



Tasman Extension Project Environmental Impact Statement

SECTION 3

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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3 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

This section describes the consultation undertaken prior to and during the preparation of this EIS and the ongoing Donaldson Coal community initiatives and consultation programs. Where relevant, references are provided to sections and/or specialist appendices of this EIS where the issues are considered and addressed.

3.1 PROJECT CONSULTATION

3.1.1 Objectives

The level of consultation undertaken during the preparation of this EIS is considered to be in accordance with the DGRs (Attachment 1) and is adequate and appropriate for a State Significant Development under Part 4 of the EP&A Act.

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 in this EIS.

3.1.2 State Government Agencies

Consultation with key NSW State Government agencies in relation to the Project commenced prior to the submission of the Project Application and supporting Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment in October 2011. Donaldson Coal continues to consult with relevant State Government agencies on a regular basis in relation to the current mining operations in the Newcastle Coalfield and the Project.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

Donaldson Coal consults regularly with the DP&I regarding existing operations at the Tasman Underground Mine and Donaldson Coal's other operations.

A request for DGRs and supporting Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment were lodged with the DP&I in October 2011. DGRs were signed by a delegate of the Director-General of the DP&I on 14 December 2011.

A meeting was held with representatives of the DP&I on 24 February 2012 to provide an update on the Project description and environmental studies and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- proposed mining method including partial and total extraction of pillars (Section 2.6);
- geological constraints on the mining layout (Section 2.2);
- interaction of the Project with the Hunter Expressway (Sections 2.7 and 4.12, Attachment 4 and Appendix H);
- impacts of ROM coal haulage on road safety (Section 4.12 and Appendix H);
- commitments for improvements to road safety, including upgrades to private driveways along George Booth Drive (Sections 4.12 and 7);
- alternatives to ROM coal haulage route and pit top intersection (Section 6.7.2);
- performance measures and SCZs for surface features (Section 2.6.3);
- subsidence impacts on cliff lines, rock terrace, rock outcrops and steep slopes (Sections 4.2 and 4.3 and Appendix A);
- predicted height of connective cracking above partial pillar extraction areas (Sections 4.2 and 4.4 and Appendices A and B); and
- requirement for consent of the Minister for the Environment for the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area (Section 6.4).

In addition to the above, numerous discussions and communications were conducted with the DP&I during the preparation of this EIS.

Office of Environment and Heritage and Environment Protection Authority

In October 2011, the EPA was formed as a separate statutory entity from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). A summary of consultation with the OEH (prior to October 2011) and the OEH and EPA are provided below.

A meeting was initially held with representatives of the OEH in Newcastle on 6 September 2011 to provide an overview of the Project, the proposed subsidence controls and the requirement for consent of the Minister for the Environment for the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area.

A separate briefing was held with a representative of the National Parks and Wildlife Division of the OEH on 15 September 2011 to provide a Project briefing and to discuss the requirement for consent of the Minister for the Environment for the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area.

The OEH's comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 4 November 2011.

An additional meeting was held with representatives of the OEH and EPA on 2 February 2012 to provide an update on the status of the Project and environmental studies and to discuss the results of the flora, fauna and aquatic ecology assessments.

Meetings were held with representatives of the OEH on 3 April 2012 and 24 May 2012 to provide an update on the Aboriginal, flora, fauna and aquatic ecology assessments.

A specific meeting was held with the regional managers of the OEH and EPA on 3 May 2012 to discuss the requirement for consent of the Minister for the Environment (Section 6.4).

Key issues raised during consultation with representatives of the EPA and OEH included:

- performance measures and SCZs for streams and vegetation (Section 2.6.3);
- predicted height of connective cracking above partial pillar extraction areas (Sections 4.2 and 4.4 and Appendices A and B);
- flora and fauna survey effort, in particular within the surface disturbance area (Appendices F and G);
- biodiversity offset and compensatory measures for the clearance of vegetation, including endangered ecological communities (EECs) and threatened flora species (Sections 4.8, 4.9 and 7);
- pit top water management, including storage of excess water in the historic West Borehole seam workings (Sections 2.10 and 4.6 and Appendix C);
- management of potential impacts to bushfire risk (Section 4.3); and
- requirement for consent of the Minister for the Environment for the Sugarloaf State Conservation Area (Section 6.4).

In addition to the above, site cards for Aboriginal heritage sites recorded during the site surveys were lodged with the OEH in December 2011.

NSW Heritage Council

NSW Heritage Council comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 3 November 2011.

A letter was sent to the NSW Heritage Council (letter dated 30 April 2012) providing a summary of the results of the Non-Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (Appendix L) and offering a further briefing if requested.

Division of Resources and Energy within Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services

Donaldson Coal presented a Conceptual Project Development Plan meeting with representatives of DRE (then NSW Department of Primary Industries – Mineral Resources [DPI-MR]) and DP&I (then NSW Department of Planning [DoP]) in November 2008. The DPI-MR provided a letter to the Department of Planning in December 2008 indicating that mining of the West Borehole Seam was considered a responsible utilisation of the State's coal resources.

A meeting was held with representatives of DRE on 19 October 2011 to provide an update on the refinements to the Project since the Conceptual Project Development Plan meeting in November 2008 and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- mining lease applications and the native title process (Section 6);
- alternatives to the new pit top (Section 6.7.2); and
- subsidence impacts on cliff lines (Section 4.2 and Appendix A).

The DRE provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 4 November 2011). In summary, the issues raised by the DRE were in relation to:

- mining titles (Section 6.3.1);
- Project description information including:
 - underground mine entries, mine layouts and scheduling (Section 2.6);
 - coal crushing and coal handling activities (Section 2.7);
 - surface facilities and storage requirements (Sections 2.5, 2.10 and 2.12);

- mine ventilation and any methane gas capture and use management (Section 2.6.6);
- management of rock from decline drift (Section 2.5.2); and
- water management (Section 2.9);
- rehabilitation (Section 5); and
- subsidence predictions and impacts, including fracture connectivity and impacts on cliff lines, private residences and electricity transmission lines (Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 and Appendix A).

In addition to the above, Donaldson Coal has been regularly consulting with the Titles Unit of DRE since September 2011 regarding the lodgement and progress of MLA 416 and MLA 426.

Department of Primary Industries within Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), including Forests NSW, NSW Office of Water (NOW), Catchment and Lands (Crown Lands Division) and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch were consulted during the preparation of this EIS. A summary of the consultation with each of these divisions is provided below.

Forests NSW

Forests NSW manage the Heaton State Forest in the south-west of the Project area.

Donaldson Coal commenced consultation with Forests NSW in May 2011 to provide a briefing on the Project and apply for Special Purposes Permit (Research) to undertake baseline studies in Heaton State Forest for this EIS.

Donaldson Coal consults regularly with Forests NSW to arrange access for baseline studies and exploration and to provide updates on the results of the ecological studies.

A Project-specific meeting was held with representatives of Forests NSW on 24 May 2012 to provide further Project information, the results of the ecological studies and Donaldson Coal's management and mitigation commitments. Forests NSW requested ongoing consultation regarding access for surface activities and involvement in the preparation of Extraction Plans for mining within Heaton State Forest.

NSW Office of Water

The NOW provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 10 November 2011). In summary, the issues raised by the NOW were in relation to:

- consideration of water licensing principles and requirements (Attachment 6);
- groundwater make and site water balance (Sections 2.9, 4.4 and 4.6 and Appendices B and C);
- fracture connectivity above mined areas and regional groundwater depressurisation (Sections 4.2 and 4.4 and Appendices A and B);
- potential impacts on stream flow, quality and geomorphology (Sections 4.5 and 4.6 and Appendices A, B, C and D);
- potential impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems and aquatic ecosystems (Sections 4.4, 4.7 and 4.8 and Appendices B, C, E and F); and
- adaptive management (Sections 2.6.3 and 4).

A meeting was held with representatives of NOW on 15 February 2012 to provide a briefing on the Project and the progress of the groundwater and surface water assessments and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- proposed performance measures and implementation of an adaptive management strategy (Section 2.6.3); and
- consistency of the Project with the water sharing plans (Attachment 6).

A further meeting was held with representatives of NOW on 30 May 2012 to provide a summary of the groundwater and surface water modelling results.

Catchment and Lands (Crown Lands Division)

Catchment and Lands (Crown Lands Division) within the DPI provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 3 November 2011). In summary, the issues raised by Catchment and Lands (Crown Lands Division) were in relation to:

- consultation with Lake Macquarie City Council in regard to Crown Reserve 89127 (Section 3.1.3); and
- consultation with the Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) (Section 3.1.6).

Donaldson Coal sent a letter to Catchment and Lands (Crown Lands Division) (letter dated 30 April 2012) providing an update on the Project, a description on consultation conducted regarding Crown land and offering a further briefing if requested.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch

Donaldson Coal sent a letter to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch of the DPI (dated 6 March 2012) providing information on the Project and offering a further briefing if requested.

Agriculture Branch

Donaldson Coal sent a letter to the Agriculture Branch of the DPI (dated 12 March 2012) providing information on the Project and offering a further briefing if requested.

Roads and Maritime Services

The Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 10 November 2011). In summary, the issues raised by the RMS were in relation to:

- potential traffic impacts on existing and proposed intersections and the capacity of the road network (Section 4.12 and Appendix H);
- identification of necessary road network infrastructure upgrades (Sections 4.12 and 7.3 and Appendix H); and
- intersection analysis (such as SIDRA).

A meeting was held with the RMS on 1 March 2012 to provide an update on the Project and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- design of the roundabout at the intersection of George Booth Drive and the new pit top access road (Section 2.5.1);
- increases in ROM coal haulage movements following commissioning of the Hunter Expressway (Sections 2.7 and 4.12 and Appendix H);
- collection of data for the road transport assessment and proposed methodology (Appendix H); and
- review of the safety and potential upgrades to private driveways along George Booth Drive (Sections 4.12 and 7.3).

A draft of the Road Transport Assessment and the SIDRA files from the intersection analysis were provided to the RMS for comment in March 2012.

The RMS responded, stating that the “RMS has reviewed the Traffic Assessment and accepts the data and methodology used in the report” (letter dated 11 May 2012, Attachment 8). The RMS response also provided preliminary comments on the design and funding of the proposed roundabout on George Booth Drive.

The RMS also indicated that it would provide further comments during the assessment phase of the EIS.

Mine Subsidence Board

The Mine Subsidence Board (MSB) provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 31 October 2011). In summary, the main issue raised by the MSB was the presence of abandoned workings in the Borehole Seam below the proposed pit top facility.

Donaldson Coal provided a geotechnical assessment of the long-term pillar stability of the abandoned workings below the new pit top facility to the MSB on 30 March 2012 and an offer to meet if further information is required.

Rural Fire Service

The existing Tasman Underground Mine pit top is under the jurisdiction of the Seahampton RFS. Donaldson Coal regularly consults with the Seahampton RFS regarding the existing Tasman Underground Mine, the RFS Management Plan and attended noise monitoring at the Seahampton RFS station.

The RFS provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 22 November 2011).

Donaldson Coal met with representatives of the Seahampton RFS on 3 April 2012 to provide a briefing on the Project, in particular the development of the new pit top facility. A letter (letter dated 30 April 2012) was sent to the RFS Headquarters to provide an update on the Project and a summary of the consultation with the local Seahampton RFS.

Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority

Donaldson Coal sent a letter to the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (Hunter-Central Rivers CMA) (dated 23 March 2012) providing information on the Project and offering a further briefing if requested.

3.1.3 Local Government Agencies

Cessnock City Council

Donaldson Coal provided a copy of the Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment to the Cessnock City Council on 5 October 2011.

The Cessnock City Council provided comments and specific input to the Project DGRs (letter dated 9 November 2011).

A meeting was held with representatives of Cessnock City Council on 20 February 2012 to provide further information on the Project and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- development of a new pit top facility to access the West Borehole Seam (Section 2.5.2);
- reduction in haulage distance and increases in ROM coal haulage movements (Sections 2.7 and 4.12 and Appendix H); and
- status of environmental studies.

A representative of the Cessnock City Council (Cr Chris Parker) is also a member of the Tasman Underground Mine Community Consultative Committee (CCC) (Section 3.2.1).

Lake Macquarie City Council

Donaldson Coal provided a copy of the Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment to the Lake Macquarie City Council on 5 October 2011.

The Lake Macquarie City Council comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 4 November 2011.

Further information on the Project was provided to the Lake Macquarie City Council in March and April 2012 with an offer to meet if additional information was required.

A representative of the Lake Macquarie City Council (Cr Barry Johnson) is also a member of the Tasman Underground Mine CCC (Section 3.2.1).

3.1.4 Federal Government Agencies

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Donaldson Coal lodged a Referral under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* (EPBC Act) with the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) on 5 December 2011.

A meeting was held with representatives of SEWPaC on 16 December 2011 to discuss the Project, including the pit top disturbance and subsidence performance measures. Additional information was provided to SEWPaC on 19 December 2011 including details on rehabilitation and available habitat for threatened species.

On 10 January 2012, a delegate of the Commonwealth Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities decided that the **Project is not a controlled action**. The Project does not require further assessment and approval under the EPBC Act before it can proceed.

3.1.5 Infrastructure Owners/Service Providers

There are a range of developments and infrastructure items in the vicinity of the Project that could be potentially affected by mine subsidence (Appendix A) or would have interactions with the Project.

Donaldson Coal has established dialogue with the relevant infrastructure owners and service providers within previous and current mining areas at the Tasman Underground Mine and Abel Underground Mine. Separate to the regular meetings held with infrastructure owners as part of the existing operations, Donaldson Coal has consulted with the following to provide an overview of the Project and discuss any future potential issues or concerns.

Daracon

Daracon operate the Buttai Quarry which is accessed from access roads off Old Buttai Road and off George Booth Drive opposite the new pit top for the Project.

A meeting was held with the Quarries Divisional Manager and Quarry Manager of Daracon on 22 February 2012 to discuss the Project, including the proposed roundabout with George Booth Drive, the new pit top access road and Daracon's access road to Buttai Quarry. A letter was sent to Daracon on 3 March 2012 providing further details on the proposed roundabout.

Daracon provided no objection to the proposed roundabout with the Buttai Quarry access road, subject to regulatory approvals.

Orica Australia Pty Limited

Orica owns and operates the Richmond Vale Research and Testing Facility on the property adjoining the proposed pit top facility (Figure 1-3a and 1-3b). Orica have approval to establish an ammonium nitrate emulsion production facility and associated infrastructure on this site (Project Approval 09_0090).

An initial meeting was held with the Site Services Manager of Orica's Richmond Vale facility on 21 November 2011 to provide a briefing on the Project and to discuss the development and use of a ventilation shaft, ventilation fan and associated infrastructure and access track on land owned by Orica. A letter (dated 9 December 2011) was sent to Orica following the meeting with the proposed location and details of the proposed infrastructure.

A second meeting was held with representatives of Orica on 21 February 2012 to further discuss the ventilation infrastructure and the presence of Heath Wrinklewort (*Rutidosia heterogama*) on Orica land. Orica provided in-principle support for the development of the ventilation infrastructure on Orica land, subject to establishing a formal land access agreement and obtaining relevant regulatory approvals.

TransGrid

TransGrid owns and operates two 330 kV electricity transmission lines within the proposed underground mining area. TransGrid also has future plans for a substation on Sheppard Drive outside the proposed underground mining area.

TransGrid comments and specific input to the Project DGRs were documented in a letter dated 4 November 2011.

A briefing was sent to the Mains Manager - Northern Region within TransGrid on 10 February 2012 providing a summary of the Project and requesting a meeting.

A meeting was held with representatives from TransGrid on 7 March 2012 to discuss the predicted subsidence impacts associated with the Project, including the proposed SCZs for built infrastructure. Donaldson Coal committed to ongoing consultation regarding subsidence impacts as part of the future Extraction Plan process.

Ausgrid (formerly Energy Australia)

Ausgrid owns and operates two 132 kV electricity transmission lines within the proposed underground mining area and another two 132 kV electricity transmission lines adjacent to the new pit top facility.

A meeting was held with a representative (Engineer-Major Connections) of Ausgrid on 7 March 2012 to discuss the interaction of the pit top facility with the electricity transmission lines, power supply to the new pit top and predicted subsidence impacts associated with the Project, including the proposed SCZs for built infrastructure. Donaldson Coal committed to ongoing consultation regarding subsidence impacts as part of the future Extraction Plan process.

A letter was sent to Ausgrid on 26 March 2012 providing a summary of the outcomes of the meeting and providing more detail on the locations of the transmission towers relative to the box cut at the new pit top facility.

Telstra

Telstra owns and operates a FOC within the proposed underground mining area.

A briefing was sent to a representative of Telstra in March 2012 providing a summary of the Project and offering a meeting if further information was required.

AAPT

AAPT owns and operates a FOC within the proposed underground mining area.

A briefing was sent to a representative of AAPT on 17 February 2012 providing a summary of the Project and requesting a meeting.

A meeting was held with AAPT on 5 April 2012 to discuss the predicted subsidence impacts associated with the Project, including the proposed SCZs for built infrastructure. Donaldson Coal committed to ongoing consultation regarding subsidence impacts as part of the future Extraction Plan process.

NBN Limited

NBN Limited owns and operates a communication tower on Mount Sugarloaf. As described in Section 2.6.3, Donaldson Coal would limit mining to first workings only within 45° angle of draw resulting in less than 2 mm of subsidence and 10 mm of horizontal displacement.

A briefing was sent to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NBN Limited on 17 February 2012 providing a summary of the Project and requesting a meeting. A meeting was held with CEO and other representatives of NBN Limited on 2 April 2012 to provide further information on the Project, including the maintenance of the SCZ for the communication tower.

Broadcast Australia

Broadcast Australia owns and operates a communication tower on Mount Sugarloaf. As described in Section 2.6.3, Donaldson Coal would limit mining to first workings only within 45° angle of draw resulting in less than 2 mm of subsidence and 10 mm of horizontal displacement.

A briefing was sent to the District Supervisor of Broadcast Australia on 29 March 2012 providing a summary of the Project and requesting a meeting.

3.1.6 Public Consultation**Local Community and Affected Landowners**

During the preparation of this EIS, Project-specific community information sheets were produced by Donaldson Coal in November 2011, January 2012 and June 2012 and distributed to inform the local community of the Project and to provide updates on the progress of the EIS and specialist studies.

The community information sheets were distributed to:

- local residents, including along Sheppard Drive, George Booth Drive, the southern end of Averys Lane and in O'Donneltown;
- Tasman Underground Mine employees; and
- the broader community through placement on the website (Section 3.2.2).

Copies of the Project community information sheets are provided in Attachment 5.

Project community information evenings were held on 1 and 2 February 2012 at Valley Fresh Flowers, George Booth Drive, Buchanan. Notification of the community information evenings were provided through the community information sheets.

Additional community information evenings are planned for 26 and 27 June 2012 and notification has been provided through the community information sheets. The sessions will afford the opportunity for the community to learn about the results of the specialist studies for the EIS.

The community information evenings provided an opportunity for the local community to ask Donaldson Coal, and the specialists preparing the EIS studies, any specific queries or issues of concern relating to the Project (Plate 3-1). The Project community information evenings were attended by representatives of:

- Donaldson Coal;
- DgS; and
- Resource Strategies.



Plate 3-1 – Community Information Session

Issues raised by members of the local community during the Project community information evenings included:

- cumulative heavy vehicle traffic volumes along George Booth Drive with other surrounding developments (Section 4.12, Attachment 4 and Appendix H);
- potential impacts of the Project on road safety (Section 4.12 and Appendix H);
- proposed road upgrades to minimise potential impacts of the Project on road performance and safety (Sections 4.12 and 7.3);
- likely extent of subsidence impacts (Section 4.2 and Appendix A);
- mining related impacts on surface water flow and quality (Sections 4.4 and 4.6 and Appendices B and C);

- potential air quality and noise impacts from the pit top (Sections 4.13 and 4.14 and Appendices I and J); and
- alternatives to the new pit top location (Section 6.7.2).

A letter was distributed to all residents along Sheppard Drive in February 2012 providing a background on the Project, the location of their property in relation to the mine plan, the proposed timing of mining under their property (if within the mine plan) and the opportunity to have a one-on-one meeting with representatives from Donaldson Coal.

In addition, Donaldson Coal continues to liaise with the local community through the established Tasman Underground Mine CCC (Section 3.2.1).

Aboriginal Community

Aboriginal community consultation was undertaken in accordance with OEH's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010* (DECCW, 2010a) and the Draft *Guidelines for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Community Consultation* (DEC, 2005a). In accordance with these guidelines, Donaldson Coal notified the following parties regarding the Project:

- OEH, Planning and Aboriginal Heritage Section;
- Awabakal LALC;
- Mindaribba LALC;
- The Registrar, NSW *Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983*;
- Native Title Services Corporation Limited (NTSCORP);
- The National Native Title Tribunal;
- Cessnock City Council;
- Lake Macquarie City Council; and
- Hunter-Central Rivers CMA.

The above listed parties were requested to advise Donaldson Coal of the names of any Aboriginal person or group who could hold cultural knowledge of, or have a right or interest in Aboriginal objects, places and/or Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the Project area or surrounds.

In addition to the written notifications, a notice was placed in *The Newcastle Post* (6 July 2011), *Cessnock Advertiser* (29 June 2011) and *The Maitland Mercury* (29 June 2011) seeking registrations from interested Aboriginal parties.

The notification invited Aboriginal persons or groups who wished to be consulted in relation to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment process for the Project to contact Donaldson Coal.

Registrations of interest to the notification letters and public notice were received from the following Aboriginal stakeholders:

- Awabakal Descendants Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation;
- Awabakal LALC;
- Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation;
- Cacatua Culture Consultants;
- Gidawaa Walang Cultural Heritage;
- Gimbay Gatigaan Aboriginal Corporation;
- Keepa Keepa Elders Group;
- Lower Hunter Wonnarua Council Incorporated;
- Mindaribba LALC;
- Widescope Indigenous Group Pty Ltd;
- Wonn 1 Contracting;
- Wonnarua Culture Heritage;
- Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation;
- Yarrawalk (a division of Tocomwall Pty Ltd); and
- Yinarr Cultural Services.

All stakeholders who registered were invited to participate in the assessment, including participation in site inspections and meetings to discuss cultural matters.

A detailed description of the consultation undertaken with the registered Aboriginal parties/groups during the preparation of this EIS is provided in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Appendix K) and Section 4.10.

In addition to the above, comment was sought from the Awabakal LALC in regard to Aboriginal Land Claim (ALC) 23441 and ALC 6637 during the consultation period for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment.

Native Title Parties

Donaldson Coal is undertaking ongoing consultation with Native Title parties regarding MLA 416. The Native Title process is described further in Section 6.3.1.

Staff, Contractors and Unions

Approximately 110 personnel (excluding service providers and general management) are currently employed at the Tasman Underground Mine. In addition to the provision of community information sheets and the mechanisms described in Section 3.2 below, a number of meetings and briefings for employees have been conducted during the development of this EIS.

3.2 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT

3.2.1 Tasman Underground Mine Community Consultative Committee

The Tasman Underground Mine CCC is established and operated in accordance with the Development Consent (DA 274-9-2002).

The Tasman Underground Mine CCC consists of community representatives including local landholders and Cessnock City Council and Lake Macquarie City Council representatives.

Regular updates and briefings on the Project have been provided to the Tasman Underground Mine CCC since October 2008. The Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment was provided to the members of the Tasman Underground Mine CCC on 5 October 2011 and a full briefing on the Project was provided at the meeting on 31 October 2011.

No concerns relating to the Project were raised during the Tasman Underground Mine CCC meetings.

3.2.2 Website and Complaints Hotline

Donaldson Coal maintains a website within the GCL web domain (www.gloucestercoal.com.au) for the general public to keep up to date with the operations at the Tasman Underground Mine.

The web domain is a significant source of information including:

- mine operations and asset details;
- environmental management, monitoring and reporting information;
- Tasman Underground Mine CCC records;
- employment opportunities;
- newsletters and information sheets;
- investor details;

- media releases;
- community support program; and
- contact details.

Environmental and community documents relevant to the Tasman Underground Mine are available at the web address provided below:

http://www.gloucestercoal.com.au/community_environment/environment/tasman/

Donaldson Coal has established a dedicated Community Hotline (1800 111 271) that is available 24 hours, 7 days a week for community members who have enquiries or concerns regarding the operations of any of the Donaldson Coal owned mines.

3.2.3 Community Programs and Sponsorships/Scholarships

Donaldson Coal plays an active role in local communities through financial contributions to facilities, including the Gloucester Coal Community Support Program, Donaldson Job Creation Trust, the Donaldson Community Welfare Trust and the Donaldson Conservation Trust. Donaldson Coal would continue to provide funding contributions to community programs and groups during the life of the Project.

Gloucester Coal Community Support Program

GCL has established the Community Support Program to provide assistance to local initiatives within the Lower Hunter and the Gloucester Basin. The aim of the Community Support Program is to help benefit a wider range of community needs such as education, environment, health, infrastructure projects, arts, leisure and research.

The Community Support Program has an allocation of funding which is separate to the other trusts. Formal applications are called for twice a year by GCL and local community groups are invited to submit their applications.

Donaldson Job Creation Trust

The Donaldson Coal Job Creation Trust was established to assist the local community achieve its goals by providing training opportunities and experience. Since 2001, the Donaldson Job Creation Trust has allocated \$1 million (M) to job training and education.

Donaldson Community Welfare Trust

The Donaldson Community Welfare Trust is a charitable trust which contributes approximately \$250,000 over five years towards supporting the local community within the Abel and Tasman underground mine areas. The objective of the trust is to promote the education needs, community works or other activities of benefit to the local community, such as the “News in Education” program.

The Donaldson Coal Community Welfare Trust allocates funding every six months, with a minimum of \$10,000 dedicated to educational projects linked to Black Hill Public School each round. An additional \$15,000 is made available for other projects of benefit to the community within the Abel and Tasman Underground Mine areas. In addition to funding for the Black Hill Public School, the Donaldson Coal Community Welfare Trust has recently provided \$12,000 in funding for the restoration of the historical cemetery at Black Hill and \$30,000 for the Benwerrin Rural Fire Brigade Station.

Donaldson Conservation Trust

The Donaldson Conservation Trust has allocated \$1M over 10 years to local environmental conservation.

The Donaldson Conservation Trust has been set up specifically to fund environmental education, research, environmental management works or activities within State Conservation Area lands or other environmentally valuable lands that lie within or above GCL’s mining leases, exploration licences or other land owned by the company.

3.2.4 Media

Advertisements regarding the Aboriginal heritage consultation and the Project community information days appeared in local newspapers (i.e. *The Newcastle Post*, *Cessnock Advertiser* and *The Maitland Mercury*).

Donaldson Coal has also provided media releases regarding the Project when requested by media outlets.

3.2.5 Public Reporting

In accordance with the Development Consent (DA 274-9-2002) for the Tasman Underground Mine, Donaldson Coal produces an Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) to review the environmental performance of the development. Copies of the previous AEMRs are available on the GCL website (Section 3.2.2).

GCL also produces Annual and Quarterly Reports for investors which are made available within the GCL web domain (Section 3.2.2).

3.2.6 Local Suppliers

The existing Tasman Underground Mine supports a number of local and national suppliers, including:

- Veolia Environmental Services Australia (waste collection contractor);
- Global Soils (weed management);
- Robson Civil Projects (ROM coal transport);
- Ace Water Cartage (water supply);
- Valley Longwall International (service labour);
- Mastermyne and Stat-sure (labour); and
- Orica (explosives).

Approval of the Project would allow Donaldson Coal to continue to support local and national suppliers of the mining operations.