Appendix 15

Visual Impact Assessment

Appendix Section	Description
15A	Visual Impact Assessment

Brandy Hill Expansion Project

Environmental Impact Statement

Appendix 15A

Visual Impact Assessment

Brandy Hill Expansion Project

Environmental Impact Statement

Document Control

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Executive Summary

A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) of the proposed Brandy Hill Quarry Expansion site has been undertaken by Hanson Construction Pty Ltd (the Proponent/Hanson). The purpose of this assessment is to identify and document the character of the existing surrounding visual landscape and identify any potential visual impacts of each stage of the Project, with regard to visual harm within the Primary Visual Catchment (PVC).

The visual assessment adopted the commonly accepted visual methodology which consists of the identification of potential viewing platforms, photographic recordings, photomontage composition, and a visual impact assessment from these identified visual receptors. The assessment accounted for vegetation characteristics and location, land form geomorphology, view quality, visual absorption capacity and visual impact significance. This visual impact assessment methodology enables definitive predictive determination of visual impacts pertaining to the Project.

There are three (3) main aspects of the Project expansion that have potential to alter the visual impact of Brandy Hill Quarry on the surrounding visual amenity. These are the proposed expansion of the quarry footprint, the relocation of the quarry plant, and thirdly the construction of a concrete batching plant.

Visual Assessment

The visual impact of the Project was assessed using a two part Visual Impact Assessment approach, inclusive of proposed mitigation measures to ameliorate any potential visual impacts pertaining to the Project. The assessment methodology firstly assesses the existing landscape settings from various viewing platforms using a combination of desktop and field analysis, and secondly awards a visual impact score. Twelve (12) viewing receptors were selected based on a variety of environmental physical landscape variables, including but not limited to, vegetation height, position and density, terrain, gradient, viewing corridors and land use. Visual impact was quantified as the product of visual sensitivity and visual influence.

Mitigation measures

The proponent proposes to construct an 18m high earth bund using overburden won from pit extension. The bund is modelled in the visual impact assessment, and will shield views of the Project from sensitive receptors in the eastern and southern viewing sectors. Additionally the Proponent will commit to the maintenance of the sites existing vegetative buffer and replace/replant dead plants where possible.

Findings

All views to the Project area were categorised as very low, low, or moderate. No views to the Project were classified as high. Mitigation measures will significantly reduce visual harm, and where possible the Proponent will commit to the maintenance of the existing vegetative buffer.

Conclusion

The Project will have minimal impact on the existing local visual amenity. Where moderate visual impact has been detected in visual assessment modelling, mitigation measures will be applied to buffer sensitive receptors and the project area.

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1.0 Introduction

Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd (the Proponent), currently operates Brandy Hill Quarry (BHQ), located in the Port Stephens Shire Council (PSSC) area. The site lies on Clarence Town road and is 3.5 km East of Seaham, 15km Northeast of Maitland and 30km North of Newcastle (**Figure 1**). BHQ is a hard rock quarry which has been in operation since 1983. The quarry produces a range of building materials including concrete aggregates, road base material and sealing aggregates.

Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd (Hanson/the Proponent) has conducted this Visual Impact Assessment as a component of the overarching Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to support the Development Application for the Brandy Hill Quarry Expansion (hereafter referred to as the Project). To facilitate the increase in production from 700,000 tonnes per annum (tpa)

to 1,500,000tpa, the quarry is required to increase its existing footprint into new areas. In doing so, the expansion increases and alters potential views to the Project from sensitive receptors. To determine the nature and effect of these views, the Proponent has undertaken this Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) of the proposed Brandy Hill Quarry Expansion site.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify and document the character of the existing surrounding visual landscape and identify any potential visual impacts of the Project, with regard to visual harm within the Primary Visual Catchment (PVC), which is shown on **Figure 2.** Relevant management and mitigation measures to ameliorate adverse visual impacts of the proposed Project have also been ascertained and included as part of this VIA. This report provides detailed analysis of the potential projected impacts to the visual amenity associated with the proposed Project.

1.1 Requirement for this Report

This report has been prepared for inclusion in the Brandy Hill Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with the Director General Requirements for submission to the *Department of Planning and Environment.* In such, the impact assessment will include

- A detailed assessment of the;
  - Changing landforms on site during the various stages of the development; and
  - Potential visual impacts of the development on private landowners in the surrounding area as well as key vantage points in the public domain
- A detailed description of the measures that would be implemented to minimise the potential visual impacts of the development.

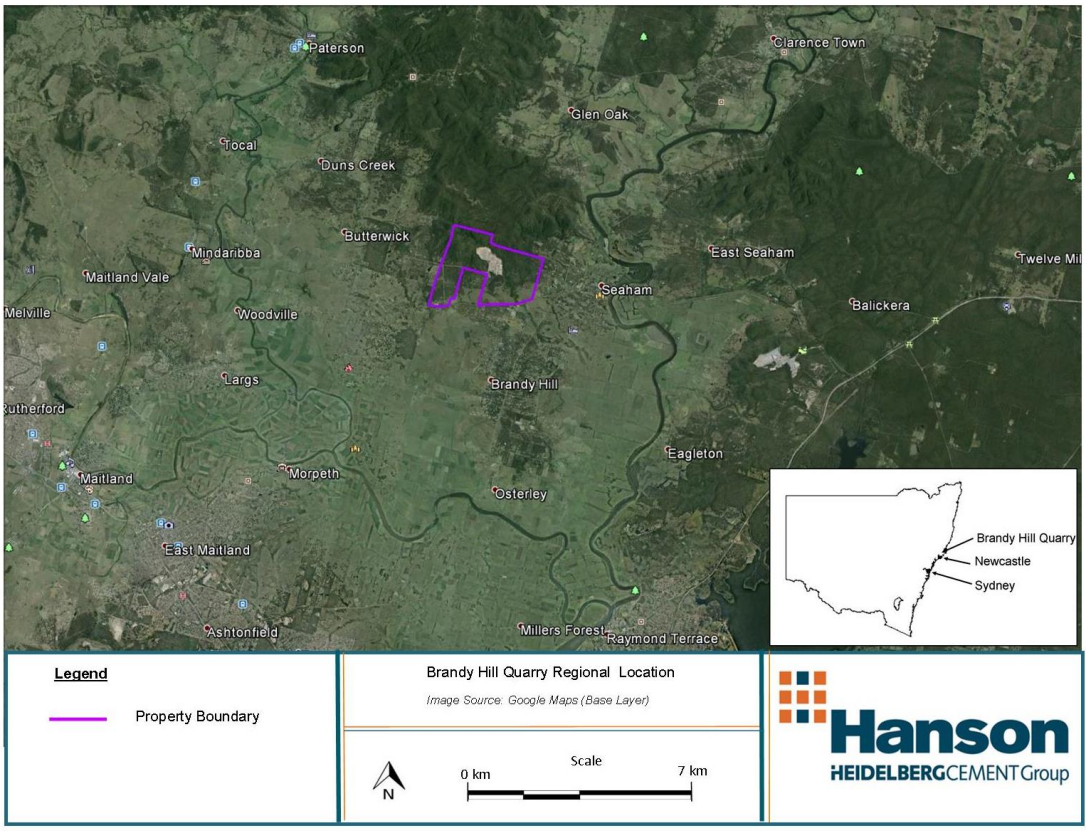

Figure 1: Brandy Hill Quarry Regional Location

1.1 Background

The PVC represents all potential visual impact areas, and critical views of the Project as shown in **Figure 2**. The PVC is defined as a 2km radius approximated from the centre of the project area. The potential for visual harm is governed by the topography, vegetation cover and land uses within PVC. Therefore the visual settings of the Project were considered based on the range of landscapes surrounding the proposed Project. The visual setting of the landforms in the Project locality can create screening and visual buffers, or can alternatively generate a viewing corridor to the Project area. To ascertain the nature and extent of visual impact generated by the Project, a targeted visual assessment at identified viewing platforms was performed.

Figure 2: Primary Visual Catchment

1.2 Project Location

Figure 1 proximities the Project relational to the surrounding regional context. The Project PVC is bounded by native vegetation to the north, northwest, and northeast which is zoned as Environmental Conservation (E2) and Environmental Management (E3) under the *Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan* (2013), see **Figure 3**. Privately owned properties encapsulate the eastern, southern and western perimeters of the site. These dwellings are situated in the township of Seaham/Brandy Hill, specifically located along Clarencetown Road to the south of the Project, Croft Road to the west of the Project, and Mooghin Road to the East of the Project (See **Figure 4**). Such dwellings are located in the PVC and are considered as potential viewing platforms for the *Visual Impact Assessment*.

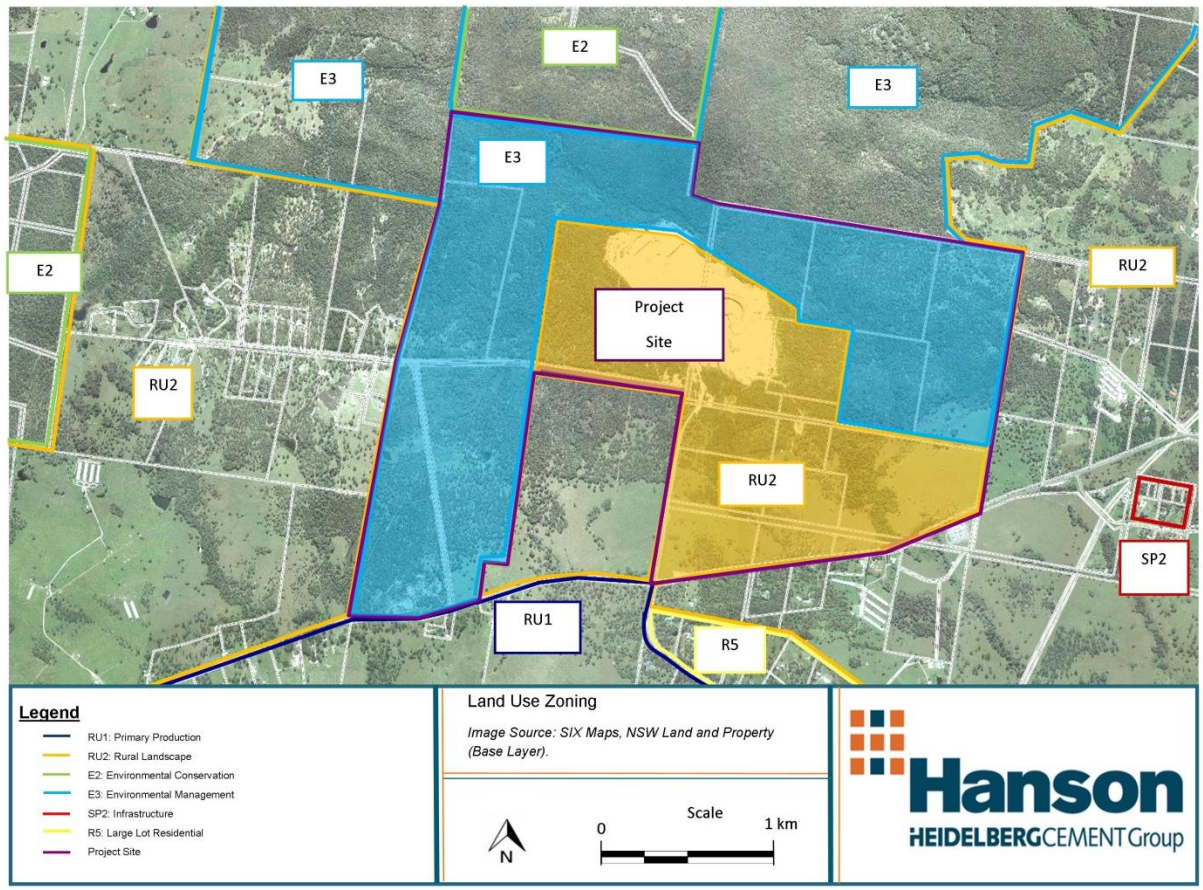

Figure 3: Land Use Zoning of the Project Area

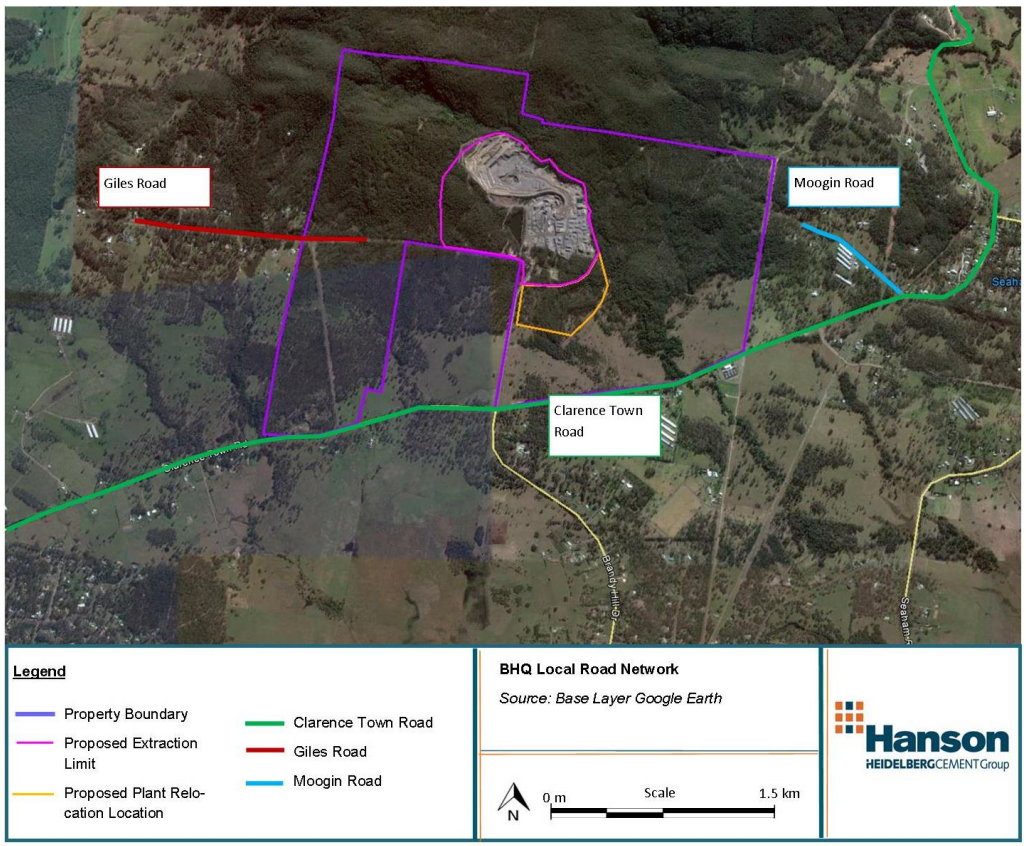

Figure 4: Local Road Network

In the broader geographic context, the Project PVC is strongly defined by the low lying basin of the Port Stephens Region. Additionally, Wallaroo National Park is situated 10km to the east of the Project and Uffington State Forest and Columbey National Park located 7km to the north east of the Project. These areas act as long distance visual barriers, filtering visual pollution from viewing platforms situated in the surrounding regional locations and are shown in **Figure 5** below.

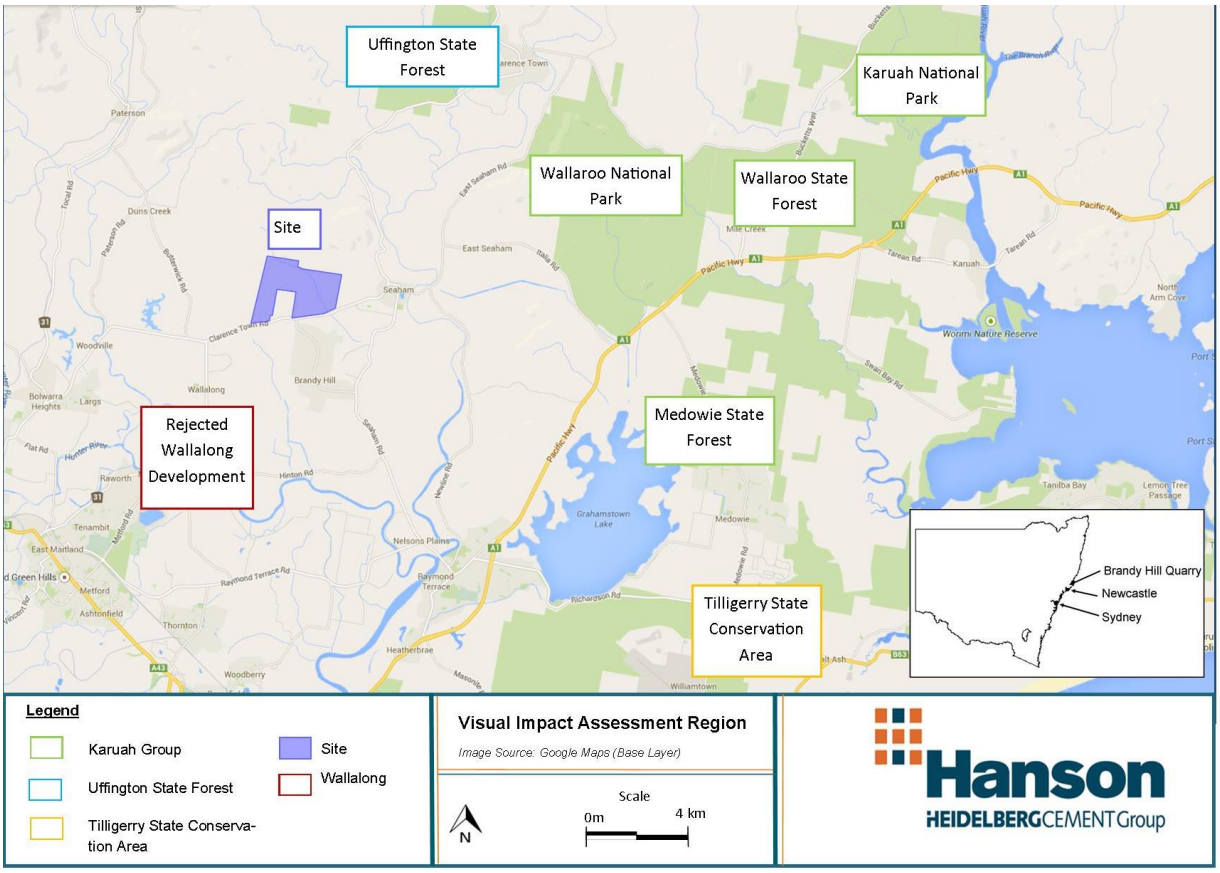

Figure 5: Visual Impact Assessment Region

1.3 Additional Proposals

It is noted that the Wallalong Urban Release Area proposal has been submitted to the Department of Planning and Environment and will involve re-zoning of the existing Wallalong village into land zoned as residential, medium density, large lot, business, industrial, recreation and environmental to facilitate population increase from approximately 900 to 9000 to the southwest of the Project. This development was “Refused” at Gateway by the *Department of Planning and Infrastructure* and has hence not been assessed as a contributing regional development for the purposes of this VIA. A copy of determination has been annexed to this report as **Appendix 1**. The existing Wallalong village has not been assessed in this Visual Impact Assessment as it falls outside of the PVC and hence out of the sensitive viewing areas.

2.0 Methodology

The visual impact of the Project was assessed using a two part Visual Impact Assessment approach, followed by proposed mitigation measures to ameliorate any potential visual impacts pertaining to the Project. The assessment methodology firstly assesses the existing landscape settings from various viewing platforms, and secondly awards a visual impact score.

The first stage in the assessment methodology is based on the identification of likely viewing platforms initially using desktop analysis followed by field assessment. Viewing platforms were selected based on a variety of environmental physical landscape variables, including but not

limited to, vegetation height, position and density, terrain, gradient, viewing corridors and land use. The first stage of the assessment included taking photographs from these identified viewing platforms in the direction on the project area. These photographs illustrate the current landform features, providing an indication of visual landscape score.

The second and final visual impact assessment component involves the allocation of a score based on analysis of a predetermined set of criteria including visual absorption capacity, view quality, and the overall significance of visual impact. This component of the Visual Impact Assessment involves a predictive assessment of the visibility of the proposed quarry from surrounding viewpoints using three-dimensional digital modelling generated via Google Sketch Up superimposed digitally to Google Earth software. A photomontage assessment using visual receptor photographs and google earth up was applied to ascertain the visual impact of the Project on the surrounding local amenity.

Google Sketch up modelling includes an 18m high bund wall that will be constructed to shield views of the quarry from sensitive receptors to the south. **Figure 6 and 7** details the proposed placement of the bund.

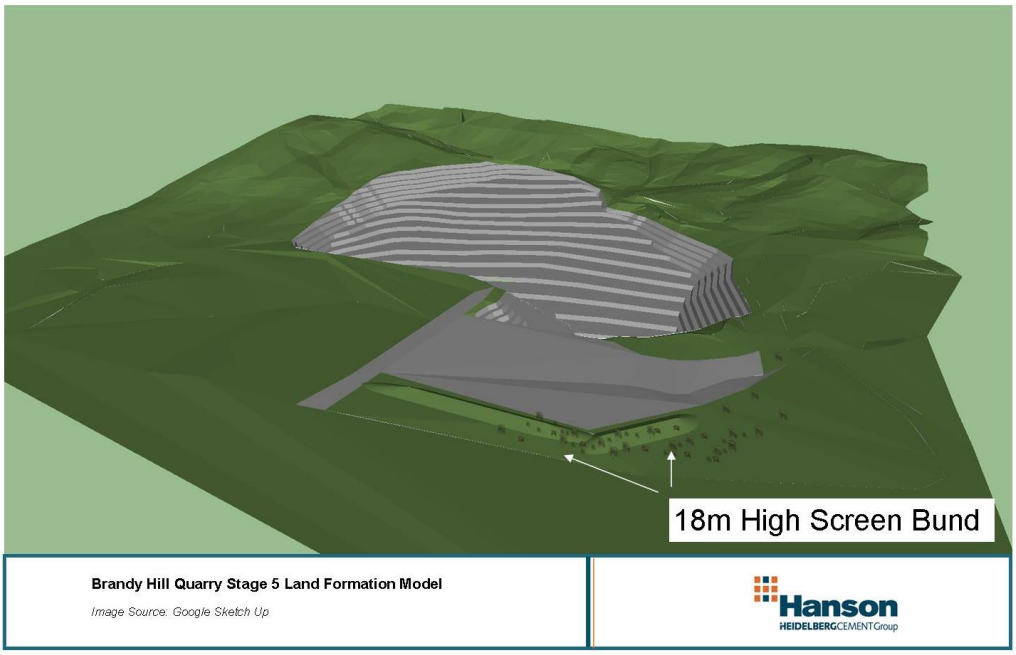

Figure 6: Brandy Hill Quarry Stage 5 Land Formation Model and Bund Placement

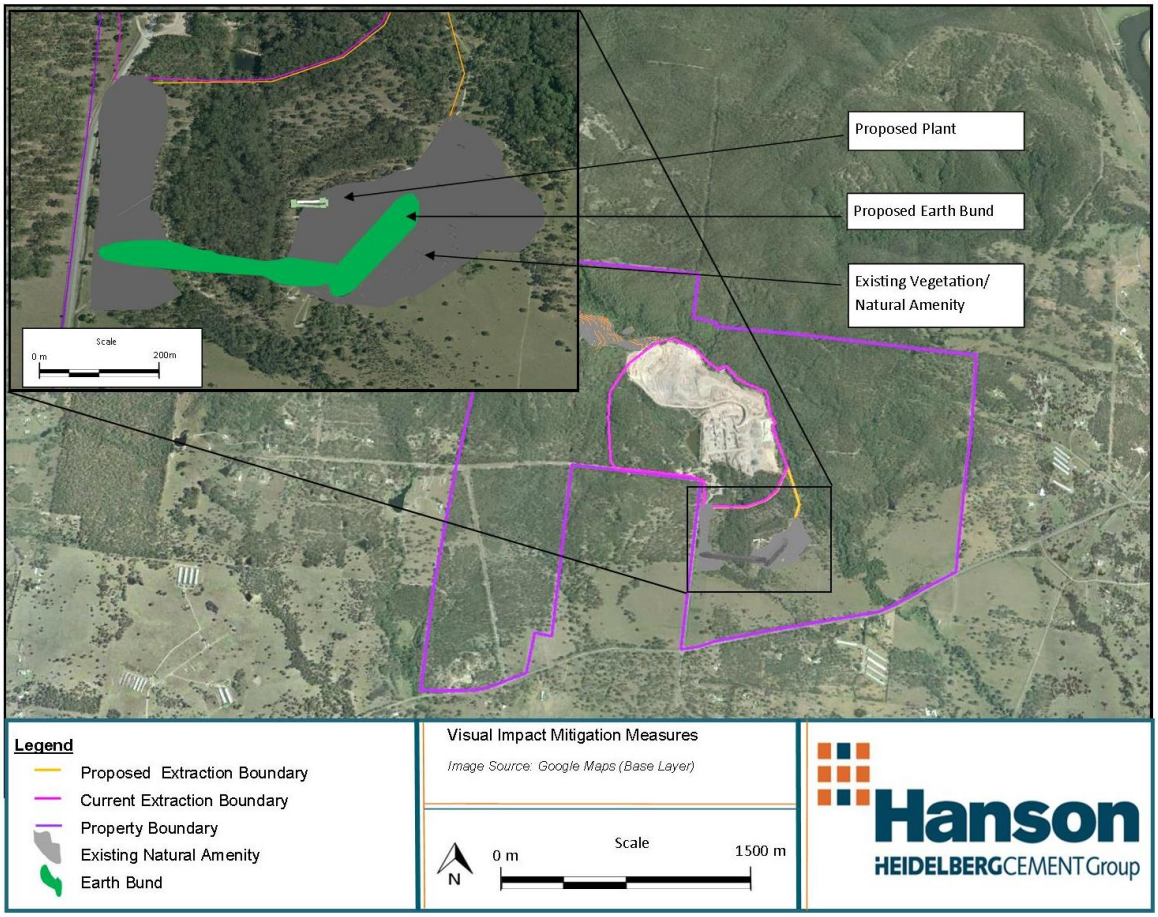

Figure 7: Visual Impact Mitigation Measures

This visual impact assessment report proposes further management and mitigation measures designed to ameliorate any adverse visual impacts associated with the Project.

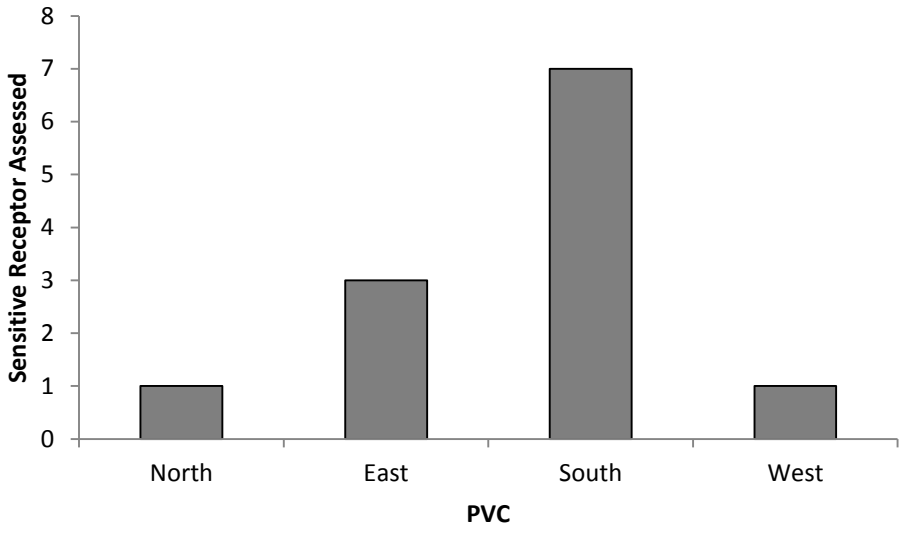

Figure 8: Sensitive Receptor Representation

2.1 Existing Visual Environment:

Analysis of the existing visual environment includes an assessment of the surrounding landscape characteristics from specific viewing platforms. In particular, residences, roads and public places were selected for analysis based on proximity to the Project and view probability/potential of the Project. In conjunction with the identification of existing viewing platforms; the existing topography, ecological characteristics and land use features were identified and used to define the PVC as outlined in **Figure 2**. Any locations that may possess views of the expansion area were included in the PVC for further analysis. Sensitive receptors included for further assessment are identified in **Figure 9** below. **Figure 8** shows a receptor representation as assessed across the PVC.

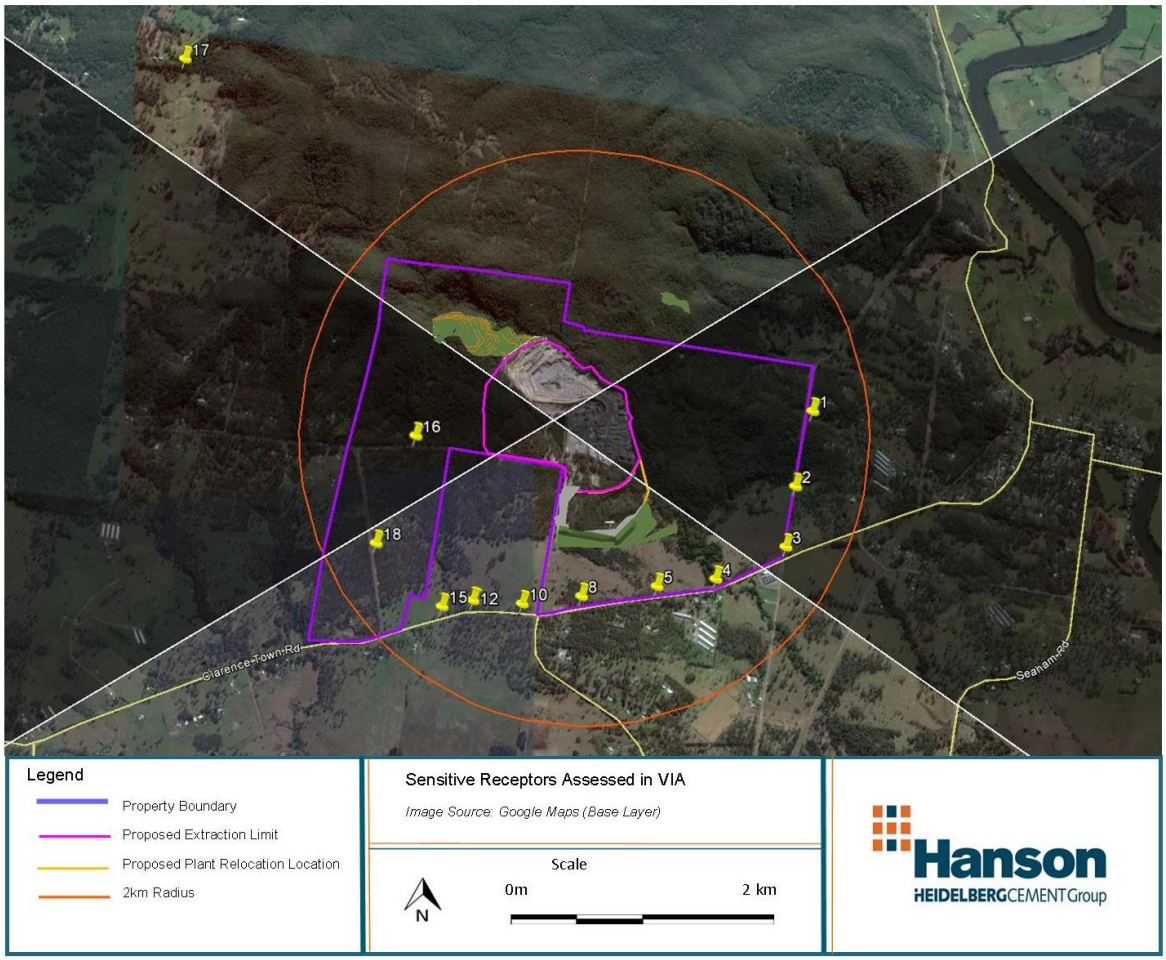

Figure 8: Sensitive Receptors Assessed in VIA

2.2 Land Use Zoning

The Land Use Zoning of the surrounding amenity as determined under the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan has been previously shown in **Figure 3.** The majority of sensitive receptors occur in Rural Landscape (RU2) and Primary Production (RU1) zoned land.

2.3 Desktop Analysis

Desktop analysis suggests that there are eighteen (18) locations where the Project may be viewed. Field analysis determined replication of views between receptors. Receptors with replicated views were removed from further assessment. Twelve (12) remaining representative viewing platforms were selected for VIA. These are mapped in **Figure 9** and include;

- Residential receptors; and
- Public road receptors.

2.4 Representative Viewing Locations

The PVC was divided into four distinct viewing sectors as shown in **Figure 2**.

- Northern View Sector
- Eastern View Sector
- Southern View Sector
- Western View Sector

2.5 Photomontage Modelling

Photomontage modelling was generated using digital structural design mapping and photographs from, sensitive receptors to illustrate the potential view of the expansion site from selected sensitive receptors. Computer-generated photomontage models were applied to each sensitive receptor to assist in the determination of visual influence of the Project in the PVC. These models enable the generation of accurate views of the Project from representative viewing platforms using and combination of digital software and receptor photographs. The applied photomontage process accounted for the modelling of an earth bund, the presence of natural screening from vegetation, and existing geomorphological/topographic land formation which may affect Project visibility.

Topographic analysis from sensitive receptors was used to validate the implementation of mitigation measures including the earth bund, its placement and characteristics.

3.0 Visual Impact

There are three (3) main aspects of the Project expansion that have potential to alter the visual impact of Brandy Hill Quarry on the surrounding visual amenity. These are the proposed expansion of the quarry footprint, the relocation of the quarry plant, and thirdly the construction of a concrete batching plant. All 3 components were accounted for in the VIA.

Visual impact of the Project was calculated as the product of visual sensitivity and visual influence.

3.1 Visual Sensitivity:

Visual sensitivity is a measure of how critical a change to the landscape is perceived by persons at an identified viewing receptor. In such, visual sensitivity is a reflection of the existing view quality. A sensitivity score quantifies the aesthetic visual base, visual interest, and change to the existing view quality.

Visual sensitivity scores are allocated based on screening, distance from the Project and orientation of the receptor. Scores were assigned from a scale of low to high. If there was no impact then the associated sensitivity score will be allocated at low.

3.2 Visual Influence:

Visual influence is quantified as a measure of both the visual contrast/integration of the Project with the existing environment, and proportion of the Project in the PVC from an identified receptor. The PVC is considered the most critical zone for visual harm.

If the Project is both poorly integrated within the existing landscape, and also occupies a high percentage of the PVC, then the visual influence will be high. Conversely, if the project is well

absorbed within the existing environment, and the Project occupies a small percentage of total area of the PVC, the Visual Influence score will be low.

The existing landscape is comprised of visual elements including form, line, colour and texture as well as the existing landscape morphology, topography and vegetation and the existing quarry. The Project will be assessed using these environmental features and land characteristics. Visual influence is assessed from “very low” to “high”.

3.3 Visual Impact:

The visual impact of the Project is measured by allocating a visual sensitivity and visual influence score at each sensitive receptor. The quantification of Visual Impact scores is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Visual Impact Assessment Matrix

Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence			
	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
High	High Impact	High/Moderate Impact	Moderate/Low Impact	Low Impact
Moderate	High/Moderate Impact	Moderate Impact	Moderate/Low Impact	Very Low Impact
`Low	Moderate/Low Impact	Moderate/Low Impact	Low Impact	Very Low Impact

3.4 Lighting

Light pollution has not been modelled in this Visual Impact Assessment. The Proponent commits to maintaining light spillage within the property boundary for the life of the Project during 24/7 operations. This commitment is replicated in the Company’s statement of commitments (**Section 7** of the *Brandy Hill EIS*).

4.0 Impact Assessment

4.1 View Point Assessment Locations

Receptors with potential views of the Project were identified via desktop analysis prior to any field work. These receptors were visited on 20 June 2014, 8 December 2014, 29 January 2015 and 6th February 2015 during field assessments. Selection of the assessment points took into account landscape morphology, topography, view distance, altitude and Project view potential. Based on this criterion, eighteen (18) assessment points were chosen due to the potential Project visibility. Of these, twelve (12) were selected for further analysis and are depicted in **Figure 9**.

Where there are two structures/dwellings on the same lot, the dwelling closest to the proposed project expansion was assessed. This is consistent with the worst case scenario approach whereby the dwelling with the highest potential for visual harm from the proposed project was analysed. If there were any topographic or elevation differentiation between receptors, both were proposed to be assessed, however desktop and field analysis did not identify this situation.

Specific details of receptor selection and subsequent impact assessment are outlined in the succeeding section. **Figure 7** shows the location of all viewing platforms included in the Visual Impact Assessment.

4.2 Impact Assessment Methodology

This visual impact assessment assesses the visual impact of the finalised Project using project expansion plans, aerial satellite photography via Google Earth and photomontages. Details of this assessment are discussed below. The PVC was divided into four sections, these being north, east, south and west **(Figure 2).** All Visual Impact scores were calculated based on stage 5 of the Project, which both occupies the largest proportion of the PVC and also occupies the land closest to sensitive receptors. Therefore assessing the final stage of the project is consistent with a worst case scenario assessment approach.

5.0 Northern Sector

The Northern sector, as shown in **Figure 2 & 3**, contains E2 and E3 zoned land (LEP). Desktop surveys identified sensitive receptors on the southern face of the hill to the north of the quarry. Field surveys aimed to assess the potential impact of the Project on these receptors, however thick native vegetation prevented vehicular access to receptors both in the PVC and the northern sector. Therefore photographs were taken from the closest public receptor. As further detailed in this section, there are no views of the Project from this receptor.

5.1 Technological assessment

A preliminary desktop assessment using geographic information system (GIS) mapping suggested that views from the northern sector to the Project would be limited due to an amalgamation of native vegetation, hill morphology, and site topography. The gradient of the existing hills and ridgelines in the area to the north of the quarry act as a long-distance natural visual buffer.

Desktop analysis suggested that there would be no vehicle or pedestrian access to the Northern Viewing sector.

5.2 Field Assessment

A field assessment of the northern sector revealed that there is no vehicular or pedestrian access to this area. E3 and E2 zoned land to the north of the project area restricts access to the northern viewing sector from the west, north and east. Public roads from the southwest for residential access are the closest public viewing receptors to the Project. Visual assessment was taken from the closest receptor on public lands.

5.3 Viewpoint Receptor 17

Table 2: Northern View Sector Assessment

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Northern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 0374222m E, 6388110m S
Receptor number (Figure 10)	17
View Type and Context	View from Dunns Creek Road. Hills between Dunns Creek Road and the project site completely shield all views from receptors along this road to the project
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	3,141m
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Very Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Very Low

Figure 9 shows potential quarry views from the closest accessible receptor in the northern sector. The quarry is situated on the other side of the hill in the photograph background.

5.3.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 10 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 17.

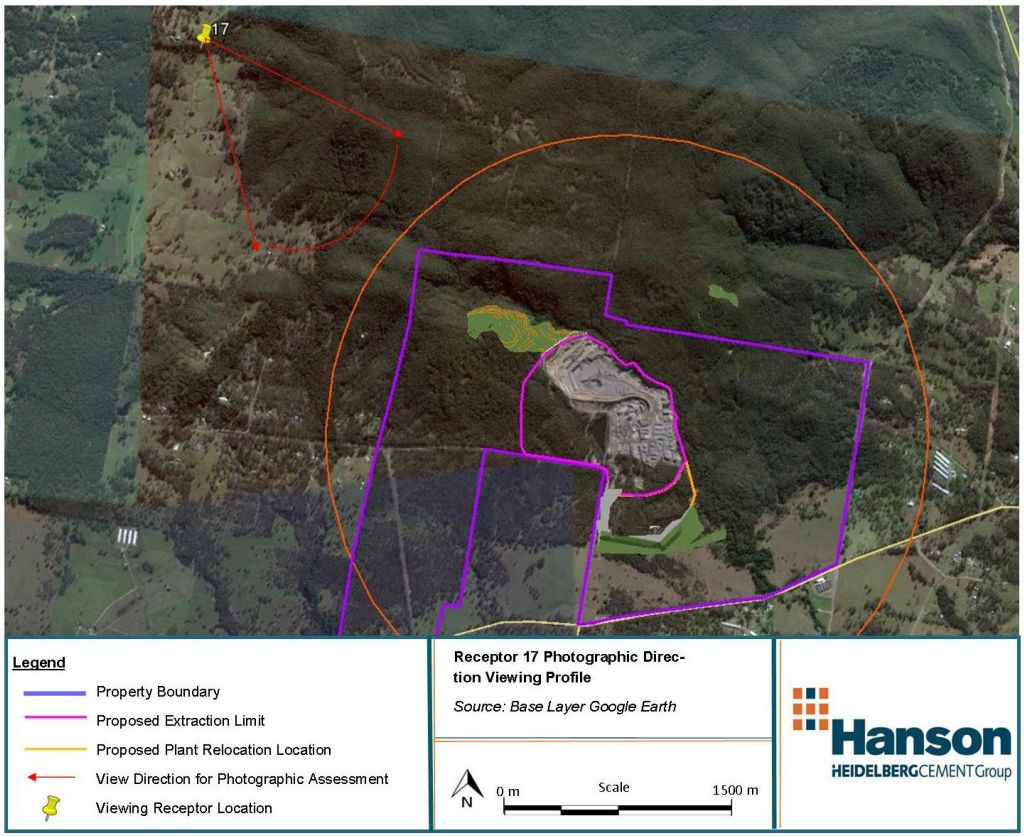

Figure 9: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 17

Figure 10: Photomontage Assessment - Viewpoint 17

5.3.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 12 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 17 to the disturbance area. The elevated hill measured at 159m elevation obscures all views to the quarry.

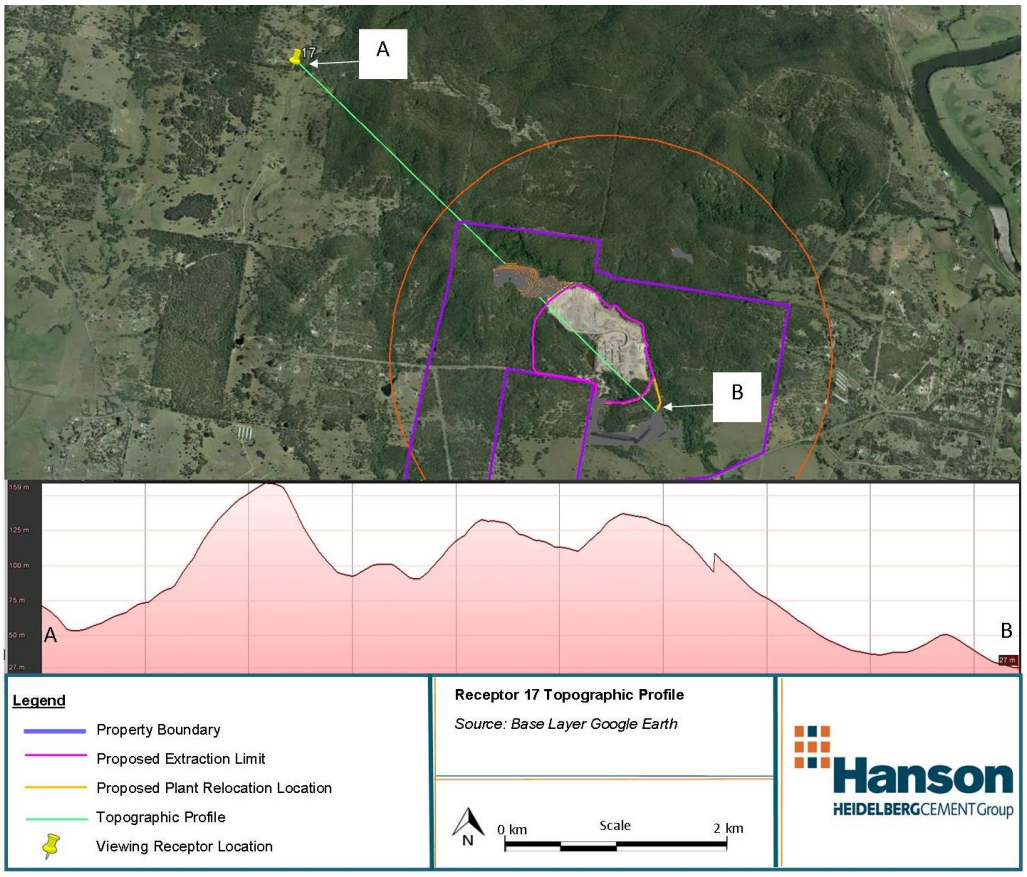

Figure 11: Topographic Profile - Receptor 17

5.3.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to the northern sector generates a score of “Very Low” (**Table 3)**.

Visual Sensitivity: Visual sensitivity assessment was taken from receptor 17, which was the closest accessible location to the Project from the northern sector. The Project will generate no net change to the overall view quality as the Project will not be seen in this location due to topographic hill shielding, distance and vegetation coverage.

Visual Influence: The Project will occupy 0% of the viewing window, therefore resulting in 100% Project absorption into the existing environment. A “Very Low Visual Influence” score has been awarded.

Table 3: Calculated Visual Impact - Receptor 17

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Very Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Very Low Impact**	

5.3.4 Mitigation Measures

There is no requirement to apply mitigation measures to the northern sector.

6.0 Eastern Sector

The Eastern Sector contains three (3) sensitive receptors, all of which are included within the 2km PVC radius of the Project. On the basis of residential and rural land use in the Eastern Viewing Sector, receptors are assessed as having a moderate to high sensitivity depending on receptor characteristics and view potential. The 18m high earth bund will shield some views of the Project from receptor 3. The earth bund will not alter views from receptors 1 and 2.

6.1 Technological Assessment

A preliminary assessment using geographic information system mapping showed that views from the PVC into the project from the Eastern View Sector will mainly occur from residential properties and public roads. Primarily views from Clarencetown Road and Mooghin Road in addition to residential properties along these roads were identified as receptors to views of the Project.

6.2 Field Assessment

A field assessment identified three primary receptors in the Eastern Viewing Sector.

6.3 Combined Assessment

Combined assessment of the eastern sector generated a score of “low impact” over the three applicable receptors.

Table 4: Combined Visual Impact Assessment - Eastern Viewing Sector

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low Impact**	

6.4 Viewpoint 1 – Eastern Viewing Sector

Table 5 below provides a summary of the VIA for receptor 1.

Table 5: VIA Summary - Receptor 1

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Eastern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 0378722m E, 6385637m S
Receptor number (Figure 14 & 15)	1
View Type and Context	View from the most north eastern point of the end of Mooghin road facing the directionality of the proposed project expansion. Thick native vegetation and land topography shields all views to the existing quarry and project.

	Vegetation will not be cleared for the Project.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	1,214m
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Very Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Very Low

6.4.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 11 below details photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 1.

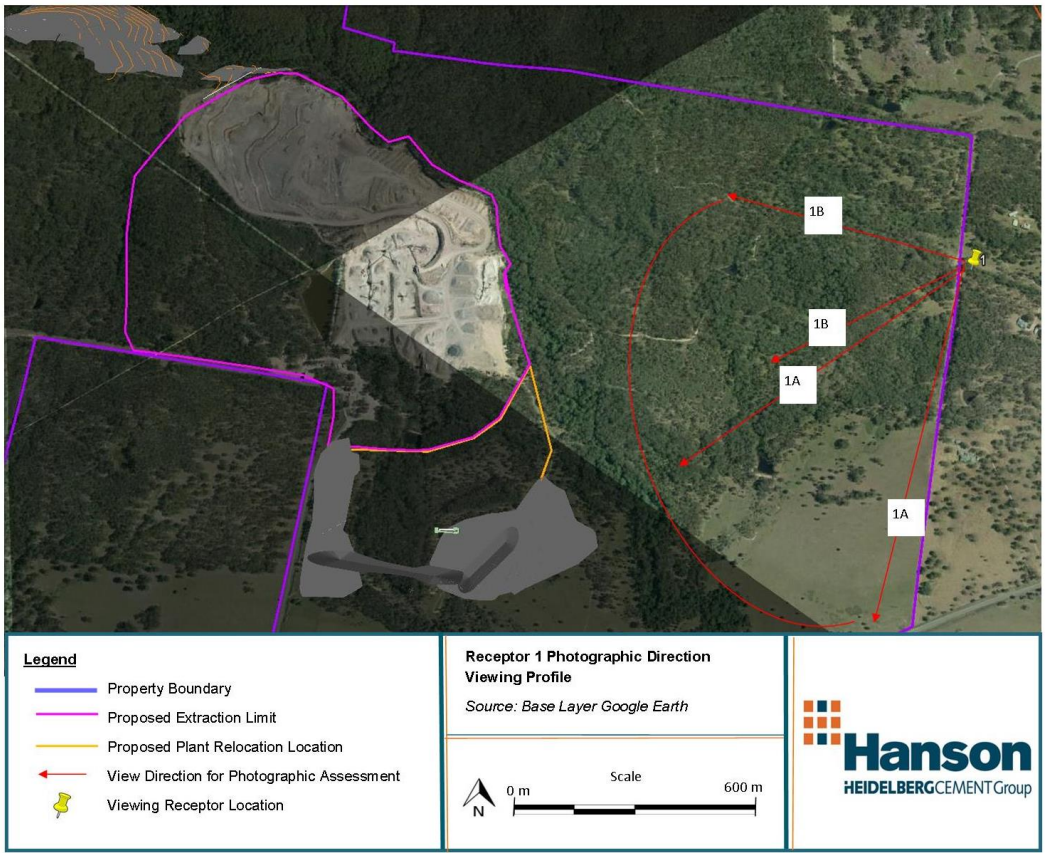

Figure 12: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 1

Figure 14 and Figure 15 show potential Project views from receptor 1.

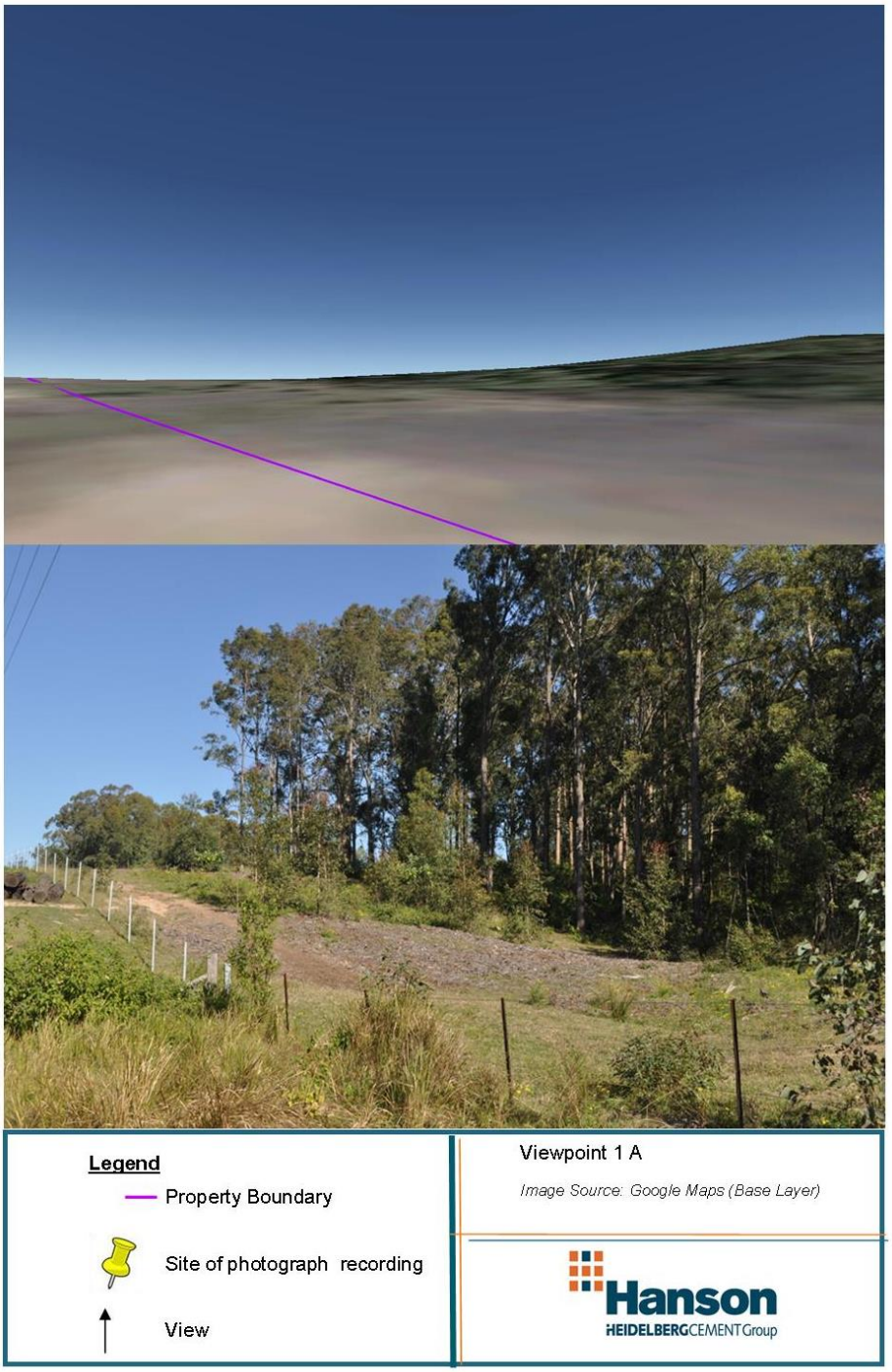

Figure 13: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 1 A

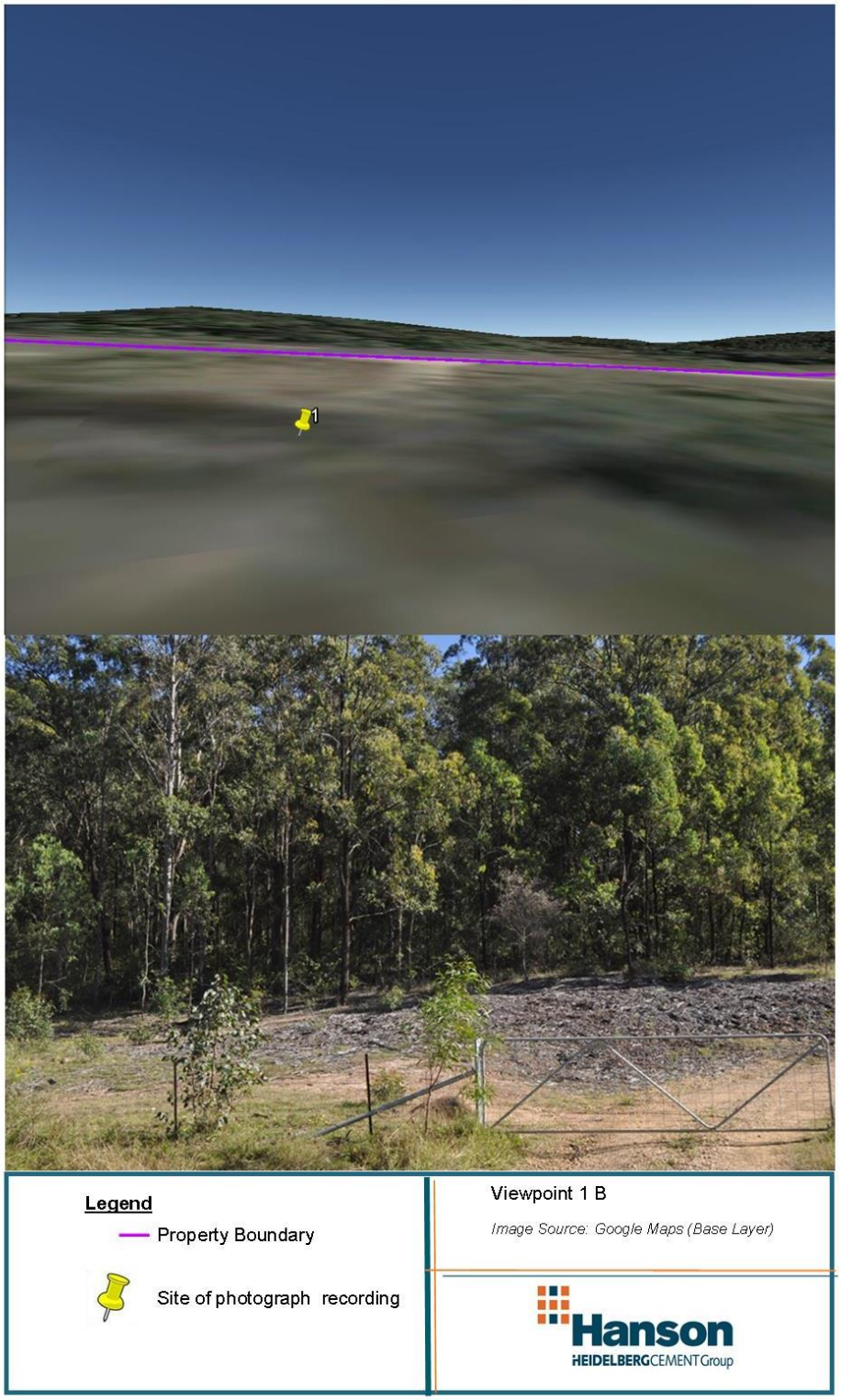

Figure 14: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 1B

6.4.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 16 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 1 to the disturbance area. The land rise 1.5 km from point A obscures views to the quarry.

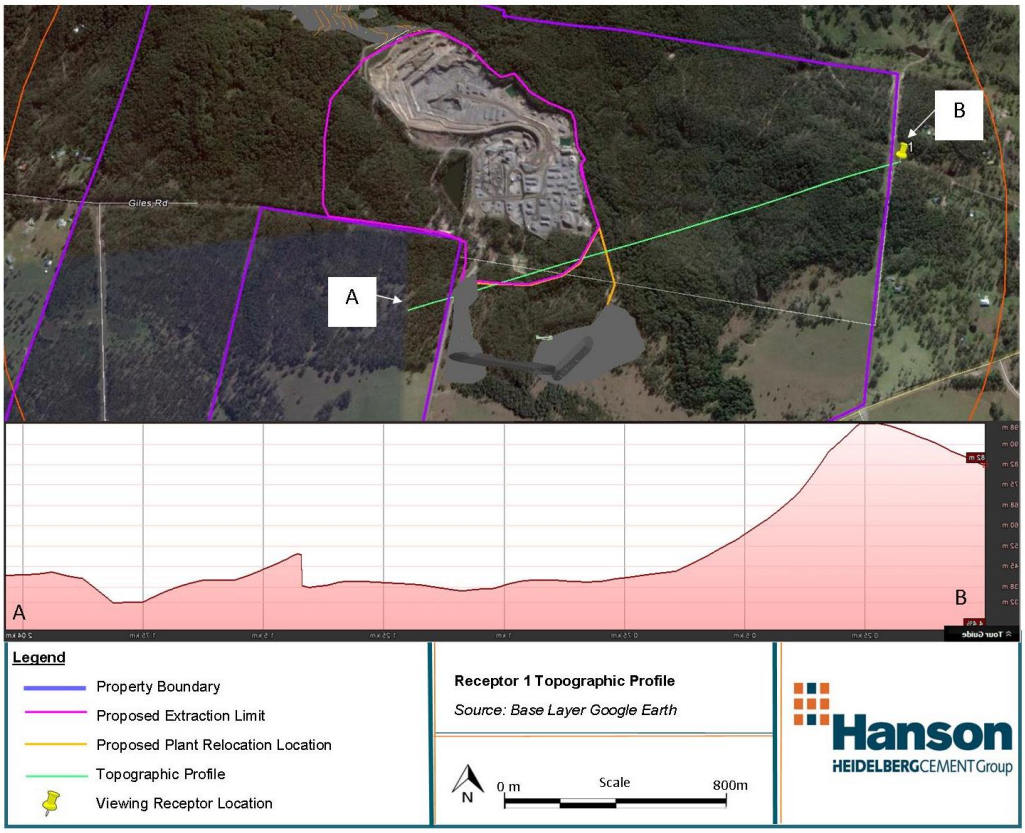

Figure 15: Topographic Profile - Receptor 1

6.4.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to the receptor 1 generates a score of “Very Low” (**Table 6)**.

Visual Sensitivity: Visual sensitivity assessment was taken from receptor 1. The topographic profile and existing vegetation shields views to the extension area. Therefore no change to the existing visual landscape has been modelled, generating a visual sensitivity score allocation of “low”.

Visual Influence: The Project will occupy 0% of the viewing window, therefore resulting in 100% Project absorption into the existing environment. A “Very Low Visual Influence” score has been awarded.

Visual Impact is shown in the table below.

Table 6: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 1

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Very Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Very Low Impact**	

6.4.4 Mitigation Measures

There is no requirement to apply mitigation measures to receptor 1.

6.5 Viewpoint 2 – Eastern Viewing Sector

Table 7 below provides a summary of the VIA for receptor 2.

Table 7: VIA Summary - Receptor 2

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Eastern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 378607mE, 6385115mS
Receptor number (Figure 17)	2
View Type and Context	Eastern property boundary.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	1,003m
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Low

Figure 17 shows potential views to the project area from receptor 2.

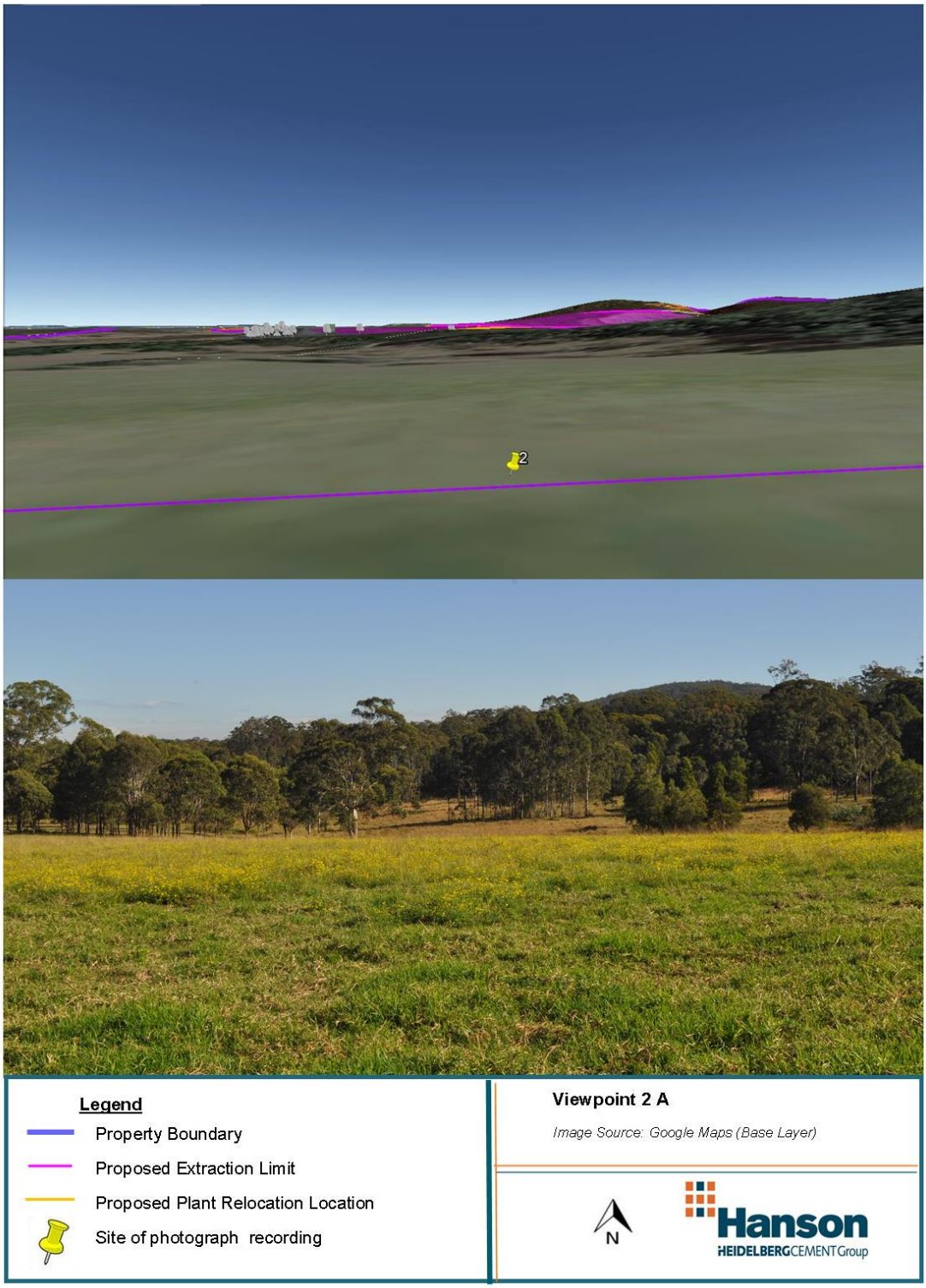

Figure 16: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 2 A

Figure 17 shows quarry exposure on the north western section on the quarry. This area currently forms part of the quarry pit. Referring to the photograph (**Figure 17**), it can be deduced

that the pit is currently not observed from this receptor. This is due to vegetation in the foreground and mid-ground of the photograph which will remain in place during the life of the Project and will maintain an effective visual barrier to the quarry. The bund placement will restrict views of the southern section of the proposed disturbance area from receptor 2.

6.5.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 18 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 2.

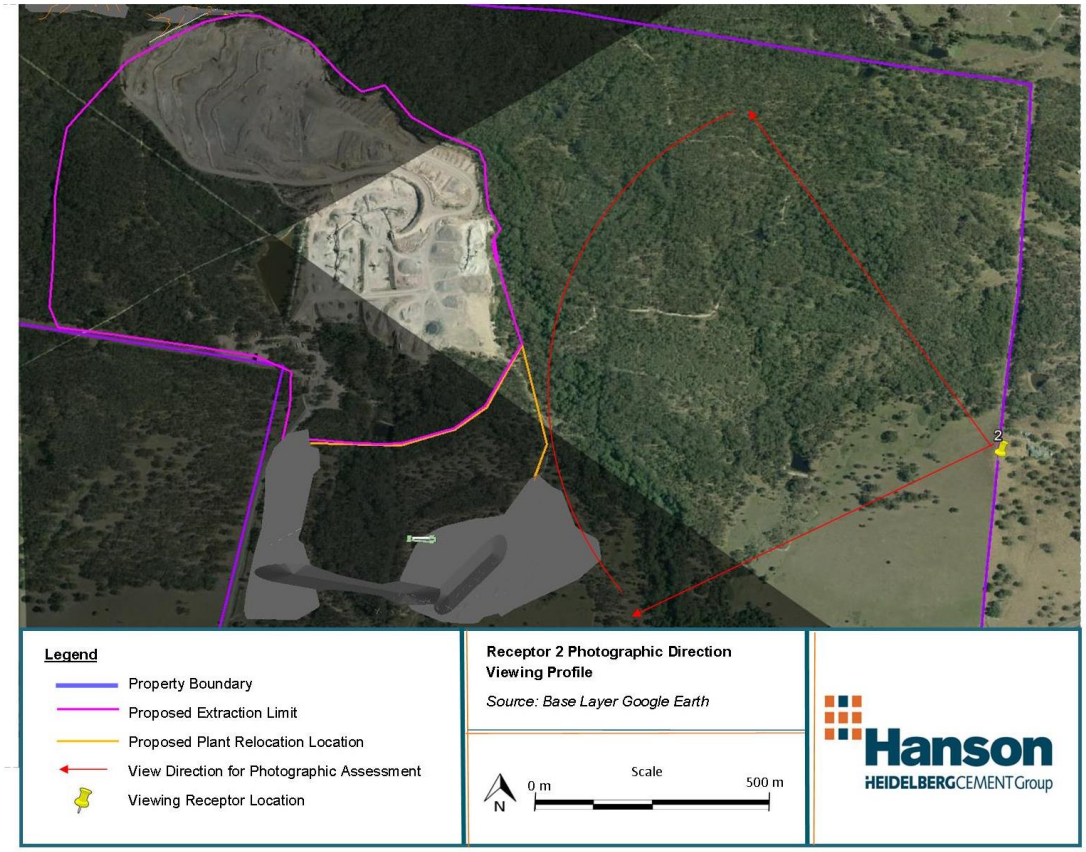

Figure 17: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile

6.5.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 19 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 2 to the disturbance area. The land rise 1.25 km from **point B** obscures some views to the quarry.

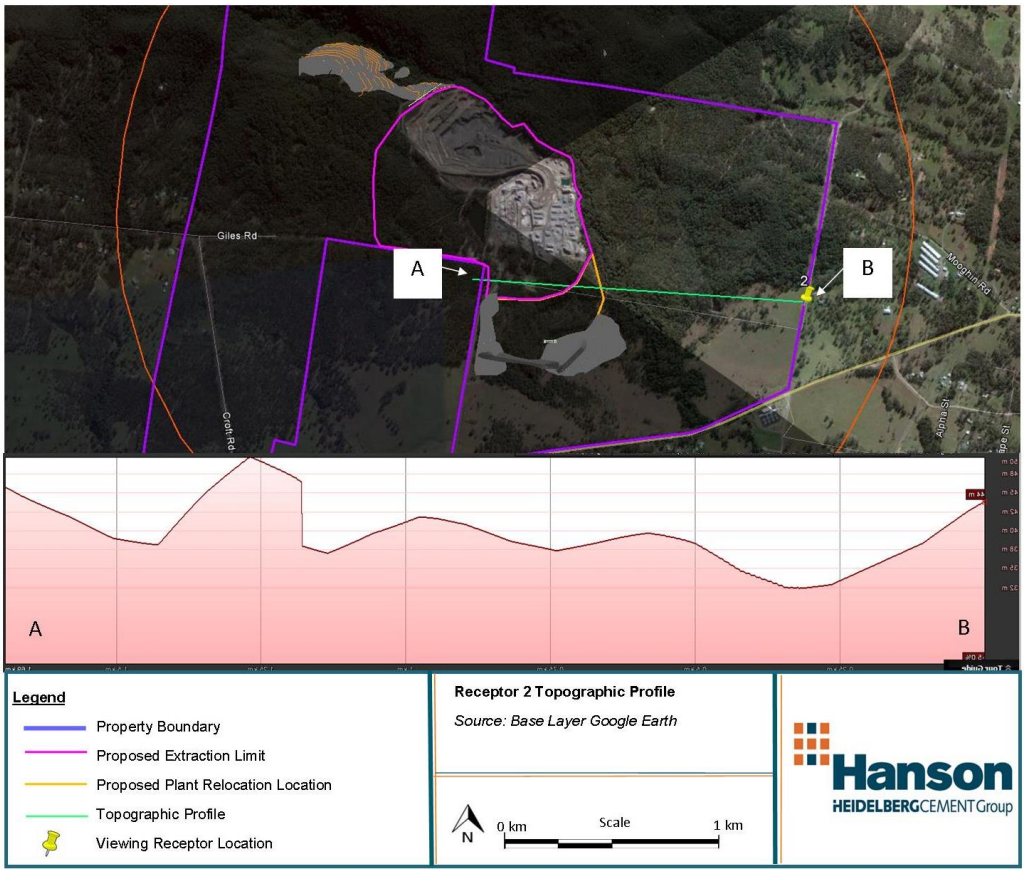

Figure 18: Topographic Profile - Receptor 2

6.5.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to the receptor 2 generates a score of “low” (**Table 8)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of cleared grassland, sparse vegetation transitioning into dense vegetation prior to the proposed extraction boundary. It is predicted that the Project will impose very minor changes to the landscape view from receptor 2, therefore not significantly altering the existing view quality and therefore has been awarded a visual sensitivity score of “low”.

Visual Influence: A combination of topography, vegetation and the proposed earth bund will filter the majority of views from receptor 2 to the project. The absorption capacity of the project from receptor 2 is high; therefore a visual influence score of “low” has been allocated.

Visual Impact is shown in the table below.

Table 8: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 2

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low Impact**	

6.5.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section of the proposed Project area. Dead trees to the east of the quarry will be replaced to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 2 and the Project.

6.6 Viewpoint 3 – Eastern Viewing Sector

Table 9 below provides a summary of the VIA for receptor 3.

Table 9: VIA Summary - Receptor 3

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Eastern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 378543.89 m E, 6384697.57 m S
Receptor number (Figure 20)	3
View Type and Context	View from the corner of the south eastern property boundary from the northern side of Clarence town road.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	1,041m
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Low

Figure 20 shows potential views of the Project from receptor 3.

Figure 19: Photomontage Assessment - Viewpoint 3 A

6.6.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 21 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 3.

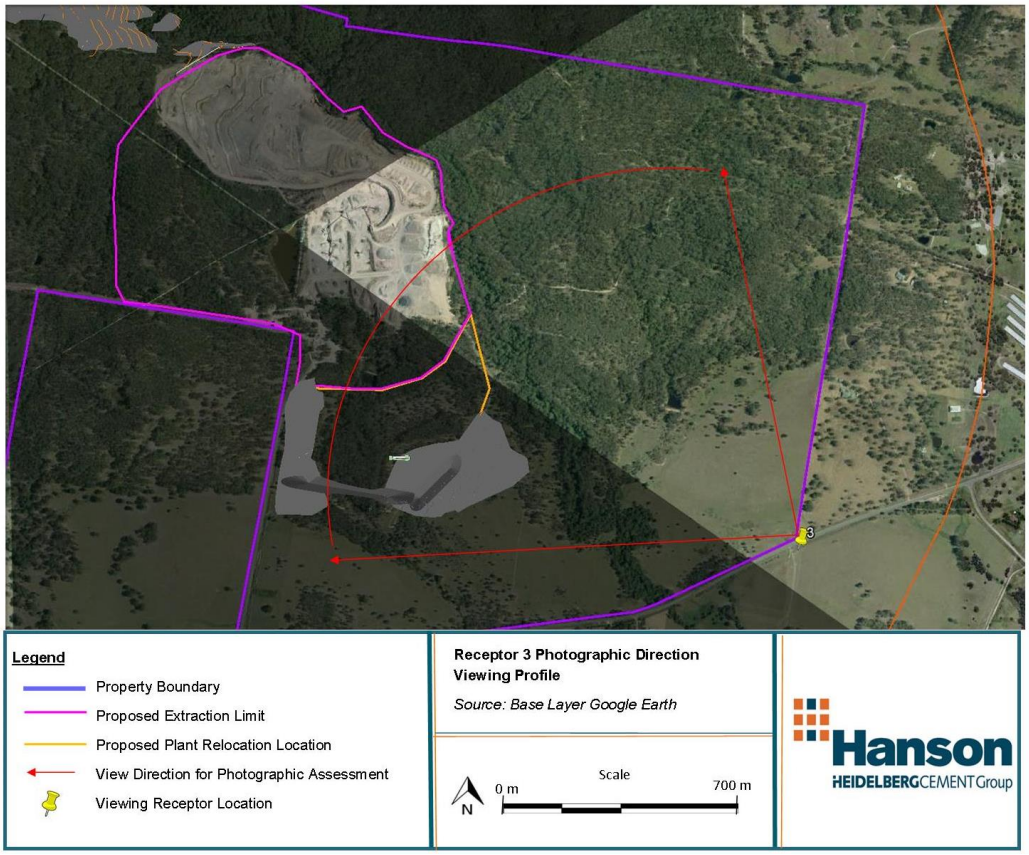

Figure 20: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 3

6.6.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 22 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 3 to the disturbance area.

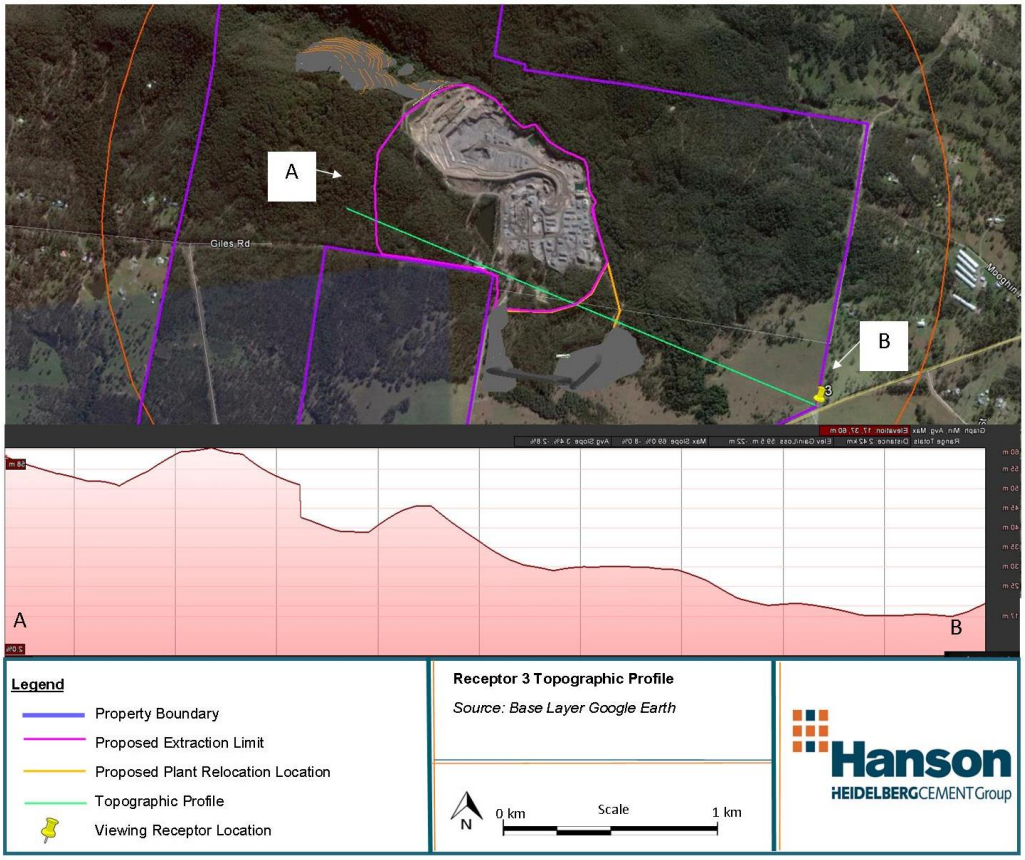

Figure 21: Topographic Profile - Receptor 3

6.6.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to the receptor 3 generates a score of “Low” (**Table 10)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of cleared grassland, sparse vegetation transitioning into dense vegetation prior to the proposed extraction boundary. It is predicted that the Project will impose very minor changes to the landscape view from receptor 3, therefore not significantly altering the existing view quality and therefore has been awarded a visual sensitivity score of “low”.

Visual Influence: A combination of topography, vegetation and the proposed earth bund will filter the majority of views from receptor 3 to the project. The absorption capacity of the project from receptor 3 is high; therefore a visual influence score of “low” has been allocated.

Visual Impact is shown in the table below.

Table 10: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 3

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low Impact**	

6.6.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section of the proposed Project area. Dead trees to the east of the quarry will be replaced to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 3 and the Project.

7.0 Southern Sector

The southern sector has high potential for visual impact due to the direction of quarry expansion and the proximity of sensitive receptors to the project area. There were eight (8) sensitive receptors assessed for inclusion in the VIA report. The southern viewing sector is likened to the nature of the eastern sector. Residential structures with a view to the quarry were similarly assessed, and likewise conclusions were drawn.

7.1 Technological Assessment

A preliminary assessment using geographic information system mapping showed that views from the PVC into the project from the Eastern View Sector will mainly occur from residential properties and public roads. Primarily views from Clarencetown Road and Croft Road in addition to residential properties along these roads were identified as receptors to views of the Project.

7.2 Field Assessment

A field assessment identified twelve (12) receptors in the Eastern Viewing Sector that may possess views to the project area. Seven (7) of these were identified as sites for further analysis included in the VIA report, as receptors in close proximity replicated views and were removed from further analysis.

7.3 Combined Assessment

Table 11: Combined VIA Assessment - Southern Sector

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low/Moderate	Low/Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low/Moderate**	

7.4 Receptor 4 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 12 below provides a summary of the VIA for receptor 4.

Table 12: VIA Summary - Receptor 4

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Southern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 378056.08 m E, 6384470.59 m S
Receptor number (Figure 24)	4
View Type and Context	View from Clarencetown road. Mature trees in the right foreground of the photograph. View of cleared paddock and vegetation prior to reaching the project area.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry	723m

(bird's eye view)	
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Low

7.4.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 23 below details complete photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 4.

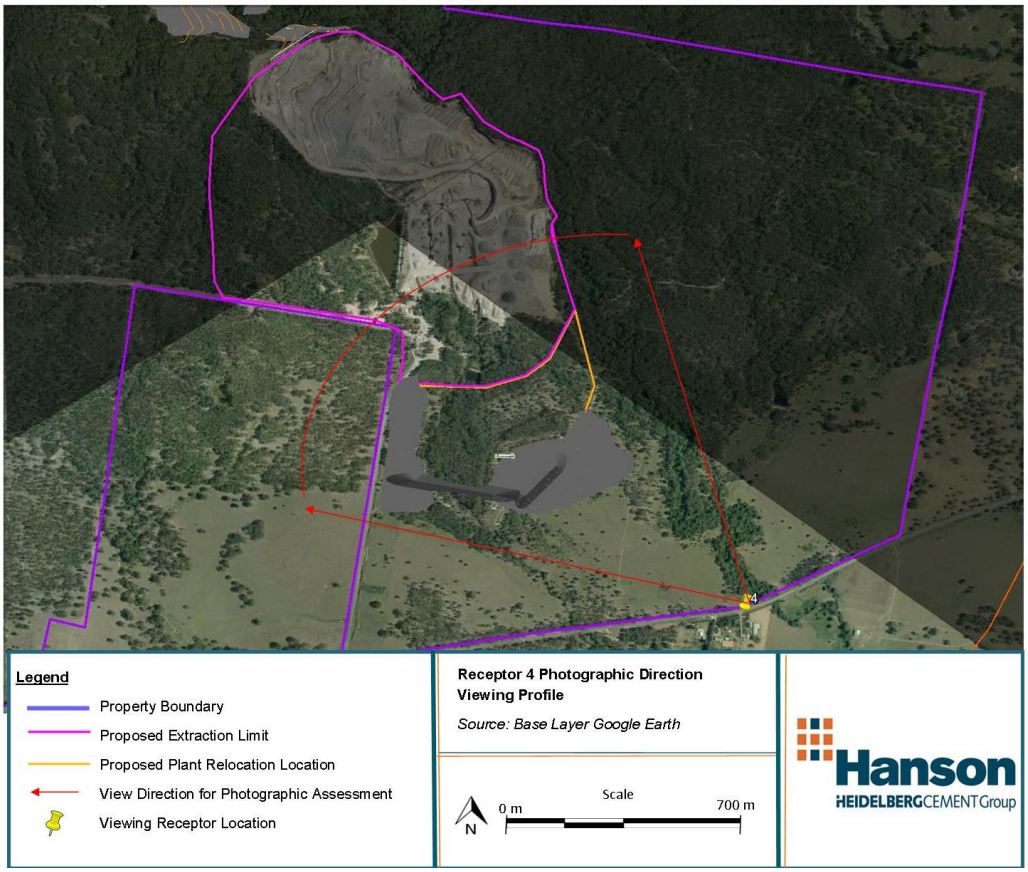

Figure 22: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 4

Figure 24 shows potential Project views from receptor 4.

Figure 23: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 4

7.4.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 25 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 4 to the disturbance area. The land rise 1.5 km from point A obscures views to the quarry.

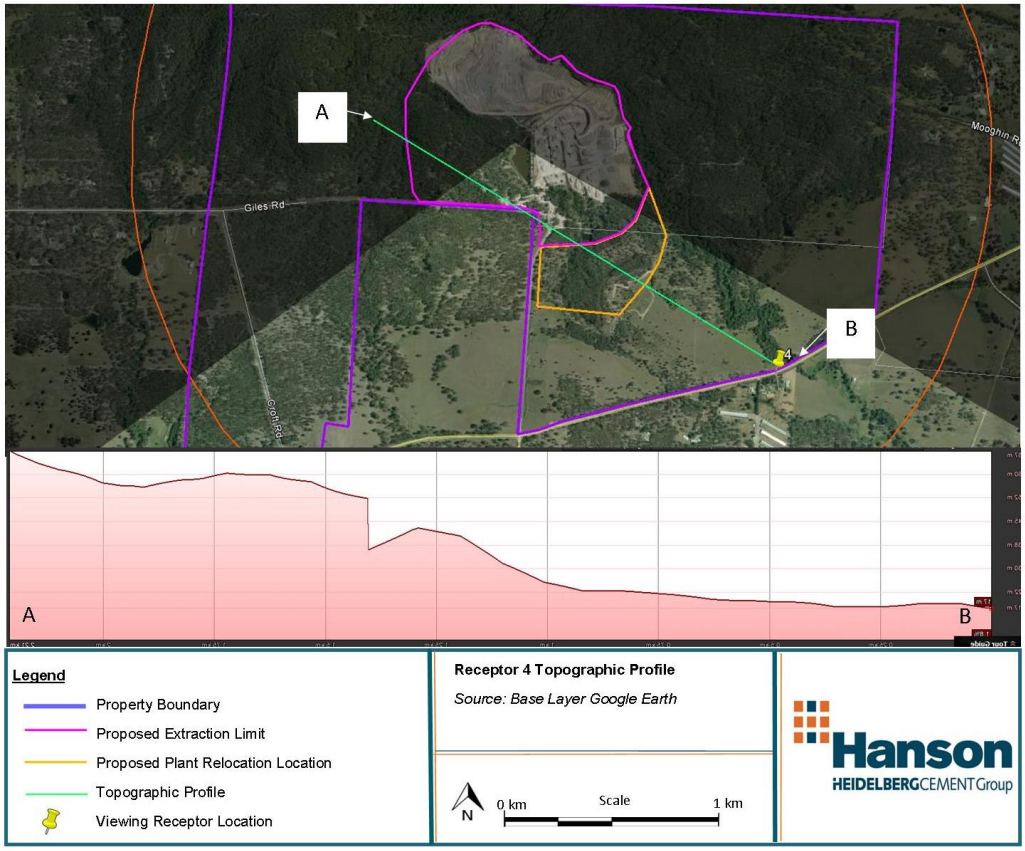

Figure 24: Topographic Profile - Receptor 4

7.4.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to the receptor 4 generates a score of “low” (**Table 13)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of mature trees in the right foreground, cleared grassland, sparse vegetation transitioning into dense vegetation prior to the proposed extraction boundary. It is predicted that the Project will impose very minor changes to the landscape view from receptor 4, therefore will not significantly alter the existing view quality. Receptor 4 has been awarded a visual sensitivity score of “low”.

Visual Influence: A combination of topography, vegetation and the proposed earth bund will filter the majority of views from receptor 4 to the Project. The absorption capacity of the project from receptor 4 is high; therefore a visual influence score of “low” has been allocated.

Visual Impact is shown in the table below.

Table 13: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 4

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low Impact**	

7.4.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section to the proposed Project area. Dead trees to the east of the quarry will be replaced to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 4 and the Project.

7.5 Receptor 5 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 14 below provides a summary of the VIA for receptor 5.

Table 14: VIA Summary - Receptor 5

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Southern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 377648.37 m E, 6384416.68 m S
Receptor number (Figure 25 & 27)	5
View Type and Context	View from Clarencetown road. Mature trees in the right foreground of the photograph. View of cleared paddock with grasses prior to the Project area.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	500m
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate
Visual Influence	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact	Moderate

7.5.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 26 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 5.

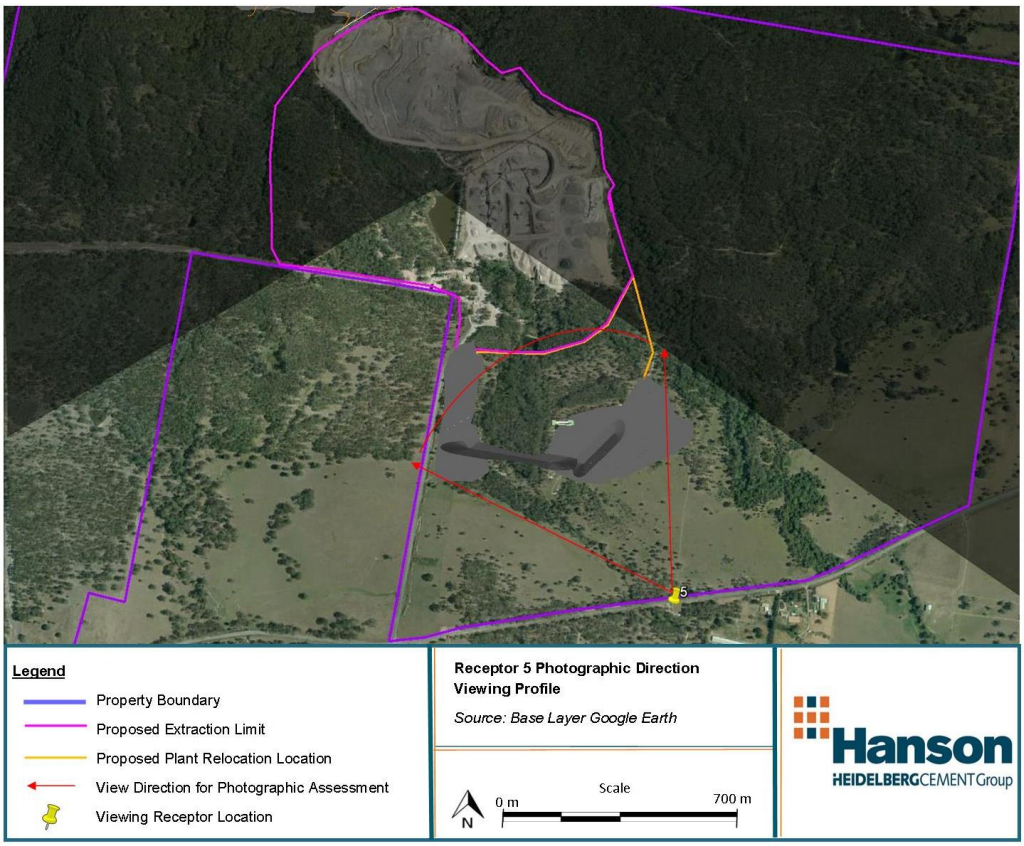

Figure 25: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile – Receptor 5.

Figure 27 & 28 shows potential Project views from receptor 5.

Figure 26: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 5 A

Figure 27: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 5 B

7.5.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 28 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 4 to the disturbance area. Gradual incline from Point B (Receptor 5) to point A, generates high viewing potential to the project area.

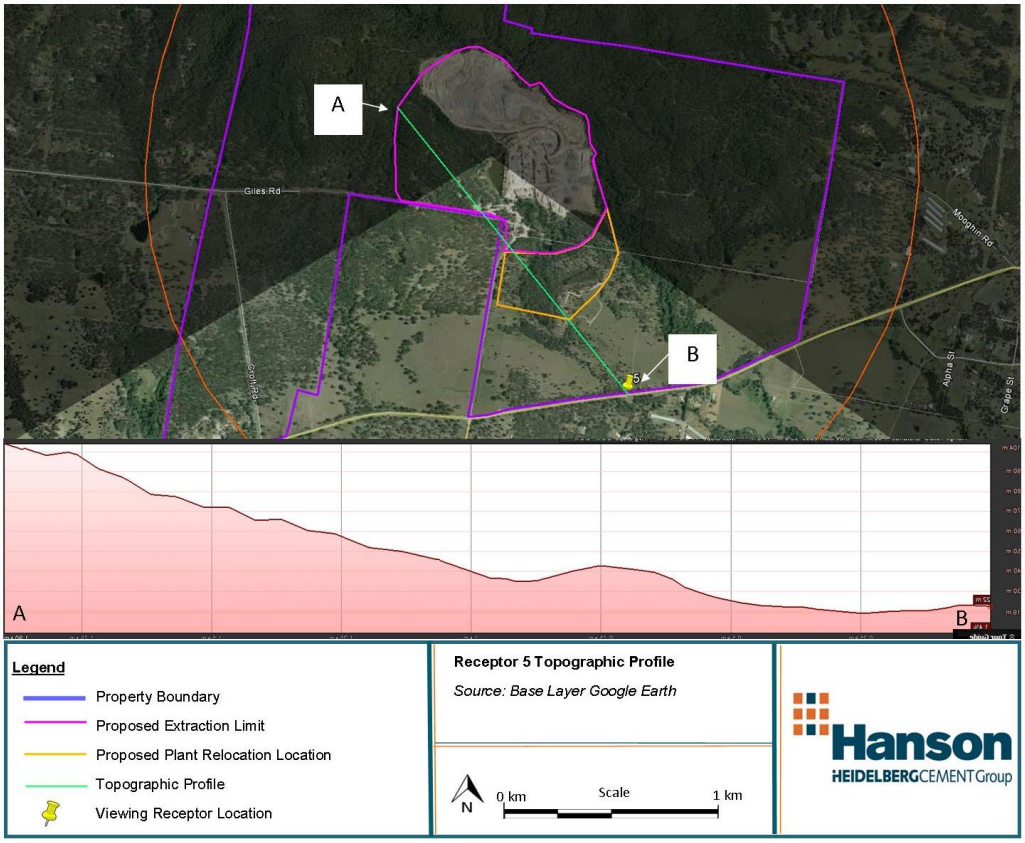

Figure 28: Topographic Profile - Receptor 5

7.5.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to receptor 5 generates a score of “moderate” (**Table 15)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of mature trees in the foreground, exposed ground (leaf litter), cleared grassland prior to the proposed extraction boundary. Without mitigation measures, the Project will alter the existing view quality in a negative way. Therefore without mitigation measures the associated score would be high. With the proposed earth bund included in the assessment, the visual sensitivity score is reduced to moderate.

Visual Influence: The gradual gradient increase from the receptor 5 into the project area is associated with high view potential. However the proposed 18m high earth bund will filter views and increase the project absorption capacity into the project area. The visual influence score allocated is moderate.

Table 15: Calculated Visual Impact Score

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Moderate	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Moderate**	

7.5.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section to the proposed Project area. Dead trees to the east of the quarry will be replaced to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 5 and the Project.

7.6 Receptor 8 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 16 documents the key VIA findings pertinent to receptor 8.

Table 16: VIA Summary - Receptor 8

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Northern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 377125m E, 6384343m S
Receptor number (Figure 31 & 32)	8
View Type and Context	Dense Vegetation in the foreground of the photograph from Clarence Town Road facing north to the project area.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	480m
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Low

7.6.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 28 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 8.

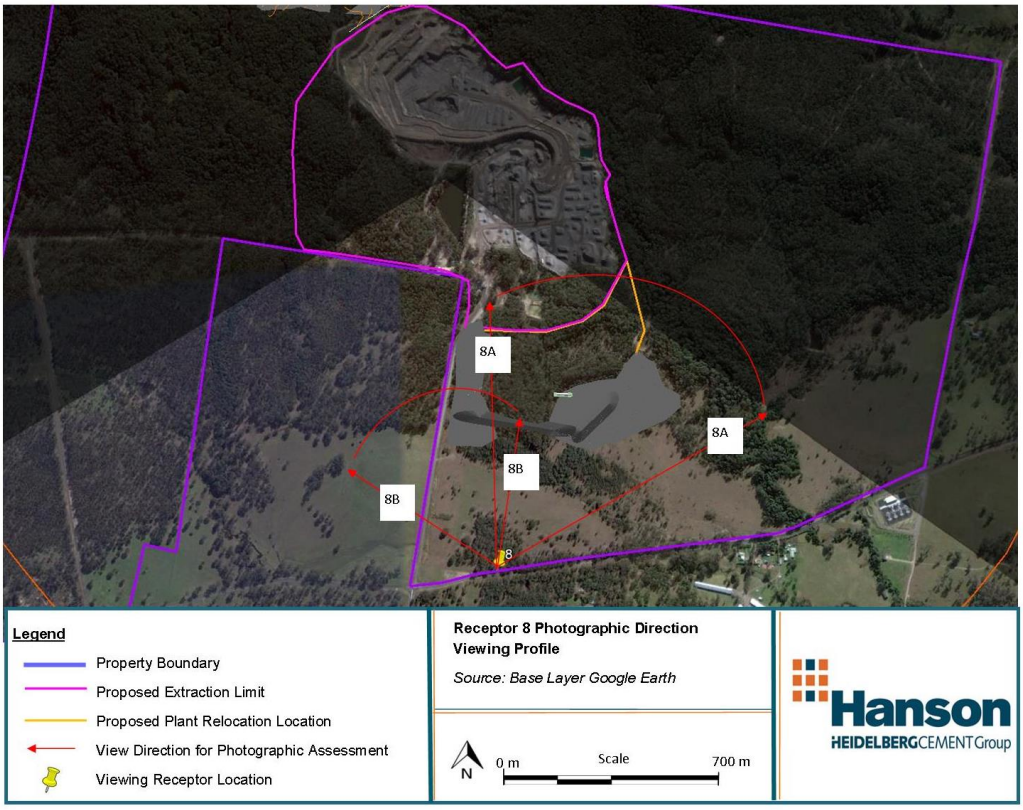

Figure 29: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 8

Figure 31 & 32 shows predicted Project views from receptor 8.

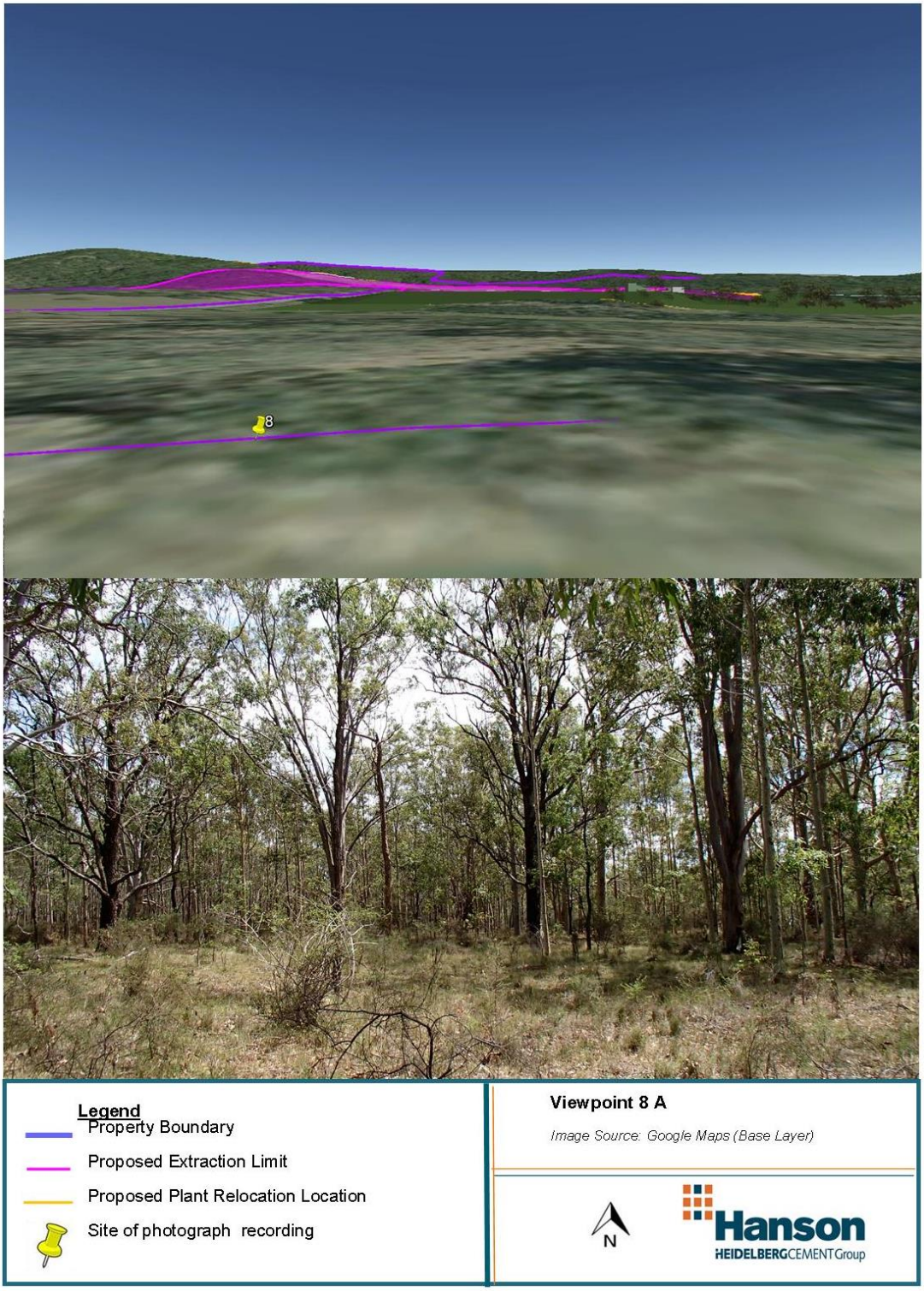

Figure 30: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 8 A

Figure 31: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 8 B

7.6.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 33 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 8 to the disturbance area. Gradual incline from point B (Receptor 8) to point A, generates high viewing potential to the project area.

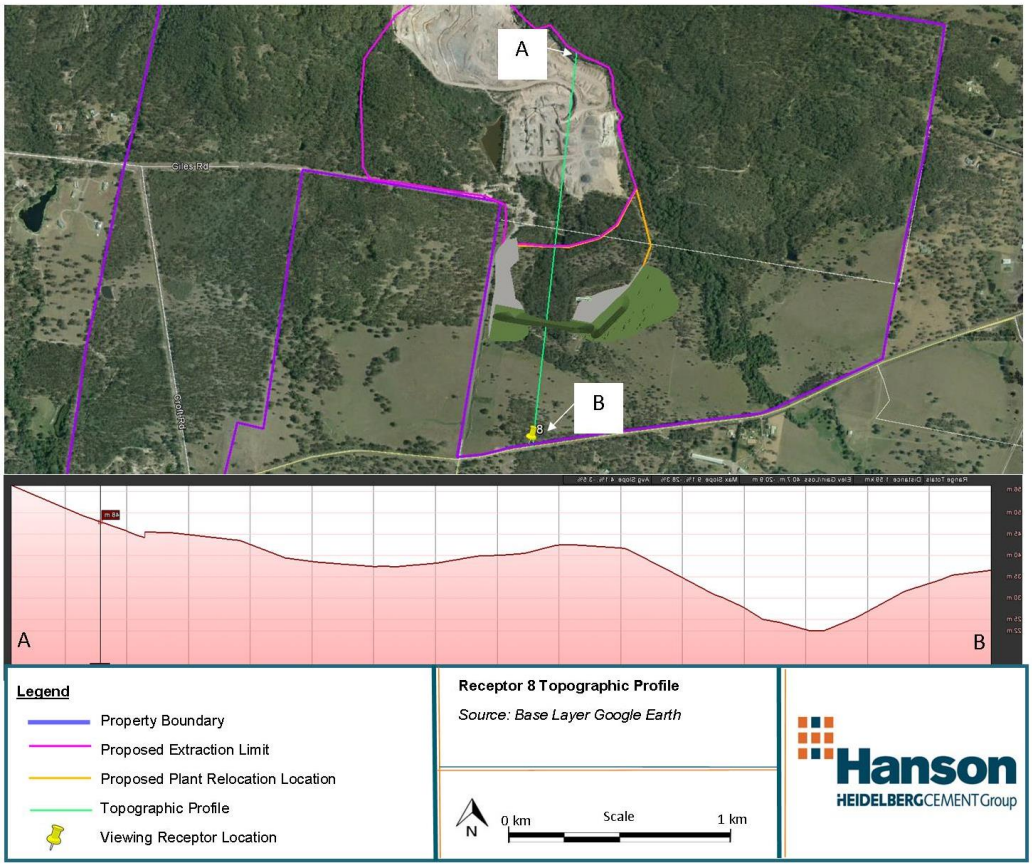

Figure 32: Topographic Profile - Receptor 8

7.6.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to receptor 8 generates a score of Low Visual Impact (**Table 17)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of dense mature trees and saplings in the foreground. The visual model shows high percentage of quarry pit exposure, however photographic assessment illustrates that vegetation prevents all views to the quarry expansion area from this viewpoint. A score of low has been allocated on the premise that this vegetation will remain and be replanted for the life of the Project.

Visual Influence: The gradual gradient increase from the receptor 8 into the project area is associated with high Project view potential. The proposed 18m high earth bund will filter views and increase the Project absorption capacity into the project area; however a significant proportion of the quarry will not be absorbed into the local topography. Foreground vegetation

will greatly enhance project absorption. The visual influence score allocated is low as the Project will be completely shielded by the proposed bund and current vegetation.

Table 17: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 8

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low**	

7.6.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section to the proposed Project area. Dead trees to the east of the quarry will be replaced to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 8 and the Project.

7.7 Receptor 10 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 18 documents the key VIA findings pertinent to receptor 10.

Table 18: VIA Summary - Receptor 10

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Northern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 376714.66 m E, 6384286.46 m S
Receptor number (Figure 35 & 36)	10
View Type and Context	Sparse mature trees in the foreground of the photograph from Clarence Town Road facing north to the project area. Moderate to dense vegetation at the background of the photograph prior to the expansion area. View across private owned property (see **Figure 35 & 36**)
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	650m
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate
Visual Influence	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact	Moderate

7.7.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 34 below details complete photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 10.

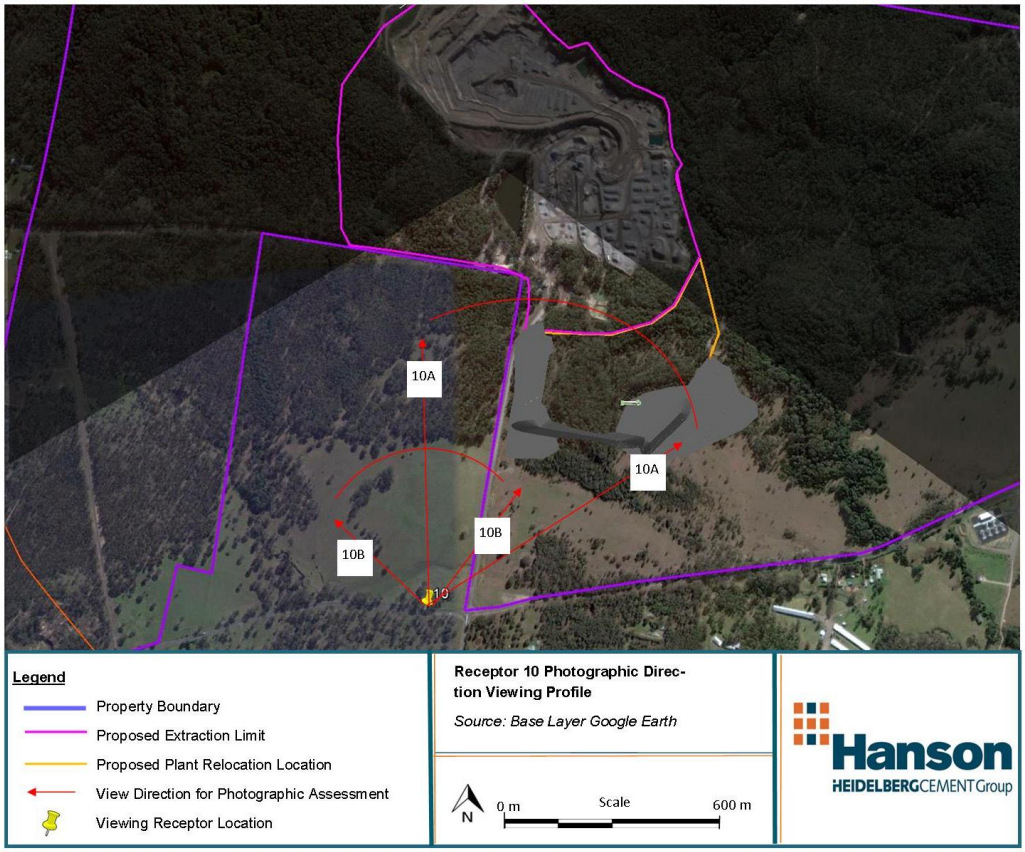

Figure 33: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 10

Figure 35 & 36 shows predicted Project views from receptor 10.

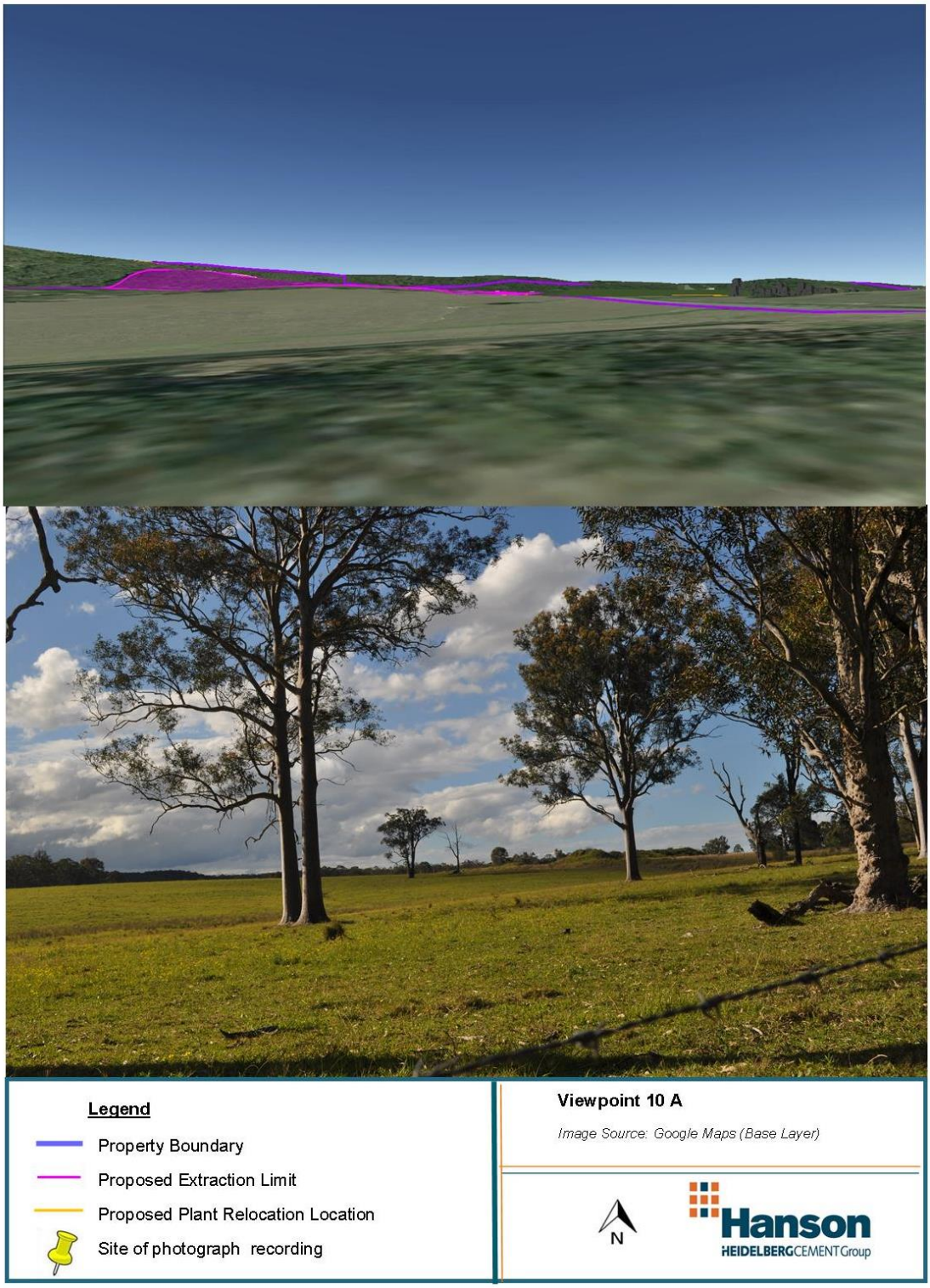

Figure 34: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 10 A

Figure 35: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 10 B

7.7.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 37 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 10 to the disturbance area. Gradual incline from Point B (Receptor 10) to point A, generates high viewing potential to the project area.

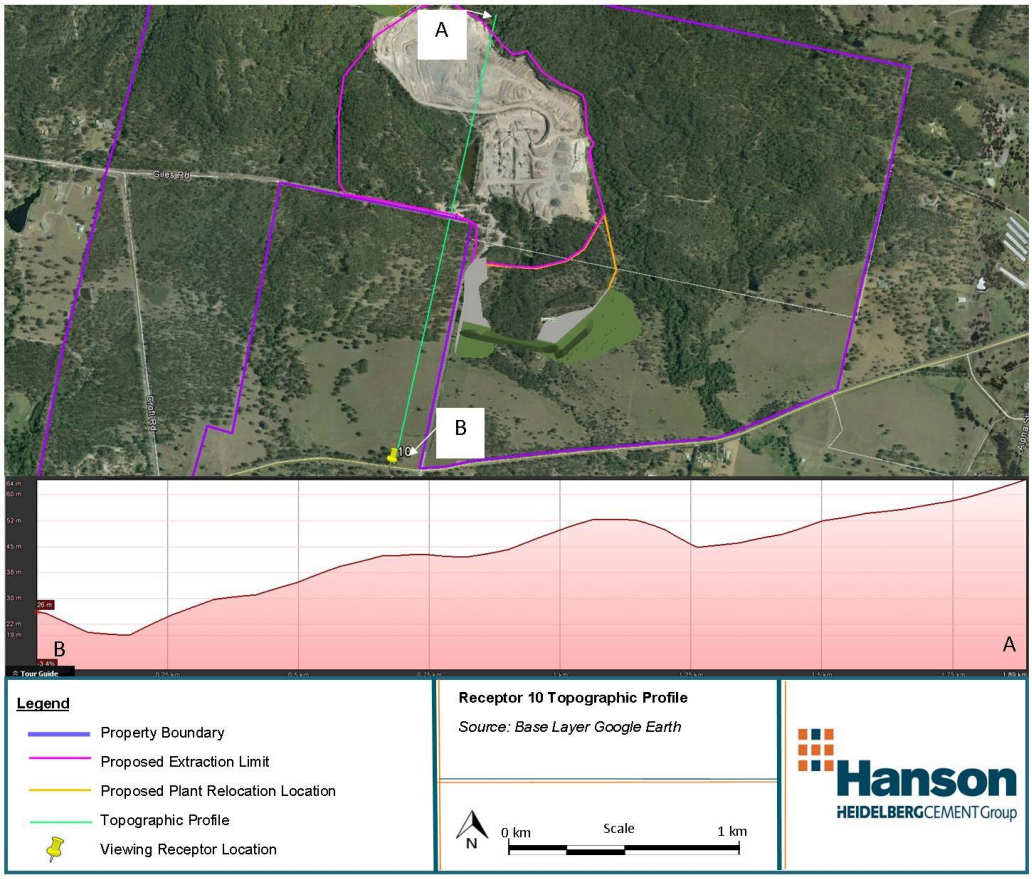

Figure 36: Topographic Profile - Receptor 10

7.7.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to receptor 10 generates a score of Low Visual Impact (**Table 10)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of cleared grassland in the foreground and dense vegetation in the background. The visual model shows quarry pit exposure, however photographic assessment illustrates that vegetation currently restricts all views to the quarry expansion area from this viewpoint. Therefore the existing view quality is good and the Project may alter this view potential due to inability to mitigate on private owned land. A score of moderate has been allocated.

Visual Influence: The gradual gradient increase from the receptor 10 into the project area is associated with high Project view potential. The proposed 18m high earth bund will filter some

views and increase the Project absorption capacity into the project area; however a significant proportion of the quarry will not be absorbed into the local topography. Foreground vegetation and dense vegetation directly south of the project expansion area will greatly enhance Project absorption. However Hanson does not own the property through the line of sight from receptor 10 to the Project area, and can therefore not commit to the maintenance of vegetation or plantation of vegetation which acts as a visual shield. On this premise, a score of moderate has been allocated to viewing receptor 10.

Table 19: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 10

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Moderate	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Moderate**	

7.7.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter some views of the southern section to the proposed Project area. The proponent does not own property fracturing receptor 10 and the expansion area, and can therefore not commit to the maintenance of vegetation, re-planting effort or rehabilitation in this area. Should the property remain in the same ecological state as present, the Project area will remain mostly shielded by existing vegetation on this property. It should be noted that approval must be sort from Port Stephens Council to remove any native vegetation, and therefore with the assistance of Council, views to the project area will be restricted from receptor 10.

7.8 Receptor 12 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 20 documents the key VIA findings pertinent to receptor 12.

Table 20: VIA Summary - Receptor 12

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Northern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 0376371 m E, 6384304m S
Receptor Number (Figure 30 – 41)	12
View Type and Context	Sparse mature trees in the foreground of the photograph from Clarence Town Road facing north to the project area. Moderate to dense vegetation at the background of the photograph prior to the expansion area. View across private owned property.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry	832m

(bird's eye view)	
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate
Visual Influence	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact	Moderate

7.8.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 38 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 12.

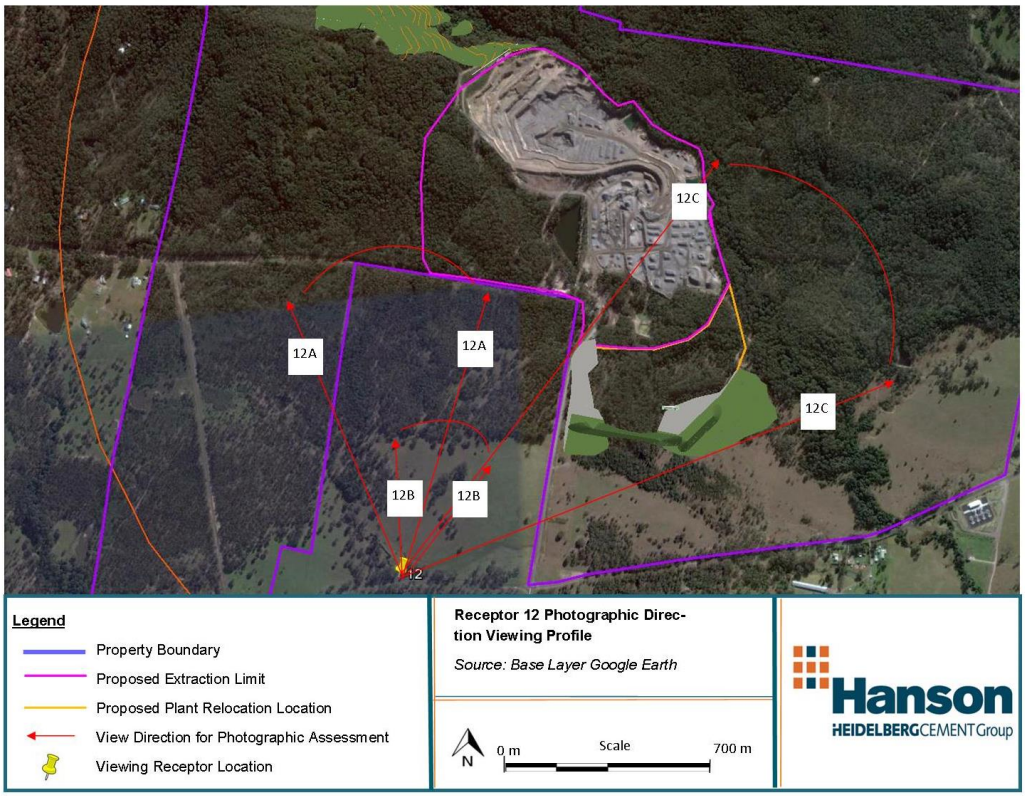

Figure 37: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 12

Figure 39, 40 and 41 show predicted Project views from receptor 12.

Figure 38: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 12 A

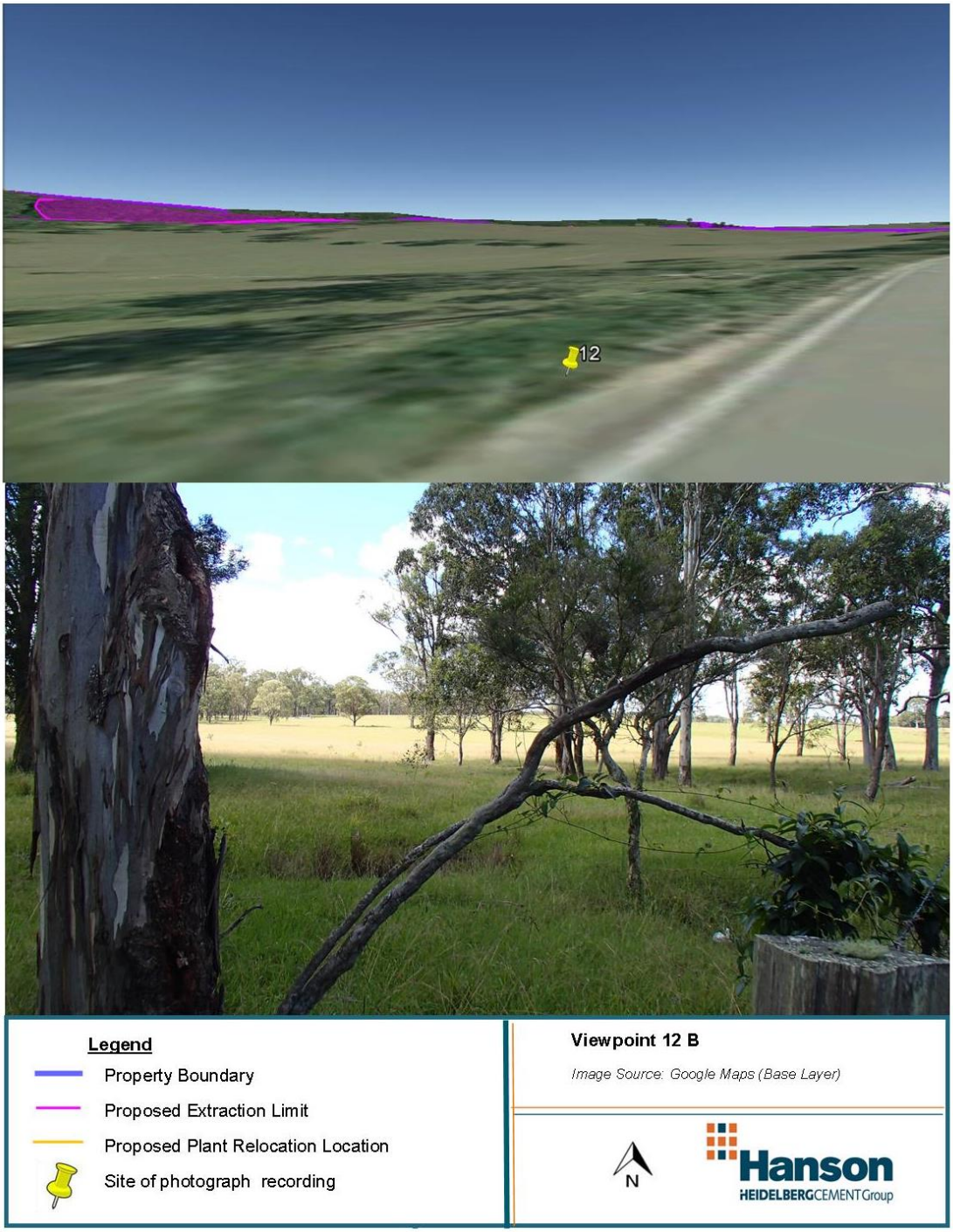

Figure 39: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 12 B

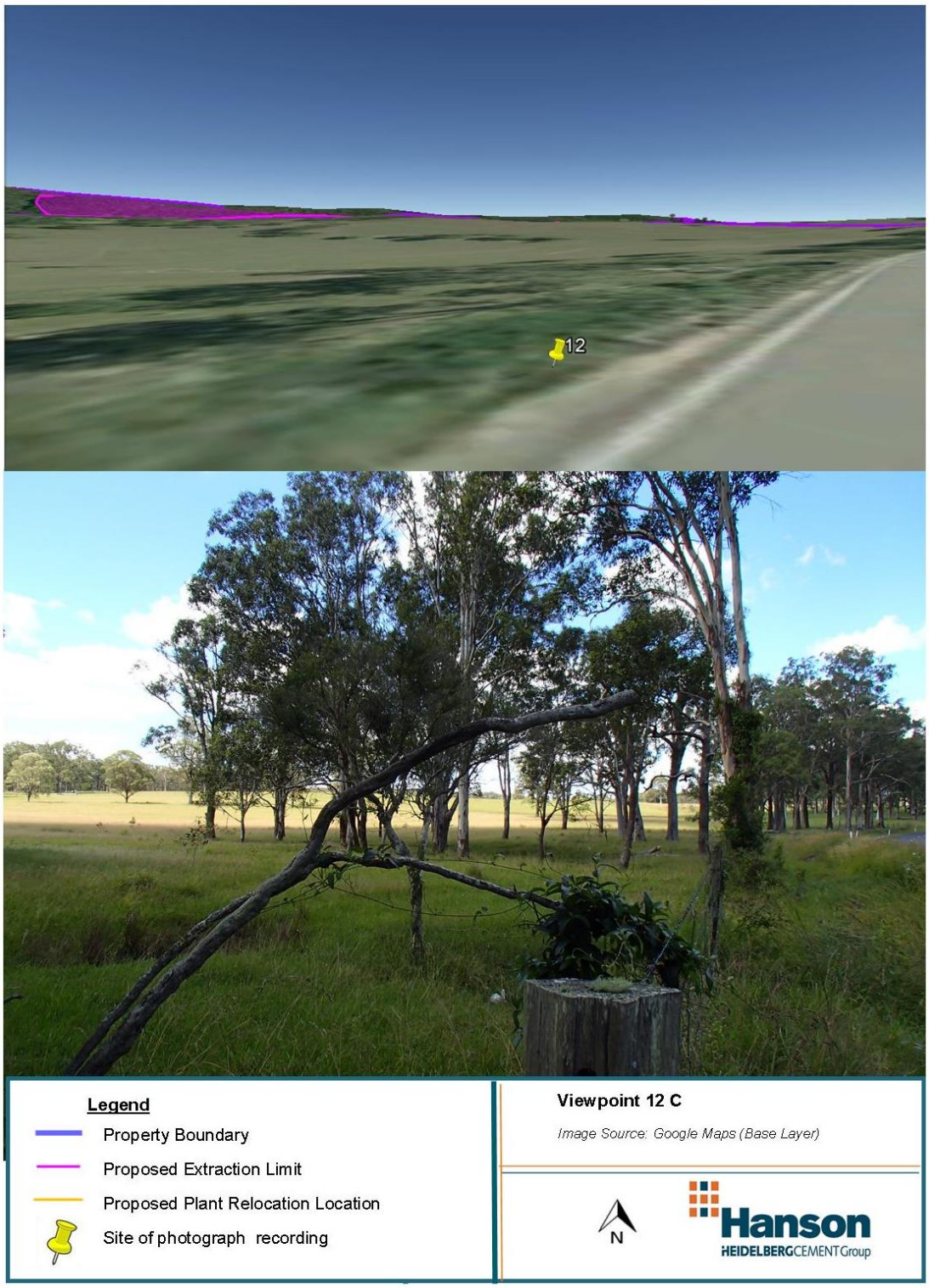

Figure 40: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 12 C

7.8.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 42 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 12 to the disturbance area. Gradual incline from Point B (Receptor 12) to point A, generates high viewing potential to the project area.

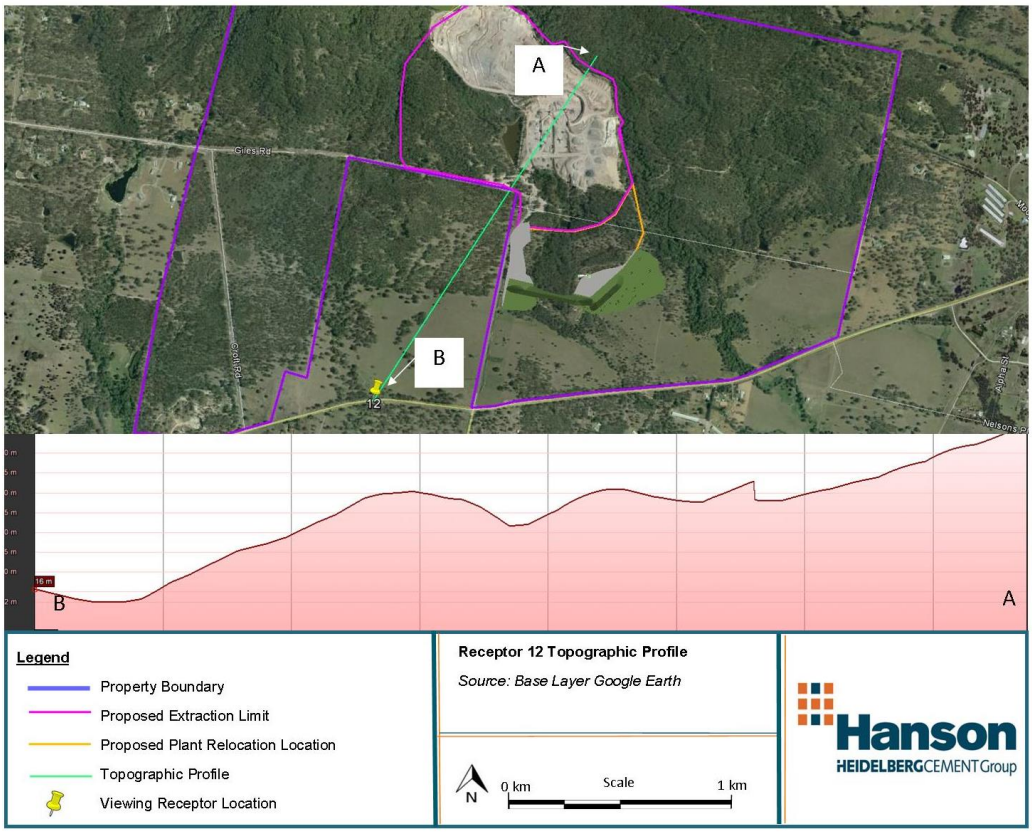

Figure 41: Topographic Profile - Receptor 12

7.8.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to receptor 12 generates a score of Low Visual Impact (**Table 21)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of cleared grassland and scattered mature trees in the foreground. Vegetation becomes more dense prior to the Project area. The visual model shows high percentage of quarry pit exposure, however photographic assessment illustrates that vegetation prevents all views to the quarry expansion area from this viewpoint.

This vegetation is located on privately owned land and therefore the maintenance of this vegetation buffer is beyond Hanson's control. Therefore a visual sensitivity score of moderate has been allocated.

Visual Influence: The topographic peak prior to the project area reduced Project view potential. The proposed 18m high earth bund will filter views and increase the Project absorption capacity into the project area; however a significant proportion of the quarry will not be absorbed into the

local topography. Background vegetation filters all current views of the proposed project area, however Hanson is not able to commit to the maintenance of this vegetation as it occurs on privately owned land. The visual influence score allocated is moderate as glimpses of the project may be viewed if background natural vegetation buffer is not maintained.

Table 21: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 12

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Moderate	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Moderate**	

7.8.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section to the proposed Project area. Dead trees on Hanson property will be replaced in order to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 12 and the Project. Vegetation will be planted on the south western sections of the project boundary where practical.

7.9 Receptor 15 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 22 documents the key VIA findings pertinent to receptor 15.

Table 22: VIA Summary - Receptor 15

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Northern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 376140.00 m E, 6384247.00 m S
Receptor Number (Figure 44 & 45)	15
View Type and Context	Sparse mature trees in the foreground of the photograph from Clarence Town Road facing north to the project area. Moderate to dense vegetation at the background of the photograph prior to the expansion area. View across private owned property.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	1035 m
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate
Visual Influence	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact	Moderate

7.9.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 43 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 15.

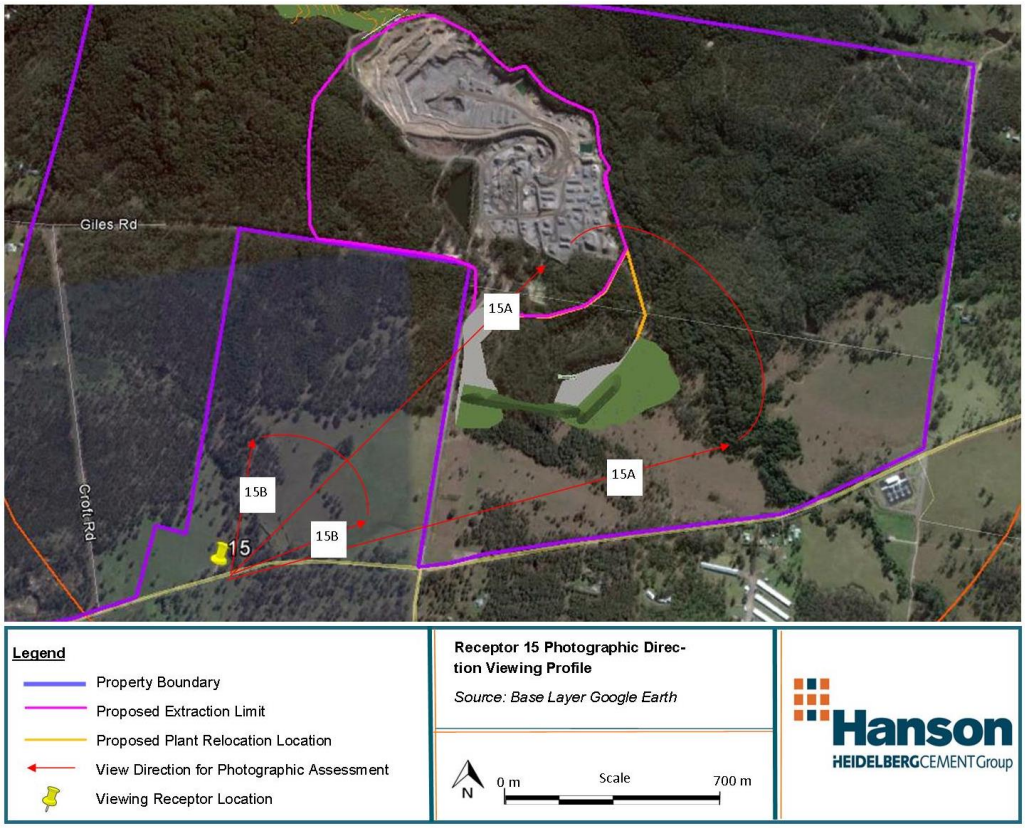

Figure 42: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile

Figure 44 & 45 shows predicted Project views from receptor 15.

Figure 43: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 15 A

Figure 44: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 15 B

7.9.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 44\6 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 15 to the disturbance area. 48m peak 1.3km from point A (receptor 15) will shield some views to the project area.

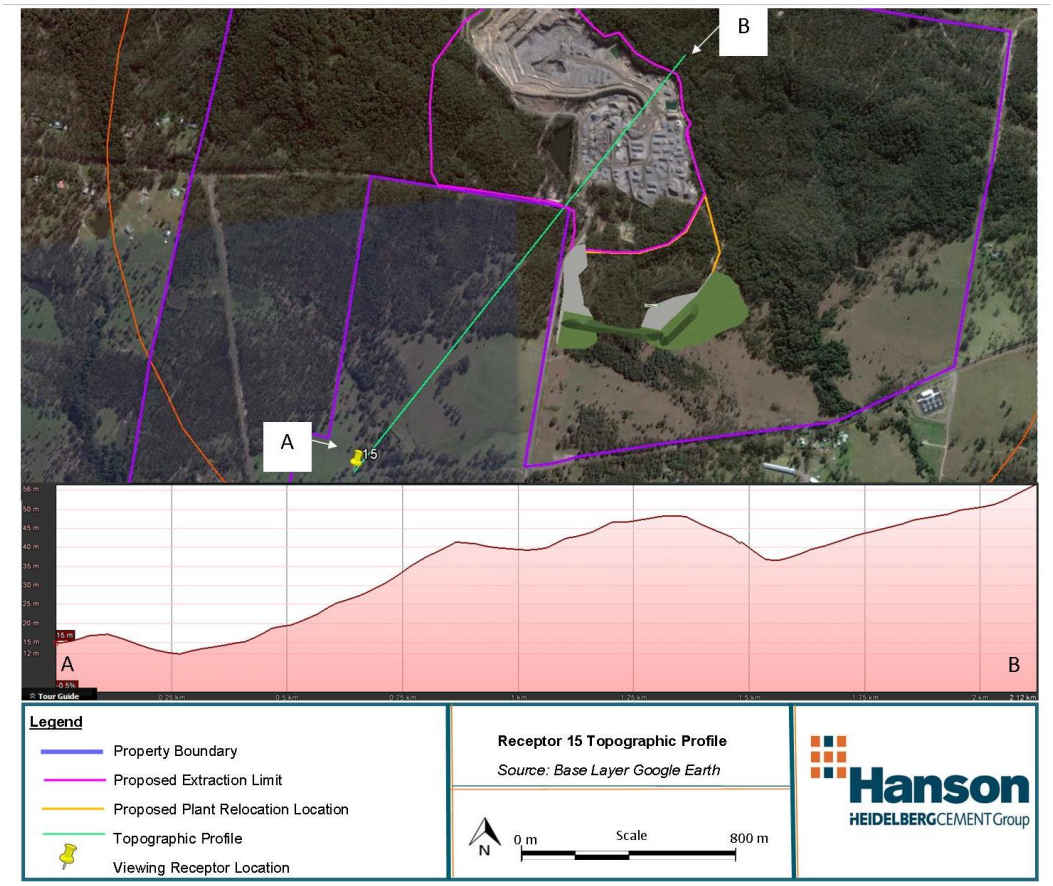

Figure 45: Topographic Profile - Receptor 15

7.9.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to receptor 15 generates a score of Low Visual Impact (**Table 23)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of cleared grassland and scattered mature trees in the foreground. Vegetation becomes more dense prior to the project area. The visual model shows high percentage of quarry pit exposure, however photographic assessment illustrates that vegetation prevents all views to the quarry expansion area from this viewpoint.

This vegetation is located on privately owned land and therefore the maintenance of this vegetation buffer is beyond Hanson's control. Therefore a visual sensitivity score of moderate has been allocated.

Visual Influence: The topographic peak prior to the project area will reduce Project view potential. The proposed 18m high earth bund will filter views and increase the Project absorption capacity into the project area; however a significant proportion of the quarry will not

be absorbed into the local topography. Background vegetation filters all current views of the proposed project area, however Hanson is not able to commit to the maintenance of this vegetation as it occurs on privately owned land. The visual influence score allocated is moderate as glimpses of the project may be viewed if background natural vegetation buffer is not maintained.

Table 23: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 15

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Moderate	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Moderate**	

7.9.4 Mitigation Measures

The construction of an 18m high earth bund will filter views of the southern section to the proposed Project area. Dead trees on Hanson property will be replaced in order to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 15 and the Project. Vegetation will be planted on the south western sections of the project boundary where practical.

7.10 Receptor 18 – Southern Viewing Sector

Table 24 documents the key VIA findings pertinent to receptor 18.

Table 24: VIA Assessment - Receptor 18

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Northern Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 375690.00 m E, 6384687.00 m S
Receptor Number (Figure 48 & 49)	18
View Type and Context	View from Croft road facing in north easterly direction. 5-10m cleared grass area in the immediate photograph foreground. Moderate – dense mature trees from the midground to the background of the photograph.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	1056m
Visual Sensitivity	Low
Visual Influence	Low
Calculated Visual Impact	Low

7.10.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 47 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 15.

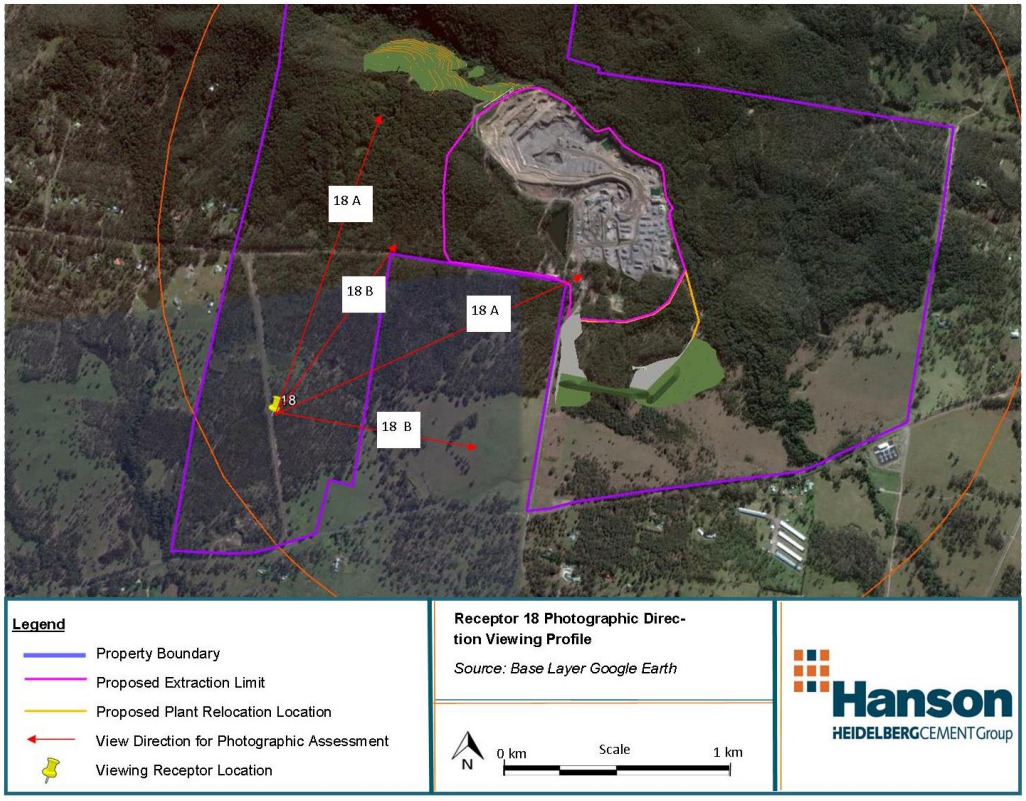

Figure 46: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 18

Figure 48 & 49 shows predicted Project views from receptor 18.

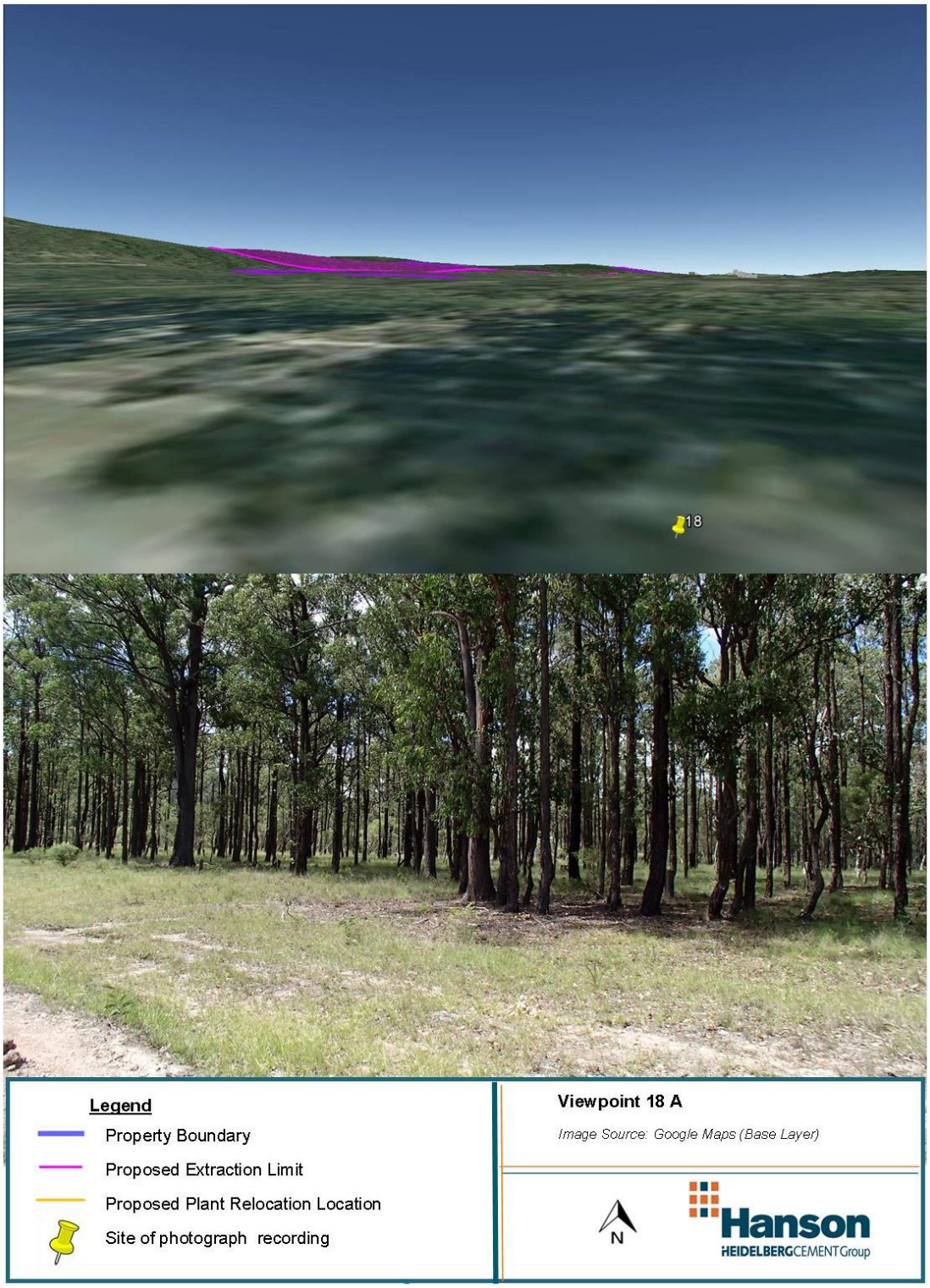

Figure 47: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 18 A

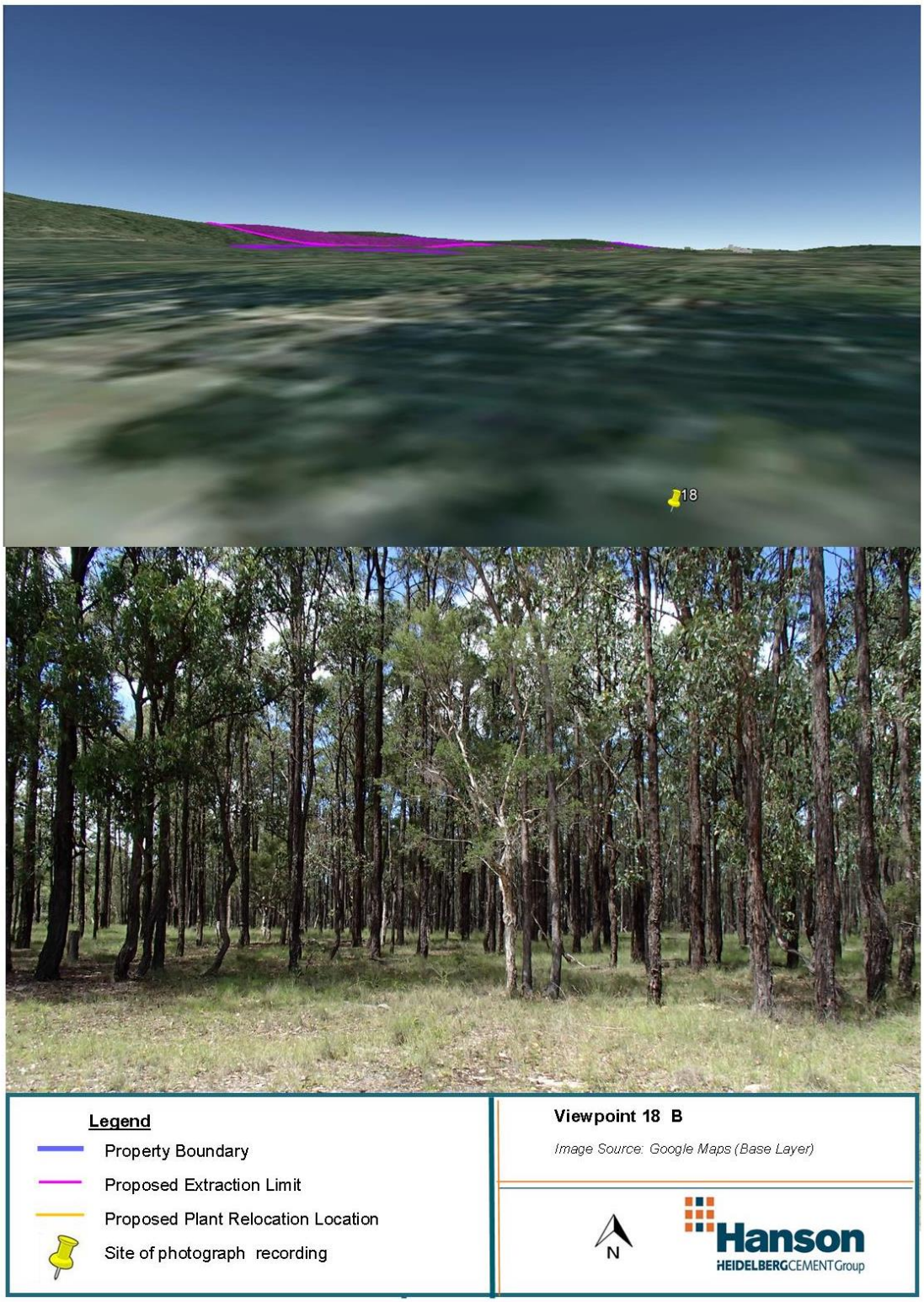

Figure 48: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 18 B

7.10.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 50 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 18 to the disturbance area. The 55m high peak 1.35 km from point A (receptor 18) will shield some views to the Project area.

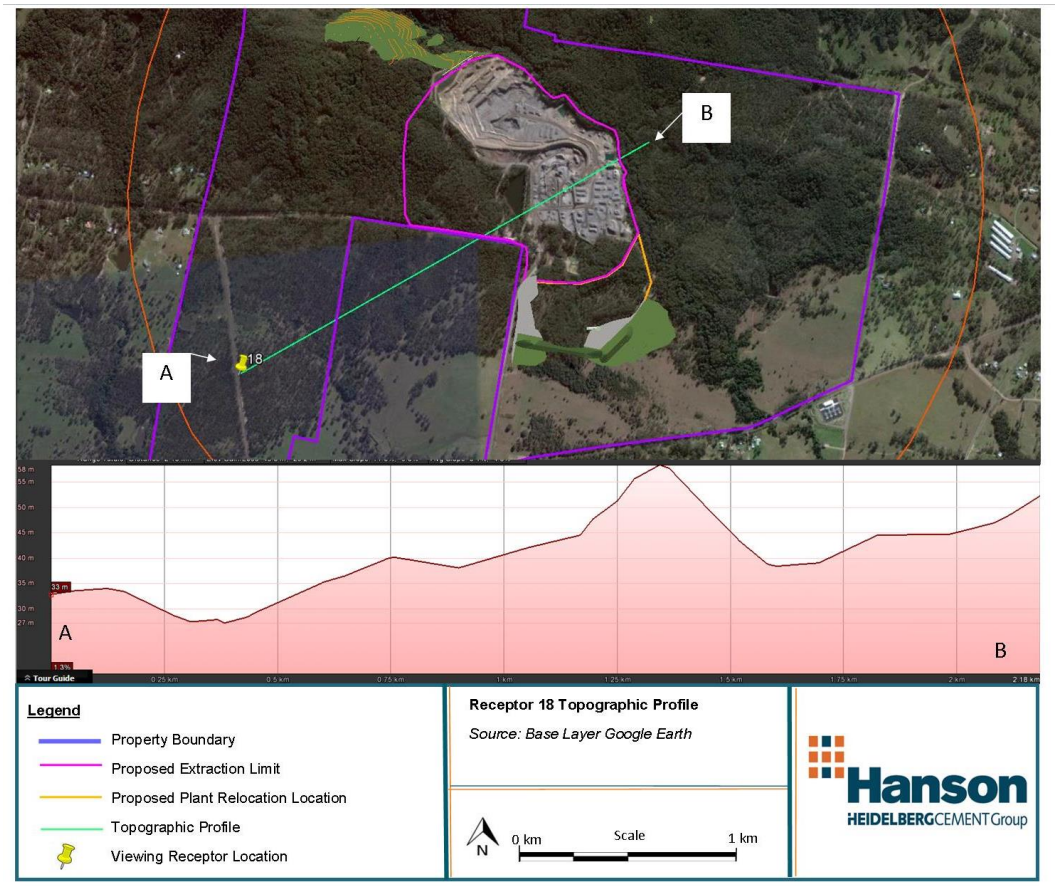

Figure 49: Topographic Profile - Receptor 18

7.10.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to receptor 18 generates a score of Low Visual Impact (**Table 25)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of moderate – dense mature trees taking up the majority of the frame. The remaining section of the foreground consists of 5 – 10 m of cleared grassland. The visual model shows exposure in the north western section of the Project area, however photographic assessment illustrates that the Project will not alter existing views to the quarry. Therefore a visual sensitivity score of low has been allocated.

Visual Influence: The topographic peak prior to the project area will reduce Project view potential, coupled with moderate – dense vegetation is modelled to absorb the majority of views to the Project area from receptor 18. A visual influence score of low has been allocated to reflect high absorption capacity pertinent to receptor 18.

Table 25: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 18

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Low	Low
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Low**	

7.10.4 Mitigation Measures

The proposed earth bund will not alter view to the project area from this viewpoint. Dead trees will be replaced in order to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 18 and the Project. Additional vegetation will be planted where required.

8.0 Western Viewing Sector

Similarly to the eastern and southern assessment sector, the western assessment sector has high potential to be impacted by the Project in terms of visual harm due expansion direction. The quarry progression in a southerly and westerly direction visually exposes areas to the west of the quarry to potential visual pollution.

8.1 Technological Assessment

A preliminary assessment using geographic information system mapping showed that views from the PVC into the project from the Western View Sector will mainly occur from residential properties and public roads. Primarily views from Giles Road were considered for further site analysis. The closest residential structure to the Project is a distance of 960m. The closest receptor is taken at the eastern end of Giles Road.

8.2 Field Assessment

A field assessment identified one main receptor from Giles Road to the Project area. This was the only accessible public receptor from the western primary visual catchment. This receptor was photographed for further analysis in the VIA report.

8.3 Combined Assessment

Table 26: Western Sector Visual Impact Combined Assessment

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Moderate	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Moderate**	

8.4 Receptor 16 – Western Viewing Sector

Table 27 below provides a summary of the VIA for receptor 16.

Table 27: VIA Summary - Receptor 16

Site Characteristics	Information
Viewpoint Location	Western Viewing Sector GPS: 56H 375950.00 m E , 6385434.00 m S
Receptor number (Figure 52 - 53)	16
View Type and Context	View from Giles Road. Road continues into the property. Vehicle access is restricted into the quarry via a locked gate. 5-10 metes either side of the road has been cleared and supports grasses. Mature dense trees, saplings and some shrubs grow in a natural state to the left and right of the road prior to reaching the project area.
Distance to the closest point of the quarry (bird's eye view)	540m
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate
Visual Influence	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact	Moderate

8.4.1 Photographic Coverage

Figure 51 below details the full photographic coverage of the project area from receptor 16.

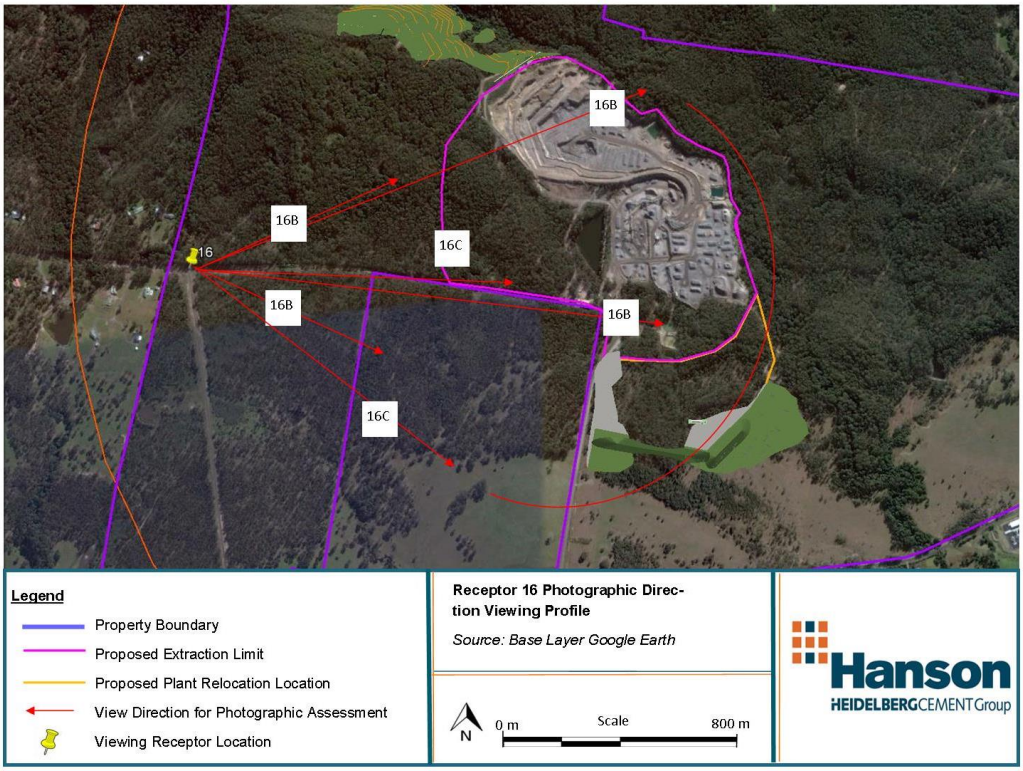

Figure 50: Photographic Direction Viewing Profile - Receptor 16

Figures 52-54 show potential Project views from receptor 16.

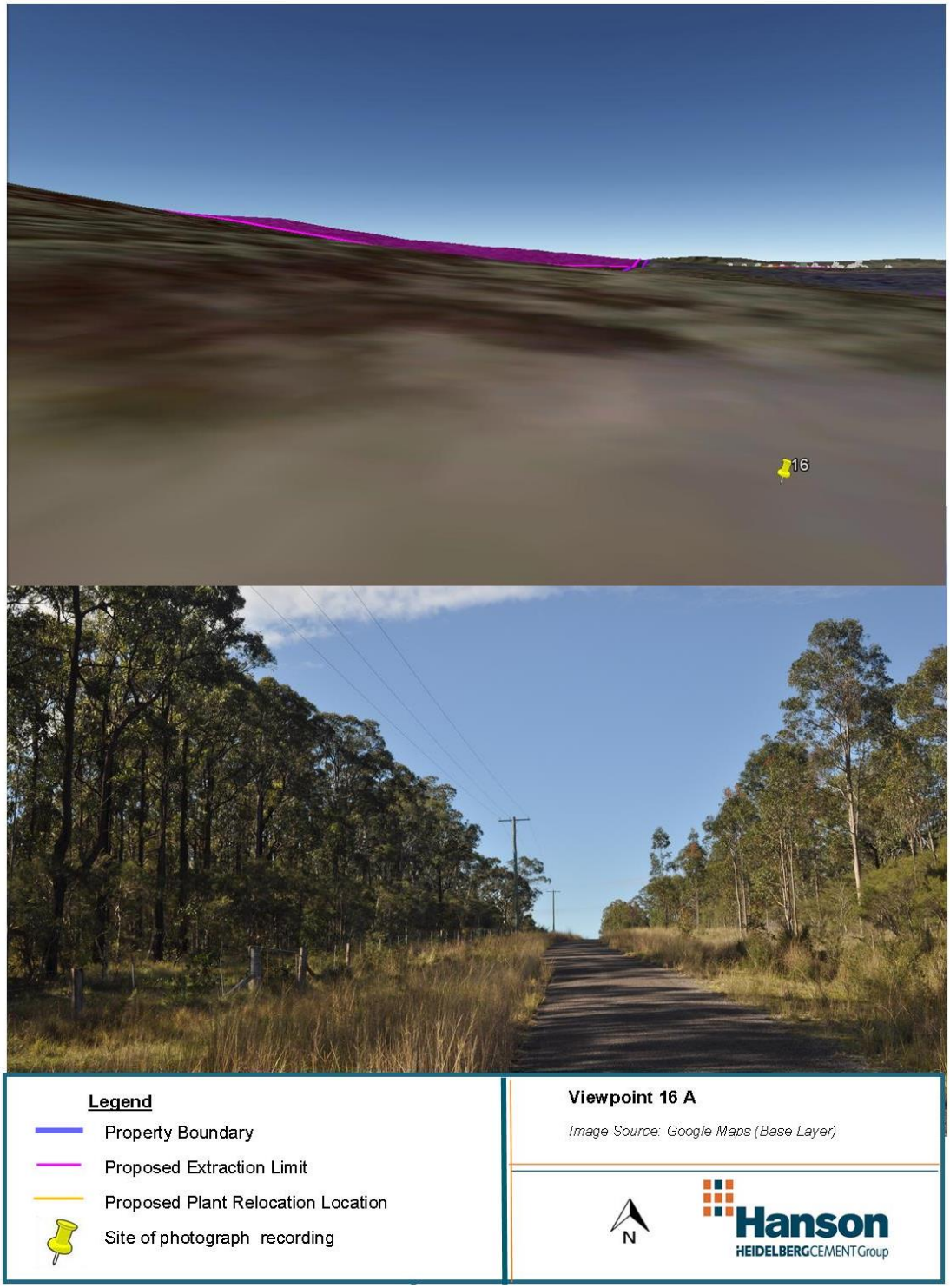

Figure 51: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 16 A

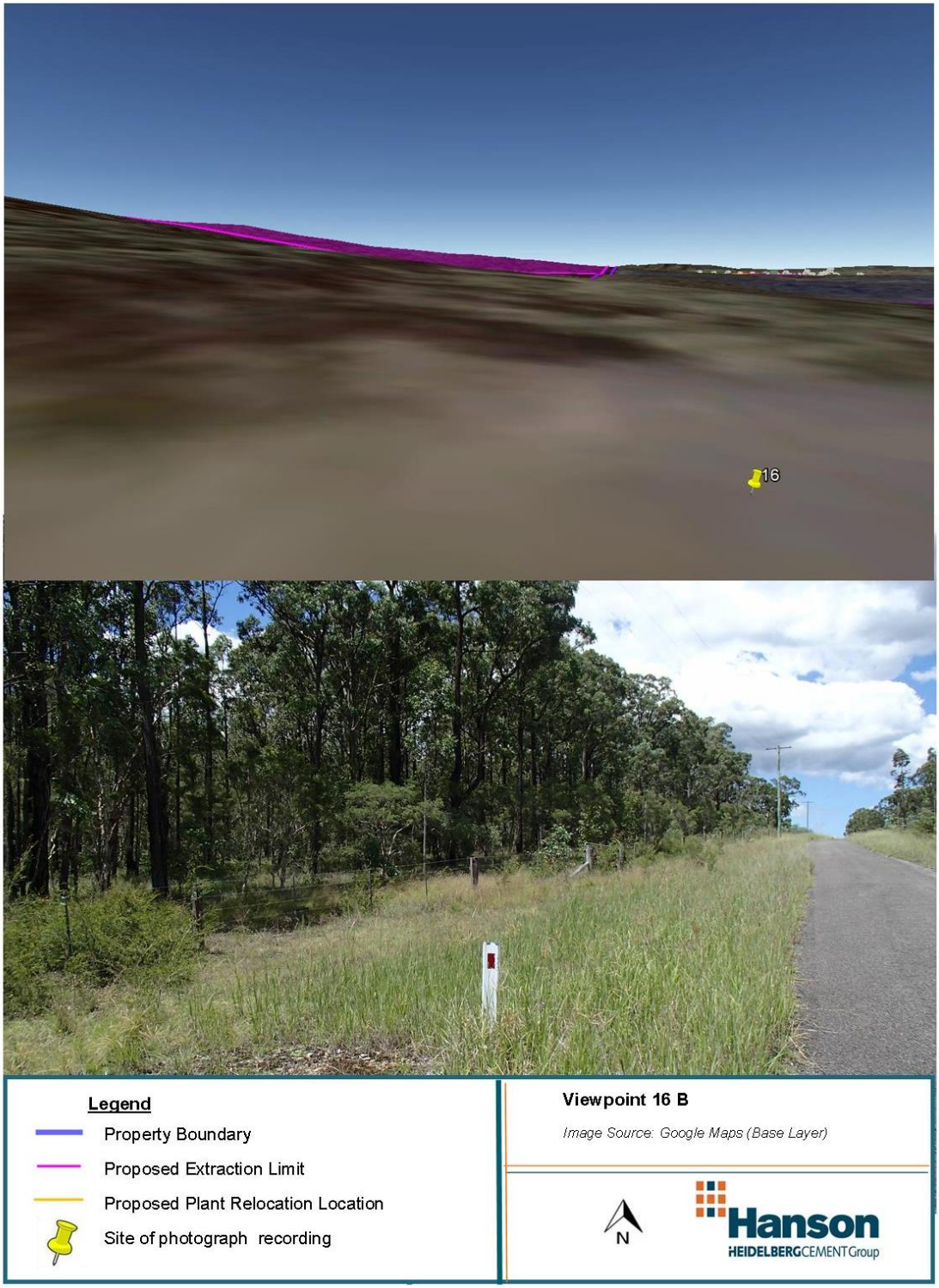

Figure 52: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 16 B

Figure 53: Photomontage Assessment - Receptor 16 C

8.4.2 Topographic Profile

Figure 55 below illustrates the topographic profile from receptor 16 to the disturbance area. The land rise 1.5 km from point A obscures views to the quarry.

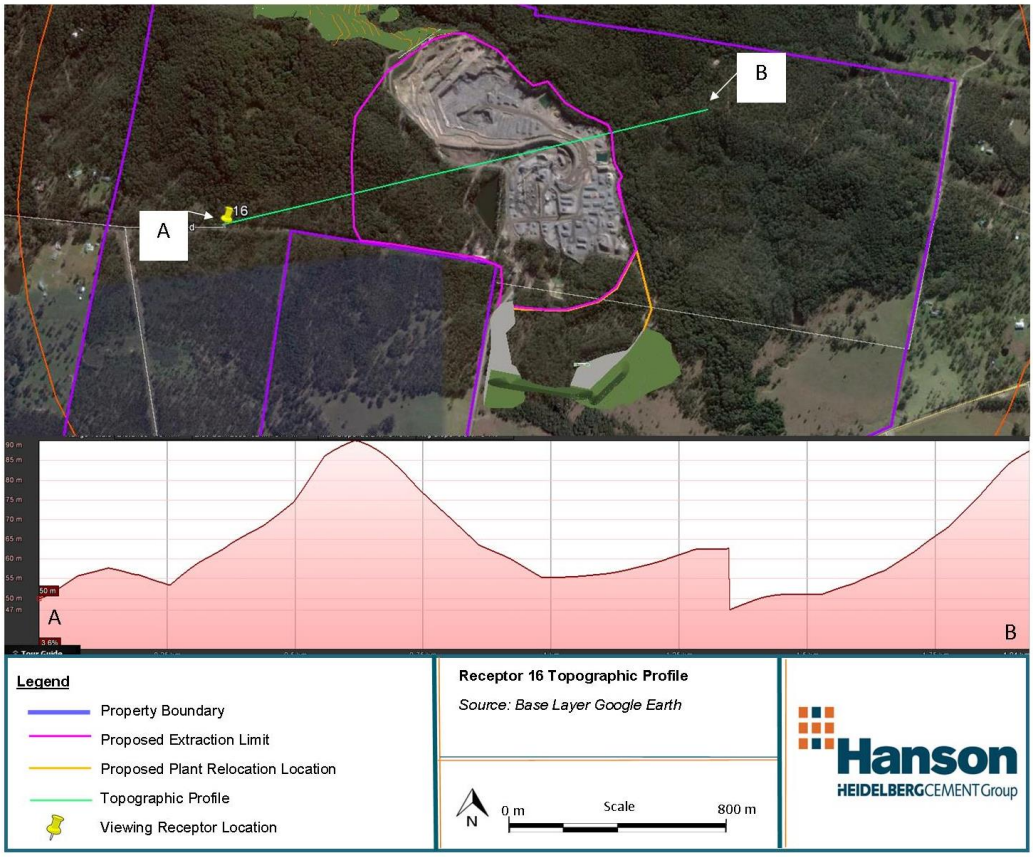

Figure 54: Topographic Profile - Receptor 16

8.4.3 Visual Impact Score

Applying the visual impact assessment methodology (**Table 1**) to the receptor 16 generates a score of “low” (**Table 28)**.

Visual Sensitivity: The existing view consists of dense native vegetation adjacent to a pre-existing road. Topographic rise in the land exposes the north western section of the Project area. The photographic assessment suggests that the existing native vegetation will maintain the existing view quality. There may however be glimpses of the Project through the viewing channel the road generates. A moderate visual sensitivity score has been allocated.

Visual Influence: Existing native vegetation and topographic rise will enhance visual absorption of the Project. As the Project area will occur on the peak of the topographic rise from receptor 16, the Project will primarily rely on native vegetation for visual filtration from receptor 16 to the Project. Without additional controls, a visual influence score of moderate has been allocated.

Visual Impact is shown in the table below.

Table 28: Calculated Visual Impact Score - Receptor 16

	Visual Sensitivity	Visual Influence
Score	Moderate	Moderate
Calculated Visual Impact Score	**Moderate**	

8.4.4 Mitigation Measures

Dead trees to the east of the quarry will be replaced to maintain an effective vegetation barrier between receptor 16 and the Project. The proposed earth bund will not mitigate views from receptor 16.

9.0 Conclusion

Table 29: Summary of Visual Impact Scores

Sector	Receptor	Calculated Visual Impact Score	Overall Sector Visual Impact Score
Northern	17	Very Low	Very Low
Eastern	1	Very Low	Low
	2	Low	
	3	Low	
Southern	4	Low	Low/Moderate
	5	Moderate	
	8	Low	
	10	Moderate	
	12	Moderate	
	15	Moderate	
	18	Low	
Western	16	Moderate	Moderate
Overall			Low

Views from all sensitive receptors are classified as either “very low”, “low” or “moderate” visual impact. The application of the proposed 18m high earth bund will greatly shield views to the project area from receptors to the south east, south, and south west of the Project. Additional commitments to maintain vegetation where possible and replanting/replacing dead trees with endemic species, will protect the existing view quality and promote positive Project absorption.

From a visual perspective, this project will have a low impact and should be able to proceed in accordance with the visual impact modelling.

Appendix 1

Wallalong Proposal

Brandy Hill Expansion Project

Visual Impact Assessment

New South Wales Government
NSW Planning & Environment
A A

- » Home
- » Local Environmental Plans
- » Local Plan Making Tracking System
- » Proposal Details

Proposal Details

Proposal

Title	Wallalong Urban Release Area
Summary	This planning proposal (PP) would rezone a 620 ha site nearby the existing rural village of Wallalong. The new town would broadly consist of residential (low (R2) and medium density (R3), large lot (R5)), business (B2), industrial (IN2), recreation (RE1) and environmental (E3) land components. Once fully developed, the expansion would facilitate an additional 3,200 dwellings (approximate), increasing the population of Wallalong from approximately 900 people to 9000. The PP would amend the Port Stephens LEP 2013.
Stage	Refused at Gateway
Number	PP_2014_PORTS_001_00
Supporting notes	SUMMARY OF ISSUES At this stage, the proposal is not able to demonstrate strategic merit. The site is not identified as a proposed urban area in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS). Nor does it satisfy the Strategy's Sustainability Criteria – a requirement for any potential release area not listed in the Strategy. It is inconsistent with several s117 directions and the Rural Lands SEPP. Further work is required before consistency with other s117 directions and SEPPs could be reconsidered. The Lower Hunter Regional Growth Plan (RGP) is currently being prepared and the draft and later final version will play a significant part in determining the strategic merit of the proposal. Preliminary work to date in the preparation of the RGP suggests demand varies significantly across the Lower Hunter and within the local government area, depending on price, location and product. Whether there may be a need for new residential zoned land and whether that should be at Wallalong, and what a new release at Wallalong may mean for other development fronts in that broader sub-region, is unknown at this time. This will be clearer following the completion of the studies currently underway in the preparation of the RGP. Council itself is uncertain regarding the strategic merit of the PP at this time. Its resolution refers to seeking an initial Gateway Determination 'to establish the strategic merit of the proposal', which if supported by Gateway, would then result in Council undertaking a series of studies to establish this merit. Unlike other sites in Council's Planning Strategy, justification for its inclusion appears based on a Council resolution of 2009 to include Wallalong as a new town. Further, Council's Planning Strategy identifies the site as a priority 3 development site, yet Council is now progressing Wallalong ahead of other sites identified as a higher priority. No explanation is provided regarding the implications of this acceleration on Council's infrastructure program. If merit is established from the initial studies, then Council intends to resubmit the PP for a further Gateway Determination, ahead of undertaking further site studies. The PP as submitted does not demonstrate that the site can be developed to the scale proposed. There are several site specific issues with developing the new town. Wallalong is isolated under major flood conditions, there is no sewerage service, and limited community services/ public transport. Road access is also limited. Connections west and south are via State Heritage Register listed bridges (two of which are single lane). Infrastructure costs, both local and State, are unknown at this time. The PP has already generated substantial community interest and representations objecting to the proposal have been made to the Ministers office and Planning and Infrastructure. It is noted that some of these objections come from individuals who's land is subject to this proposal. SITE DESCRIPTION Wallalong is a small rural village consisting of both low density residential and large lot residential. It sits within land zoned for rural purposes. The subject land extends to the north and west of existing large lot residential development which seperates the site from the existing village of Wallalong, approximately 1 kilometre to the south. The village is approximately 20 minutes from both Maitland and Raymond Terrace with access via either Clarence Town Road (SHR listed, single lane bridge in Maitland direction). Alternatively, Hinton Road provides access to Maitland, East Maitland (a major shopping centre, 15 min), Morpeth and the New England Highway, and this is via two SHR listed bridges (one being single lane). PREVIOUS ADVICE FROM THE AGENCY In 2007 the agency indicated that a proposal for rural residential development at Wallalong could be considered, provided it was able to fully address all issues associated with the proposal. In 2009 the agency advised Council that there was no prospect to consider land release in the Wallalong area in the short to medium term unless issues (aircraft noise, infrastructure) impacting on Kings Hill were not able to be resolved.

Kings Hill is an existing zoned urban release area within Port Stephens with a yield of up to 5000 dwellings. While aircraft noise was resolved and the land rezoned in 2010, infrastructure matters are still being progressed by Council/ landowners and development has not yet commenced.

In 2010 the then Minister for Planning advised Council that Wallalong had not been supported due to location, access and infrastructure issues and that the priority urban release area within Port Stephens LGA was Kings Hill.

More recent advice (2011) noted that the agency would consider the suitability of new development sites, such as Wallalong, as part of its review of the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (ie as part of the RGP process).

The site was also considered under the Potential Home Sites Program. In March 2013, the Government announced the outcomes of its review into landowner nominated potential housing sites. The review concluded that strategic viability of urban development at Wallalong would be considered as part of the RGP process.

The Wallalong Landowners Group has made a submission to the Lower Hunter Discussion paper requesting that the Wallalong Urban Release Area be identified as a proposed urban release area in the new Regional Growth Plan.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY COUNCIL

Council has provided a number of different documents associated with the proposal. The PP identifies the need for further investigations in order to determine the strategic merit of the release area.

Also provided is an independent report prepared for Council by City Plan Services, and supporting documentation prepared by 'the proponent' (landowners group).

There are differences in the project between the documents provided. For example, Council's PP anticipates a yield of 1,200 dwellings over the next 20-25 years, with 3,200 dwellings over its lifespan (which is unspecified) whereas the proponent documents refer to a yield of 3,700 dwellings over the next 25 years.

The PP prepared by Council forms the main focus of this report and is the document that will be considered by Gateway. In reviewing this information, the Agency requested further advice from Council to clarify certain matters.

Information was most recently received on 12 March and it is this date that the PP is recorded as received.

Location

Street:	Suburb:	City:	Postcode:
Numerous land parcels at Wallalong. Refer to Table 1 of the Planning Proposal.			

Stage

Submission Stage	
Date Proposal Lodged	12/03/2014
Relevant Planning Authority (RPA)	Port Stephens Council
Local Government Area Covered	Port Stephens
Gateway Stage	
Date of Determination	11/06/2014
Gateway Decision	N/A
Link to RPA Web Site	http://www.portstephens.local-e.nsw.gov.au/
Gateway Implementation Stage	
Date sent to RPA for Implementation	11/06/2014
(Planning Proposal sent to RPA for exhibition)	
LEP Assessment Stage	
Date returned to Department for assessment	N/A
(Planning Proposal returned to Department of Planning for assessment and drafting of LEP)	
Local Environmental Plan Stage	
Date of Publication	N/A
Publish Decision	N/A
Link to LEP Document	

Documents

File Name	File Type	Size (KB)
Council Letter.pdf		842
Council Report.pdf		55
Planning Proposal.pdf		1,622

Planning Proposal - LEP Maps.pdf		1,631
Planning Proposal - Aerial Map.pdf		1,816
1. Port Stephens Gateway.pdf		1,135
2. Port Stephens PR Report.pdf		153
3. Port Stephens PT Report.pdf		1,179