



ASSESSMENT REPORT

Section 75W Modification - Integra Coal Operations Pty Ltd

1 BACKGROUND

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



Figure 1: Regional Context of Integra Mining Operations

The mining operation at the complex is regulated by three consents/approvals:

- DA 86/2889 for the Camberwell open cut mining operations and use of associated surface facilities, including a coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP) and coal loader;
- DA 105/90 and MP 06_0213 for the Glennies Creek underground colliery operations; and
- MP 06_0057 for the use of the surface facilities to support the underground workings at the pit-top area, the gas drainage borehole area and the Forest Road Ventilation Shaft area.

These consents/approvals allow Integra to:

- extract up to 3.8 million tonnes per annum from its open cut mining operations;
- extract up to 4.5 million tonnes per annum from 17 longwall panels;
- process up to 1,200 tonnes per hour at the Camberwell CHPP, before loading it onto trains and dispatching it to export and/or domestic markets.

The Ventilation Shaft Area comprises a 4.99ha area located adjacent to Forest Road, approximately 2.9km west-north-west of the mine's pit top area and 1km north-north-west of the main northern railway line crossing of Glennies Creek Road (see Figure 2).

The area was initially established to enable the installation of facilities required to ventilate the underground mining operations. Currently services to the underground workings are provided from facilities at the pit top/portal area (see Figure 2).

Mining in the Middle Liddell seam has, over time, moved further away from the portals, to distances of up to 6.5km. In recent months, it has become apparent to Integra that services to the underground workings, primarily compressed air and electrical power, cannot be effectively reticulated to the working face at the required levels over these distances.

The proposed modification to the Ventilation Shaft Area would ensure long-term service requirements for the underground workings are met as the mining face continues to move further from the pit top facilities as later longwalls are mined (see Figure 2).

2 PROPOSED MODIFICATION

On 26 June 2008, Integra submitted an application with the Department which seeks to modify the Minister's approval for the use of the underground surface facilities under Section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

Approval is sought to carry out the following works within the Ventilation Shaft Area:

- Relocate two compressors (currently positioned adjacent to the mine portals) and install a third compressor adjacent to the secondary shaft;
- Construct a 300mm borehole to deliver compressed air underground;
- Install a 66kV to 11kV transportable 15 to 20MVA substation, and backup 1250kVA genset;

- Install a 450mm diameter borehole in which a 300mm feeder powerline would be run from the 66/11kV substation to a pit bottom switch board;
- Install a 100 tonne stonedust storage tank and associated 300mm drophole for delivery of stonedust to the underground workings;
- Develop an area and associate inertisation unit pad, together with an associated 640mm diameter borehole and pipework, to enable inert gas to be piped to the underground workings;
- Prospective approval is also sought to develop and operate a 550mm diameter borehole and associated infrastructure to assist in gas drainage from the underlying coal seams. This may ultimately facilitate the piping of the methane gas to the nearby Power Station owned by Envirogen Pty Ltd.

The proposed modification represents a logical extension to existing coal mining activities in the area and would continue to utilise the current workforce and equipment fleet.

3 STATUTORY CONTEXT

3.1 Approval Authority

The Minister was the approval authority for the original project approval, and is therefore the approval authority for this application.

However, the Executive Director of Major Project Assessment division may determine this application under the Minister's delegation of 7 June 2007.

3.2 Exhibition and Notification

Under Section 75W of the EP&A Act, the Department is not required to notify or exhibit the application.

However, after accepting the EA for the project, the Department:

- made it publicly available on the Department's website, and
- notified relevant public authorities by letter.

4 CONSULTATION

The Department consulted the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Department of Water and Energy (DWE), and Singleton Shire Council. The following comments were provided.

DECC confirmed that there were no State-listed threatened species or known items of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance within the disturbance area.

DPI recommended that a conceptual plan showing the likely final landform be provided, together with further detailed information.

DWE confirmed that the proposed modification would not intercept or interfere with groundwater resources that are not currently regulated by Integra's existing water licences and no additional licences or approvals would be required.

Integra provided a response to the issues raised in the DPI submission (see Appendix B). The Department has considered the issues raised by DPI and the Integra's response to these issues, in its assessment of the proposed modification.

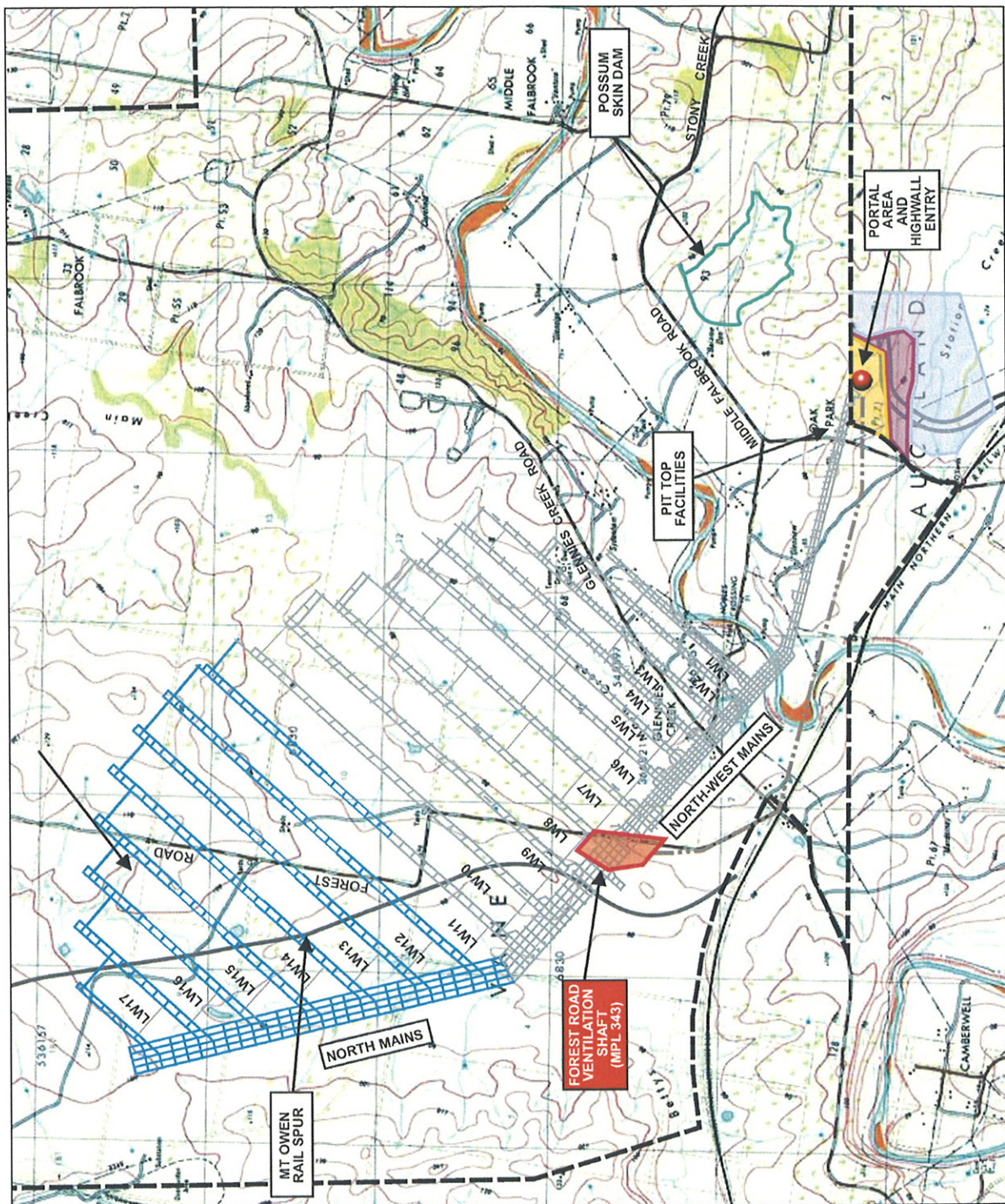


Figure 2: Forest Road Ventilation Shaft Area and Pit Top Facilities Area

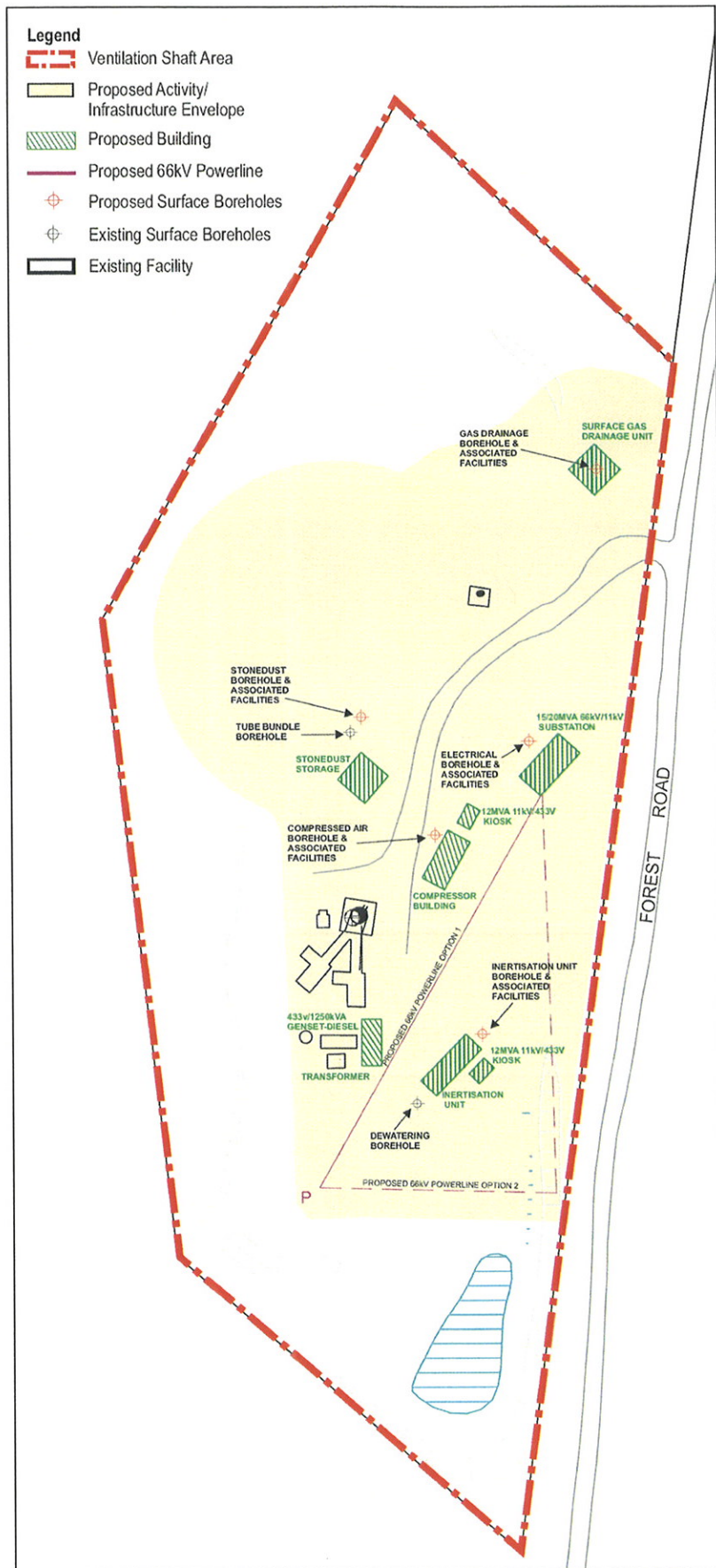


Figure 3: Existing and Proposed Infrastructure at the Ventilation Shaft Area

5 ASSESSMENT

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

Table 1: – Assessment of key issues

Issue	Prediction	Recommended Measures
Rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed modification would result in some limited surface disturbance associated with the installation of additional infrastructure. DPI recommended a conceptual plan showing the likely final landform and additional information on rehabilitation be provided by Integra. In their response, Integra provided a plan depicting the final landform of the Ventilation Shaft Area (see Figure 4), assuming there is no requirement for the retention of any infrastructure by the landowner. Integra's response detailed commitments to the rehabilitation of the Ventilation Shaft Area on closure of the mine and/or no further requirements for the ventilation shaft site. The Department is satisfied that Integra has sufficient control measures in place to minimise disturbed areas and ensure appropriate rehabilitation is undertaken on the cessation of underground mining phases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integra have committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stockpiling all topsoil removed for future rehabilitation activities; permanently sealing all shafts in accordance with DPI requirements; removing all infrastructure (subject to landowner consent); sealing or fencing any eroded area adjacent to or within the Ventilation Shaft area; and rehabilitating all areas of disturbance; on cessation of underground mining. To formalise these commitments, the Department recommends that a condition be imposed which requires the company to prepare a Rehabilitation Management Plan in consultation with DPI.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A noise impact assessment was carried out in accordance with the NSW Industrial Noise Policy (INP), which examined cumulative noise impacts during both construction and operation. The assessment found that noise emissions from the Forest Road Ventilation Shaft Area would remain at or below the approved noise impact assessment criteria at all surrounding receptors, during day, evening and night periods. The cumulative noise assessment identified that during the inversion scenario, a 1dBA exceedance may occur at Receptor 84, which is mine owned. The Department is satisfied that the overall noise level would remain at or below applicable intrusive and amenity criteria at all privately-owned receptors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integra is required to comply with noise limits specified within the project approval and to monitor noise impacts. All monitoring results to be made publically available on Integra's website and reported annually in the AEMR.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment found that the proposal could increase dust generation through borehole drilling, construction activities and traffic movements. Integra would control dust emissions during these activities by moistening soil prior to stripping and through the use of a dust collector on the drill rig. Other sources of emission could impact air quality such as mine gas emissions from drainage boreholes and exhaust emissions from equipment but these impacts are not predicted be significant. The Department is satisfied that potential air quality impacts on surrounding residents would be negligible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integra is required to comply with air quality limits specified within the project approval and to monitor air quality impacts. All monitoring results to be made publically available on Integra's website and reported annually in the AEMR.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A GHG assessment was carried out for the proposed modification which found that GHG emissions would increase due to increased electricity consumption, diesel use during 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integra is a member of Greenhouse Challenge Plus and under its Energy Savings Action Plan employ

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> construction and gas drainage from the borehole. However, this would be negligible in the context of the overall emissions from Integra's operations. Integra would allow Envirogen to connect to the Ventilation Shaft drainage borehole, for piping of methane to Envirogen Glennies Creek Power Station where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of project-specific measures to minimise GHG emissions. No additional control measures required.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No threatened bird, reptile or mammal species have been identified within the Ventilation Shaft Area. The proposed works would be confined to areas that are (or have approval to be) disturbed. The proposal would have minimal effect on existing biodiversity values in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional control measures required.
Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment determined that no significant direct or indirect groundwater impacts are anticipated. Similarly, there would be no impacts to surface water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional licences or approvals are required by DWE and no additional control measures are required, above and beyond those set out in the existing Water Management Plan for Integra's mining operations.
Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modification would result in some surface disturbance associated with the proposed works. However, this area has been highly disturbed and modified by previous development. The assessment found that the proposed modification would not impact upon items of Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional control measures required above and beyond those set out in the existing Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan for Integra's mining operations
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modification would result in an average of eight semi-trailer movements a month along Forest Road and Glennies Creek Road. However, there would be a corresponding reduction in the number of heavy vehicle movements on Bridgeman, Stony Creek and Middle Falbrook Roads. The assessment found the proposed modification is unlikely to result in a significant increase of light vehicle movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional control measures required



Figure 4: Rehabilitation Plan for the Forest Road Ventilation Shaft Area

6 CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the application in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act.

This assessment has found that the proposed modification to the Forest Road Ventilation Shaft Area would not lead to any significant change in the environmental impacts associated with the approved project.

Notwithstanding this, the Department has taken the opportunity to modify some of the existing conditions, to ensure the mine's environmental performance is subject to the current standards applied to mining developments in NSW.

Essentially the Department believes that the project would enable Integra Underground Operations to meet future operational requirements, which it may otherwise be unable to achieve.

Consequently, the Department believes the proposed modification is in the public interest, and should be approved subject to conditions.

7 RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Executive Director:

- consider the findings and recommendations of this report;
- approve the application under Section 75W of the EP&A Act; and
- sign the attached notice of modification.

 20/11/08

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Director
Major Development Assessment

 21.11.08

Chris Wilson
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