisfied with NCOPL's proposed approach for the assessment of potential flooding and ponding impacts for the Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPIE advised it had consulted with the DPIE - Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD) and agrees with the proposed flood assessment outlined in NCOPL's letter (Section 6.5 and Appendix C).
20 November 2019	Supplementary SEARs issued to address EPBC Act matters and include the Conditional Gateway Certificate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A description of the DAWE (formerly DEE) assessment requirements relevant to the EPBC Act and the conditional Gateway Certificate requirements have been provided in Attachment 2.
12 December 2019	Teleconference to discuss the Project, including the indicative Surface Development Footprint. Key discussions included NCOPL's desired flexibility for surface disturbance and a process to achieve this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (Section 6.7 and Appendix D).
4 May 2020	Letter to DPIE informing of changes to remaining consultation with stakeholders as part of the SIA, ACHA and EIS. Changes were in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant issues raised.

Table 5-1 (Continued)
Consultation Summary – NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS Reference
15 July 2020	<p>Videoconference to discuss specialist study findings. Key discussions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings related to subsidence, agricultural impacts, groundwater, surface water, biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, air quality and greenhouse gases and noise. Discussion regarding consultation undertaken for the EIS. Process for submission of the EIS and public exhibition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes of consultation with landholders of the privately-owned stock and domestic water supply bores predicted to experience drawdowns exceeding the AIP minimal impact considerations criterion (Appendix B). Greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and the <i>Strategic Statement on Coal Exploration and Mining in NSW</i> (Sections 3.5.2, 3.5.6, 6.17, 7.4.1 and 7.4.3 and Appendices B, C and I). Cumulative groundwater impacts associated with the Narrabri Gas Project (Appendix B). Ecological rehabilitation credits in accordance with the draft <i>Ancillary Rules for Use of Mine Site Ecological Rehabilitation as an Offset</i> (DPIE, 2019) (Appendix D).

Table 5-2
Consultation Summary – NSW Resources Regulator

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS Reference
12 April 2019	Letter documenting input to the SEARs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Project-specific assessment requirements provided. The Resources Regulator's standard mining development rehabilitation assessment requirements have been considered in Attachment 5.
3 June 2020	Letter providing a summary of the Project, including information on the Subsidence Assessment, rehabilitation and mine closure and mining lease requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Resources Regulator advised it is encouraging mining companies to engage early to encourage progressive rehabilitation and consider post-mining land uses in the design stages of a project. As such, an invitation was extended to NCOPL to present via videoconference to the Rehabilitation and Securities Panel.
18 June 2020	Videoconference to discuss progressive rehabilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justification for the proposed surface development (Sections 2.11, 7.2.2 and 7.4.3). Justification for the reject emplacement area post-mining land use as pasture/grazing (Attachment 5). Viability of flaring as an option to manage gas associated with the Project (Section 2.6.7). Ventilation shaft decommissioning and source of backfill material (Attachment 5). Timing of rehabilitation for surface development areas (Attachment 5). Consideration of minimising disturbance of the soil profile during vegetation clearing by slashing, rather than stripping, soils (Section 6.7, Appendix D and Attachment 5).

NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division (within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment)

A summary of consultation conducted with the NSW BCD is provided in Table 5-3.

Heritage Division

A Project summary letter was sent to the Heritage Division (a delegate for the NSW Heritage Council) on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and a summary of the outcomes of the Historical Heritage Assessment (Appendix F).

Heritage Council of NSW

A Project summary letter was sent to the Heritage Council of NSW on 5 June 2020 to provide information on the Project and a summary of outcomes of the Historical Heritage Assessment (Appendix F).

NSW Environment Protection Authority

The EPA provided input to the SEARs on 18 April 2019. The input from the EPA has been considered in this EIS including addressing the following Project-specific issues:

- noise from gas drainage and ventilation (Appendix H);
- air quality including dust and odour (Appendix I); and
- water management (Appendices B and C).

NCOPL met with representatives of the EPA on 6 December 2019 for a briefing on the Project and discussion of issues including noise, air quality and waste.

The following key issues were raised by the EPA for inclusion in the EIS:

- management of water in above-ground drilling sumps (Section 2.10); and
- waste management and minimisation on-site, including general solid waste management and recycling (Section 2.12).

NCOPL held a videoconference with representatives of the EPA on 9 July 2020 to discuss the findings of the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment, Noise Assessment and Surface Water Assessment for the Project, in addition to planned waste management. The EPA encouraged consideration of forming an agreement with a nearby receiver predicted to experience a negligible noise exceedance. NCOPL would continue to consult with this landowner regarding noise impacts.

Roads and Maritime Services

The RMS provided input to the SEARs on 16 April 2019, which included a number of requirements for a traffic and transport impact study.

The Road Transport Assessment (Appendix J) has been prepared in consideration of the input to the SEARs from the RMS.

A Project summary letter was sent to RMS on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and a summary of outcomes of the Road Transport Assessment (Appendix J).

A Project update letter was subsequently sent on 29 June 2020, describing that the findings of the Road Transport Assessment remain the same as those detailed in December 2019 correspondence.

No issues have been raised by the RMS in relation to the Project to date.

Transport for NSW

A Project summary letter was sent to Transport for NSW (TfNSW) on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and a summary of outcomes of the Road Transport Assessment (Appendix J).

A Project update letter was subsequently sent on 9 June 2020, describing that findings of the Road Transport Assessment remain the same as those detailed in December 2019 correspondence.

No issues have been raised by TfNSW in relation to the Project to date.

Table 5-3
Consultation Summary – NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS Reference
15 January 2019	Letter to the OEH (now BCD) requesting advice in relation to the proposed engagement approach for the Project ACHA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the letter, the BCD recommended that the ACHA include a new registration process for interested Aboriginal stakeholders, in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010</i>.
17 April 2019	Letter documenting input to the SEARs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input from the BCD has been considered in this EIS, including appropriately addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> biodiversity and offsetting (Appendix D); Aboriginal cultural heritage (Appendix E); historic heritage (Appendix F); water and soils (Appendices B, C and G); and flooding (Appendix C).
10 December 2019	Project update, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial findings of flora and fauna surveys. Biodiversity offset options. Update on progress of the ACHA. Findings of historical heritage surveys. Proposed approach to the assessment of flooding impacts. Timing for completion of specialist studies, consultation and lodgement of the EIS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of drought impacts on biodiversity sampling results (Appendix D). Progress of the biodiversity offset in parallel with the BDAR (Section 6.7.6 and Appendix D).
4 May 2020	Letter to the DPIE informing of changes to remaining consultation/engagement activities with stakeholders as part of the Project ACHA. Changes were in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant issues raised.
25 June 2020	Videoconference to discuss specialist study findings. Key discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings related to biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage. Discussion around consultation undertaken for the ACHA. Discussion around submission of the EIS and public exhibition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsidence monitoring in the vicinity of Bulga Hill to confirm minimal subsidence impacts from the Project (Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5 and Appendix A).

Department of Primary Industries

The DPI provided comments and specific input to the Project SEARs, which were documented in a letter dated 23 April 2019. This also included comments from DPIE – Water (formerly DPI – Water) and the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR).

Key issues raised in relation to the SEARs included:

- identification of an adequate and secure water supply for the life of the Project (Appendix C);
- a site water balance (Appendix C);
- assessment of impacts on surface and ground water sources, related infrastructure, adjacent licensed water users, basic landholder rights, watercourses, riparian land, groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) and measures proposed to reduce and mitigate these impacts (Appendices B and C);
- proposed surface water and groundwater monitoring activities and methodology (Sections 6.4.4, 6.4.5, 6.5.4 and 6.5.5 and Appendices B and C); and
- considerations in relation to the AIP (Attachment 7).

The issues raised by the DPI have been considered during the preparation of this EIS.

Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries

A Project summary letter was sent to the DPI – Fisheries on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and a description of relevant specialist assessments in preparation. It was noted that potential impacts to ephemeral watercourses and ponding areas were being assessed as part of the Subsidence Assessment and the Surface Water Assessment (Appendices A and C).

A Project update letter was sent to the DPI – Fisheries on 29 June 2020. The letter provided a summary of findings of the BDAR, as they relate to aquatic ecosystems.

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Water

NCOPL held a teleconference with the DPIE – Water on 10 December 2018. This included providing an overview of the Project, gateway application requirements with respect to Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) criteria and the AIP and proposed timing for submission of the Gateway Application, EPBC Act Referral, Scoping Report and EIS.

NCOPL held a teleconference with the DPIE – Water and the NRAR on 12 December 2019. This included a briefing on the Project and discussion of relevant issues, including the site water balance and water licensing.

During the teleconference, the DPIE – Water raised that the EIS should include consideration of WAL availability. This has been addressed in Appendix C.

NCOPL held an additional videoconference with the DPIE – Water and the NRAR on 9 July 2020 to provide a briefing on the outcomes of the Project Groundwater Assessment and Surface Water Assessment.

The DPIE – Water raised that a number of new Water Sharing Plans (WSPs) commenced on 1 July 2020. Additionally, the DPIE – Water recommended that GDEs are considered in accordance with the AIP, including the new GDEs described in the new WSPs. These considerations have been addressed in Appendix B.

Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture

A Project summary letter was sent to the DPI – Agriculture on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and the Agricultural Impact Statement in preparation.

NCOPL held a videoconference with the DPI – Agriculture on 9 July 2020 to provide a summary of the findings of the Project Agricultural Impact Statement. The DPI – Agriculture raised the point that the EIS should include consideration of lessons learnt and successes from rehabilitation at the existing operation (Attachment 5).

*NSW Natural Resources Access Regulator and
DPIE – Water*

A representative from the NRAR participated in the teleconference with NCOPL and DPIE – Water on 12 December 2019. The NRAR raised that the EIS should include the Project's modelled licensed surface discharge volume. This has been addressed in Appendix C.

A representative from the NRAR also participated in a videoconference with NCOPL and the DPIE – Water on 9 July 2020.

The following key issues were raised by the NRAR for inclusion in the EIS:

- confirmation that significant groundwater drawdown is not expected in the Namoi alluvium (Appendix B); and
- make-good provisions/management of the privately-owned stock and domestic water supply bores predicted to experience drawdowns exceeding the AIP minimal impact considerations criterion (Appendix B).

*Department of Planning, Industry and Environment –
Crown Lands*

A Project summary letter was sent to the DPIE – Crown Lands on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and a description of Crown Lands within the MLA areas.

NCOPL held a videoconference with the DPIE – Crown Lands on 25 June 2020 to provide a summary of specialist studies relevant to Crown Land. The DPIE – Crown Lands advised that they would review the status of suspected “unformed” Crown roads within the Project area, to determine the approach to their management in the future.

Subsidence Advisory NSW

Subsidence Advisory NSW provided input to the SEARs on 18 April 2019. No Project-specific assessment requirements were provided.

A Project summary letter was sent to Subsidence Advisory NSW on 6 August 2020. The letter included a summary of the findings of the Subsidence Assessment, relating to potential impacts on built features.

Dams Safety NSW

A Project summary letter was sent to Dams Safety NSW on 10 June 2020. The letter included a description of the Project's potential interaction with dams declared with a Significant Consequence Category under the *Dams Safety Act 2015*.

North West Local Land Services

North West Local Land Services provided comments on the SEARs on 23 April 2019, requesting that impacts to Travelling Stock Reserves and Crown Land be assessed in the EIS.

A Project summary letter was sent to the North West Local Land Services on 19 December 2019 to provide information on the Project and a description of relevant specialist assessments in preparation.

A Project update letter was sent to North West Local Land Services on 29 June 2020. The letter provided a summary of findings of specialist assessments as they relate to Crown Lands, water management and weed management. It also advised that no Travelling Stock Reserves are located within the existing Narrabri Mine Lease or within Mining Lease Applications 1 and 2.

Forestry Corporation of NSW

NCOPL meets regularly with Forestry Corporation about operational matters at the Narrabri Mine. Project consultation has included:

- 8 November 2019 – NCOPL met with Forestry Corporation regarding the Project and to commence discussions about a long-term access agreement.
- 15 May 2020 – NCOPL held a teleconference with Forestry Corporation to progress the long-term access agreement and discuss impacts on Scratch Road (an existing forestry road/track that would be impacted by Project surface infrastructure). Forestry Corporation indicated that they would re-align Scratch Road as required to maintain access to Forestry Corporation assets.
- 26 May 2020, 1 June 2020 and 2 June 2020 – NCOPL held a series of teleconferences with Forestry Corporation to negotiate the long-term access agreement. Following the videoconference on 2 June 2020, Forestry Corporation provided a draft long-term access agreement, which was subsequently endorsed by NCOPL.

NSW Rural Fire Service

The NSW Rural Fire Service provided input to the SEARs on 15 April 2019. The input from the NSW Rural Fire Service has been considered in this EIS, including the following (Appendix P):

- aim and objectives of *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006* (Appendix P);
- identification of potential ignition sources during construction and operation of the development (Appendix P);
- storage of fuels and other hazardous materials (Appendix P);
- proposed bushfire protection measures for the development, including vegetation management and fire suppression capabilities (Appendix D);
- operational access to the site for firefighting appliances (Appendix P); and
- emergency and evacuation planning (Appendix P).

A Project summary letter was sent to NSW Rural Fire Service on 14 May 2020, describing that consideration of bushfire hazards is detailed in the Preliminary Hazard Analysis for the Project. The NSW Rural Fire service provided a response on 19 June 2020, attaching their previous input to the SEARs and noting they will review bushfire considerations in the EIS during its exhibition.

NSW Health

NSW Health provided input to the SEARs on 16 April 2019. The input from NSW Health has been considered in this EIS.

A Project summary letter was sent to NSW Health on 29 June 2020, providing a summary of the findings of the Air Quality Assessment, Noise Assessment and Surface Water Assessment for the Project as they relate to the matters raised by NSW Health.

5.2.2 Local Government Agencies

The Project is wholly located within the Narrabri LGA. NCOPL has regularly consulted with NSC in relation to the Project. Consultation with GSC is also described below.

Narrabri Shire Council

A summary of consultation conducted with NSC is provided in Table 5-4.

NCOPL will continue to consult with NSC throughout the EIS assessment process to respond to any issues or concerns raised. This consultation will also involve discussions regarding community contributions.

Gunnedah Shire Council

A proportion of NCOPL's employees reside in the adjacent Gunnedah Shire. A meeting with GSC, NCOPL and CDM Smith was held on 22 August 2019 in relation to the SIA, to discuss potential social issues to be considered in the EIS.

Key issues raised by GSC included consideration of potential social opportunities and impacts in the Gunnedah LGA and potential impacts to housing affordability due to an extension of the mine life. These are addressed in Appendix K.

NCOPL will continue to consult with GSC throughout the EIS assessment process to respond to any issues or concerns raised.

5.2.3 Federal Government Agencies

Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

NCOPL consulted with the Commonwealth DAWE in July 2019 as part of the lodgement of a Referral under the EPBC Act, including a Project briefing on 24 July 2019.

A delegate of the NSW Minister determined on 30 September 2019 that the proposed action is a "controlled action" in relation to the following controlling provisions:

- EBPC Act listed threatened species and communities; and
- water resources.

A description of how the assessment requirements relevant to the EPBC Act have been addressed in this EIS is provided in Attachment 2.

Table 5-4
Consultation Summary – Narrabri Shire Council

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS Reference
4 December 2018	Project briefing and scoping of the SIA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of potential cumulative community impacts associated with other proposed projects in the region (Section 6.16.3 and Appendix K). Potential impacts to the community's social fabric due to land acquisition for the Project (Section 6.16.3 and Appendix K). Maintenance of agricultural productivity post-mining (Attachment 5). Potential impacts to groundwater and surface water resources (Sections 6.4.3 and 6.5.3 and Appendices B and C).
22 August 2019	Meeting with NSC, CDM Smith and NCOPL in relation to the SIA, to discuss potential social issues to be assessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential social opportunities and impacts in the Narrabri LGA (Section 6.16.3 and Appendix K). Potential road network and traffic impacts (Section 6.13.3 and Appendix J). Potential impacts from water use given drought conditions (Section 6.4.3 and Appendix B). Investment in community infrastructure.
1 May 2020	Meeting with NSC, CDM Smith and NCOPL to discuss specialist assessment findings and mitigation measures for the SIA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider encouraging women to apply for positions at the Narrabri Mine (Section 6.16.4 and Appendix K). Undertake engagement with local businesses, including a range of business associations (Section 6.16.4 and Appendix K). Consider local businesses as part of assessment of tenders in procurement decisions (Section 6.16.4 and Appendix K).
27 May 2020	Meeting to provide Project update, including findings of specialist assessments related to surface water, groundwater, noise, air quality, road transport and agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential water impacts including groundwater use and impacts on surrounding water sources (Section 6.4.3 and Appendix B). Opportunities for local businesses (Section 6.16.4 and Appendix K).

Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development

The Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC) on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development provided advice on the Project to the Mining and Petroleum Gateway Panel.

The IESC advice has been considered in the Subsidence Assessment (Appendix A), Groundwater Assessment (Appendix B) and Surface Water Assessment (Appendix C).

5.2.4 Infrastructure Owners, Service Providers and Specialist Interest Groups

Australian Rail Track Corporation

The Hunter Valley coal rail network is managed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). The Werris Creek Mungindi Railway, which forms part of the Hunter Valley coal rail network, would continue to be used to transport ROM coal to the Port of Newcastle for export.

A Project summary letter was sent to the ARTC on 11 December 2019. This included an overview of the Project and Project requirements for rail track capacity and train path availability (i.e. no change to approved daily train movements and continuation of operations to 2044). Confirmation that access to the NSW rail network would continue to be available for the Project was requested.

The ARTC responded via letter on 21 July 2020, indicating that sufficient capacity can be established to accommodate the Project to 2044.

NCOPL would continue to work with the ARTC on access arrangements to the Hunter Valley coal rail network as the Project progresses.

Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator

The Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator (HVCCC) plans and co-ordinates the co-operative daily operation and long-term capacity alignment of the Hunter Valley coal rail network.

A Project summary letter was sent to the HVCCC on 29 June 2020. The letter described the ROM coal production and rail transport movements for the Project.

Siding Spring Observatory

The Siding Spring Observatory is located approximately 115 km to the south-west of the Project. As such, the Project is within the Dark Sky Region, as defined in the *Dark Sky Planning Guideline* (DP&E, 2016).

A Project summary letter was sent to Siding Spring Observatory on 15 July 2020, to provide information on the Project and a summary of predicted visual impacts of the Project relating to night-lighting. It also noted that, in relation to flaring, ongoing monitoring of gas volumes and composition and investigation of developments in flaring technology would determine whether flaring is a viable option to manage gas associated with the Project.

The Siding Spring Observatory responded on 24 July 2020, requesting that the EIS include an assessment of the number of lumens the flares (if required) would emit, both shielded and unshielded. NCOPL responded on 11 August 2020 indicating that should flares be proposed in the future, NCOPL would undertake further consultation with Siding Spring Observatory.

Namoi Water

A Project summary letter sent to Namoi Water on 11 August 2020, to provide information on the Project, the Groundwater Assessment and a summary of water licences expected to be required for the Project.

Other Infrastructure Owners and Service Providers

In addition to the above, Project summary letters were also sent to the following infrastructure owners and service providers in June and July 2020:

- RailCorp;
- Port of Newcastle;
- Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group;
- Essential Energy; and
- Telstra.

Essential Energy requested additional information regarding its assets in the Project area and consultation is ongoing.

Telstra responded on 17 July 2020, advising NCOPL of the Telstra assets located in proximity to the Project area.

5.2.5 Neighbouring Landholders and Tenement Holders

Narrabri Gas Project

NCOPL has consulted with Santos regarding its Narrabri Gas Project, located adjacent to the Narrabri Mine (Figure 1-1).

NCOPL contacted Santos via email on 12 August 2019 providing the proposed approach for cumulative groundwater modelling of the Narrabri Gas Project. This also included a request to confirm that information taken from the Narrabri Gas Project Groundwater Impact Assessment is still representative of the proposed development.

Santos responded via email on 21 August 2019, indicating it had no comments on the proposed approach to be used in the cumulative groundwater modelling.

Other Neighbouring Landholders

NCOPL regularly consults with other neighbouring landholders as part of its ongoing community engagement (Section 5.3). Project-specific community consultation is also described in Section 5.2.6.

NCOPL will continue to consult with neighbouring landholders during the exhibition period of this EIS.

5.2.6 Public Consultation

NCOPL maintains open lines of communication with the community through a number of community initiatives and local involvement. These mechanisms are described in Section 5.3.

In addition, NCOPL undertook the following specific consultation activities for the EIS:

- conducting a community drop-in information session;
- face-to-face meetings with affected landholders;
- providing briefings to the Narrabri Mine Community Consultative Committee (CCC);
- distributing a community newsletter to local residents and other stakeholders (Plate 5-1);
- a community article in the local newspapers;
- a community survey as part of the SIA;

- directly consulting with representatives of the Aboriginal community;
- providing information through a local community event (Narrabri Gypsy Willow River Markets);
- consulting with local community groups; and
- briefing NCOPL's locally based staff and contractors.

The above consultation mechanisms are described in further detail below. Further consultation would occur prior to and during exhibition of the EIS to confirm that community stakeholders have both access to the EIS and the opportunity to ask questions.

Consultation completed as part of the SIA process is described in Section 5.2.8.

Community Drop-in Session

A community drop-in session was held on 7 May 2019 at the Baan Baa Railway Hotel.

Notification of the community drop-in session was provided via a letterbox drop, which was distributed to all addresses in nine local postcodes.

The community drop-in session provided an opportunity for NCOPL to give a briefing on the Project and for the local community to ask NCOPL any specific queries or issues of concern relating to the Project.



Plate 5-1 November 2019 Community Newsletter Cover

Twenty-two community members attended the community drop-in session.

Key issues raised by members of the local community during the Project community drop-in session included:

- current and expected water usage and where water would be sourced from (Sections 2.10.1 and 6.5.3 and Appendix C);
- subsidence characteristics and its potential impact on surface water in drainage lines (Sections 6.3.3, 6.5.3 and Appendices A and C);
- potential air quality impacts and related monitoring (Sections 6.9.4 and 6.9.5 and Appendix I);
- potential noise impacts (Section 6.8.4 and Appendix H);
- discharge of excess water (Section 6.5.3 and Appendix C);
- surface disturbance required for proposed surface infrastructure (Section 6.7.3 and Appendix D); and
- offset requirements and how these properties would be managed in the long term (Section 6.7.6 and Appendix D).

Meetings with Affected Landholders

In the course of preparation of the EIS, NCOPL has consulted with affected landholders (i.e. the landholders where impact assessment has indicated that noise, subsidence, groundwater or other impacts may occur on the property).

Briefings of Community Consultative Committee

Section 5.3.1 provides further information on the CCC operated by NCOPL.

Updates on the status of the Project have been provided at quarterly meetings of the Narrabri Mine CCC since mid-2017.

The Narrabri Mine CCC meets at the Narrabri Mine office for its meetings. CCC members have the opportunity to ask questions of NCOPL personnel about the Project design and proposed mitigation measures.

The feedback from the CCC members has consistently been that the committee is concerned about the potential for a new pit top to facilitate access to coal reserves in EL 6505. This is not part of the Project (i.e. the Project seeks continued use of the current Pit Top Area). This is understood by CCC members and has led to reduced concern regarding the Project.

Presentations on the SIA process and updates on consultation undertaken were made by CDM Smith to the Narrabri Mine CCC at the meetings held in December 2018 and December 2019.

Key issues raised by members of the CCC in relation to the Project have included:

- potential noise and dust impacts associated with ventilation fans required for the Project (Appendices H and I); and
- concern around road network impacts associated with increased traffic (Appendix J).

Community Newsletter

Whitehaven prepared and distributed a community newsletter providing information on the Project and its status in November 2019.

The newsletter was distributed through local newspapers including the *Narrabri Courier*, the *Namoi Valley Independent*, *The Northern Daily Leader* and *Wee Waa News*.

Community Survey

Over 24 July to 4 September 2019, a community survey was conducted as part of the Social Impact Assessment.

The local and wider regional community was encouraged to participate through the distribution of surveys via the Whitehaven website, advertisements in the *Narrabri Courier* and the *Namoi Valley Independent* newspapers and hard copies available at the Narrabri Mine office, Whitehaven Gunnedah office, the NSC and Boggabri Library.

A total of 81 survey responses were received, including 41 local respondents (residing in the Narrabri LGA and Gunnedah LGA) and 40 other respondents (residing outside these two LGAs).

The potential for employment and training opportunities and diversification of the economy were potential social benefits raised by some respondents in the survey (Appendix K).

Three issues raised most commonly by local respondents included potential for impacts to surface water and groundwater resources (Appendices B and C), Aboriginal cultural heritage values (Appendix E) and natural and conservation areas (Appendix D).

The issues raised by the survey responses are presented and addressed in the SIA (Appendix K) and Sections 6.16.3 and 6.16.4.

Local Community Groups

NCOPL is in regular contact with local community groups through its support of groups through sponsorships and donations (Section 5.3.4).

A Project summary letter was sent to the Narrabri and District Chamber of Commerce on 11 August 2020. The letter included a summary of the findings of the Project Economic Assessment and Social Impact Assessment, relating to socio-economic benefits.

In addition, consultation was conducted with the Narrabri and District Chamber of Commerce through the SIA process (Section 5.2.8).

Staff and Contractors

NCOPL currently employs up to 520 full-time equivalent personnel (employees and contractors).

Briefings on the Project for staff and employees have been conducted during the development of the EIS.

5.2.7 Aboriginal Community

Aboriginal community consultation for the Project was undertaken in accordance with *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010* (Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water [DECCW], 2010a) and the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009*.

In accordance with these guidelines, NCOPL notified the following parties about the Project:

- Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council;
- Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council;
- Office of the Registrar;
- National Native Title Tribunal;
- Native Title Services Corporation Limited;
- North West Local Land Services;
- NSC;
- GSC; and
- BCD.

In addition to the written notifications, public notices were placed in the following publications, seeking registrations from interested Aboriginal parties:

- the *Namoi Valley Independent* (30 July 2019);
- the *Narrabri Courier* (30 July 2019); and
- the *Koori Mail* (31 July 2019).

The public notices invited Aboriginal persons or groups who wished to be consulted in relation to the ACHA for the Project to contact NCOPL.

Subsequent to the above, the following Aboriginal stakeholders registered their interest in being involved in the consultation process (in alphabetical order):

- Aaron Talbott;
- AGA Culture Services (Ashley Sampson);
- Brian Draper;
- Cacatua General Services;
- David Horton;
- Gomeroi Narrabri Aboriginal Corporation (GNAC);
- Kerry Morgan Fernando;
- Leslie "Uncle Jacko" Woodbridge;
- Michael John Long (White Cockatoo);
- Michael Ronald Long (Junior); and
- Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council.

All stakeholders who registered were invited to participate in the ACHA (i.e. the Registered Aboriginal Parties [RAPs]).

NCOPL offered all RAPs the opportunity to attend a Project information session regarding the ACHA proposed methodology and the Project at the Narrabri Bowling Club on 22 October 2019. This information session provided an opportunity for the RAPs to provide comments on the proposed methodology, with any additional comments requested by 31 October 2019, allowing for a 28-day review period. Further details regarding this can be found in Appendix E.

All of the RAPs listed were provided with a copy of the draft ACHA for review and comment on 24 April 2020, with comments requested back by 22 May 2020. The letter accompanying the draft ACHA invited all RAPs to participate in an information session to discuss the key findings of the draft ACHA. Due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 at the time of the information session, this was conducted over videoconference on 8 May 2020. NCOPL advised RAPs that a site inspection would be postponed to a time when allowed by COVID-19 restrictions.

With the easing of restrictions in NSW, NCOPL subsequently invited all RAPs to attend a supplementary information session at the Baan Baa Hall on 30 June 2020, followed by a site inspection to view a selection of identified Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.

A detailed description of the consultation undertaken with the RAPs during the preparation of this EIS is provided in the ACHA (Appendix E).

5.2.8 Social Impact Assessment

CDM Smith undertook consultation activities in support of the SIA for the Project (Appendix K), in addition to the consultation activities conducted by NCOPL.

Consultation in support of the SIA included:

- a community survey;
- meetings with NSC and GSC;
- attendance at Narrabri Mine CCC;
- meeting with the Narrabri Chamber of Commerce; and
- meetings with nearby landholders.

Further detail on the SIA consultation activities is provided in Appendix K.

5.3 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT

This section describes the community initiatives and involvement relevant to the Narrabri Mine that would continue for the Project.

5.3.1 Community Consultative Committees

The Narrabri Mine CCC is established and operates in accordance with Project Approval 08_0144.

The purpose of the Narrabri Mine CCC is to provide a forum for open discussion between representatives of the Narrabri Mine, the community, the relevant councils and other stakeholders on issues directly relating to the Mine's operations, environmental performance and community relations, and to keep the community informed on these matters.

The Narrabri Mine CCC meets quarterly and the meeting minutes are publicly available on the Narrabri Mine website.

As described in Section 5.2.6, during the preparation of the EIS, briefings on the status and progress of the Project were provided and discussed with the members of the Narrabri Mine CCC.

5.3.2 Website and Community Call Line

Whitehaven maintains a website for the Narrabri Mine (<https://whitehavencoal.com.au/our-business/our-assets/narrabri-mine/>) for the general public to keep up to date with NCOPL's activities and the status of the Project.

The website is a significant source of information, including:

- Narrabri Mine operations;
- environmental management plans;
- environmental monitoring results;
- independent environmental audits;
- annual reviews;

- Narrabri Mine CCC meeting minutes; and
- community call lines.

5.3.3 Community Contact Points

NCOPL maintains a number of available points of contact for the community to ask specific questions or provide feedback, including:

- dedicated community general enquiry ([02] 6794 4755) and complaints (0447 934 755) lines;
- an email address (information@whitehavencoal.com.au); and
- Whitehaven Coal Office (231 Conadilly Street, Gunnedah NSW 2380).

5.3.4 Community Contributions, Programs and Sponsorships

NCOPL's and Whitehaven's financial year 2019 financial contributions (in the form of sponsorships and donations) in the region were \$150,800 in the Narrabri LGA (e.g. rescue helicopter) and \$530,900 in total in the regions where Whitehaven operates. Whitehaven staff also donated an additional \$47,651 via payroll donations in financial year 2018.

Over the past five years (2015 to 2019), Whitehaven has made several higher-value, longer-term donations to the region including \$560,000 to the Westpac rescue helicopter, as well as state- and nation-wide companies and not-for-profit organisations, including \$155,000 to the Girls Academy, \$40,000 to the Clontarf Foundation and \$45,000 to the Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre.

NCOPL would continue to provide funding contributions to local community programs and groups during the life of the Project.

5.3.5 Contractors and Suppliers

The Narrabri Mine's existing operations support a number of local and regional contractors and suppliers. Approximately 71% of NCOPL's operating expenditures are currently directed towards NSW suppliers (Appendix L).

Approval of the Project would allow NCOPL to continue and expand support for local and regional contractors and suppliers.

5.3.6 Public Reporting

In accordance with Project Approval 08_0144 for the Narrabri Mine, NCOPL produces Annual Reviews to report on environmental performance and rehabilitation activities. Copies of Annual Reviews and monitoring results are available on the Whitehaven website (Section 5.3.2).

NCOPL also publishes annual reports and other information for investors, which are made available on the Whitehaven website.