

APPENDIX
D



Stakeholder Engagement



MAULES CREEK

COAL PROJECT

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER NO.1
JULY 2010

WHO IS ASTON?

Aston Resources is a private independent Brisbane based coal company.

Aston Resources is focused on the development of its wholly owned Maules Creek Coal Project.

Introduction

In February 2010, Rio Tinto Coal Australia (RTCA), on behalf of Coal and Allied Pty Limited, sold the rights to the Maules Creek Coal Project (the Project) to Aston Coal 2 Pty Limited (Aston), a subsidiary of Aston Resources. The Project is located approximately 20 km north-east of Boggabri and is predominantly located within the Leard State Forest as shown on **Figure 1**.

A Mining Operations Plan (MOP) for Exploration Activities (between April 2010 and April 2012) has been approved by Industry and Investment NSW (I&I NSW). Following the MOPs approval the Exploration Program has since commenced in May 2010.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide some background on Aston and to introduce the local community to the Project.

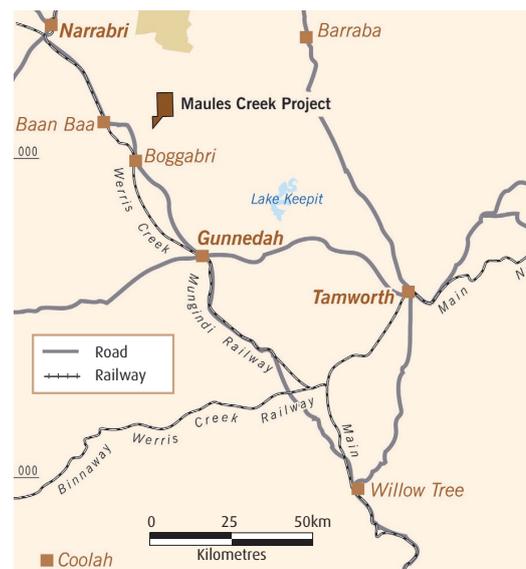


Figure 1: Maules Creek Coal Project Location

Exploration activities

An Exploration Program commenced in late May 2010 and involves a tactical analysis of the coal seam deposits located generally within the southern portion of Coal Lease (CL) 375. The location of the Maules Creek Mining Tenement Boundaries are shown on **Figure 2**. This will be achieved through a combination of core and open hole drilling techniques.

The key aims of the Exploration Program include:

- To gain contemporary coal quality and coal processing data of all the known seams available for open cut mining;
- To maximise the Joint Ore Reserves Committee (JORC) recognised reserves / resources;

- To test a small number of pit shell points to accurately determine the most appropriate position of a possible box cut low wall; and
- To provide any additional information required to progress a new contemporary planning approval for the Project.

The 2010 Exploration Program will comprise of approximately 11,200 m of borehole drilling that is anticipated to take around six months to complete. No drilling is currently proposed on any privately owned land.

ASTON
RESOURCES

Community Consultation

A Stakeholder Consultation Strategy has been developed for the Project and is now underway, with the identification of key regulatory and community stakeholders along with the development of stakeholder engagement plans. Engagement with the community will be integrated as part of the Social Impact Assessment which will be conducted for inclusion in an Environmental Assessment document (EA) being prepared for the Project. Company mechanisms will be designed to maximise community involvement in the assessment program. Such information will assist in informing project planning and developing strategies to address issues of relevance to the community.

Aston Resources has recently opened an office within the Boggabri township to provide a key point of contact for the community with Aston personnel.

This newsletter is the first in a series of newsletters that will be distributed to local landholders designed to ensure the local community is adequately informed throughout the Exploration Program and during the preparation of the EA.

Additionally, Hansen Bailey, a specialist environmental consultancy firm based in Singleton, will assist Aston in ensuring the use of best practice environmental management for any exploration works being conducted. Hansen Bailey will also be available to respond to any questions in regard to the Project.

Environmental Monitoring Studies

Aston will also be establishing an environmental monitoring program during 2010 to gather background information on the local environment that will assist in the preparation of the EA. These studies will include, but are not limited to:

- Ecology;
- Aboriginal archaeology & cultural heritage;
- Meteorology;
- Noise;
- Air Quality; and
- Surface water and groundwater resources.

A Land Disturbance Protocol (LDP) has been developed as part of the MOP to identify possible environmental impacts that drilling and environmental monitoring may cause as a result of the drilling activities. In order to ensure the protection of ecological and Aboriginal Archaeological values all exploration drill pads and access tracks are having pre-disturbance Due Diligence Surveys conducted.

All drill pads cleared as part of the Exploration Program will be rehabilitated during the MOP term.

Where To From Here?

Aston will progress through the initial stages of the Exploration Program outlined above during 2010 to assist in the development of a future coal mining operation. Aston is proposing to seek a new Project Approval for the development of an open cut coal mine at Maules Creek which will require the preparation of an EA under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

The preparation of the EA has commenced in parallel with exploration, monitoring and various environmental and community assessment activities.



Figure 2: Maules Creek Coal Project Mining Tenements



Further Information

If you have any questions in regard to the Maules Creek Exploration Program, and environmental assessment activities please either visit Aston personnel at their offices at 121 Merton Street Boggabri, or contact the following:

Lance Muir
 Maules Creek General Manager
 Phone: 02 6749 7800
 Email: mcc@astonresources.com



Nathan Cooper
 Senior Environmental Scientist
 Hansen Bailey
 Phone: 02 6575 2000
 Email: ncooper@hansenbailey.com.au



MAULES CREEK

COAL PROJECT

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER NO.2 SEPTEMBER 2010

INTRODUCTION

Aston Coal 2 Pty Limited (Aston), a subsidiary of Aston Resources Pty Limited (Aston Resources) purchased the Maules Creek Coal Project (the Project) in February 2010 from Coal and Allied Pty Limited. The Project is located approximately 20 km north-east of the township of Boggabri and is predominantly located within the Leard State Forest.

This Newsletter is the second in a series designed to provide the local community with ongoing and current information in relation to the Project and to explain the various stages of the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

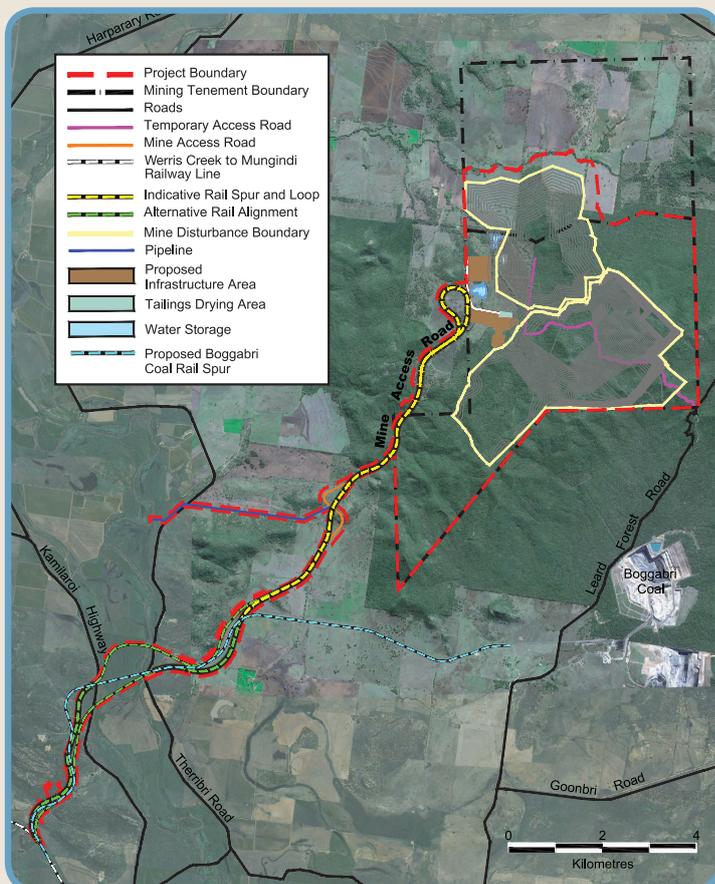


FIGURE 1: PROJECT LAYOUT



The Project

The Project seeks to gain a contemporary Project Approval from the NSW Department of Planning (DoP) for the development of a 21 year open cut coal mining operation and associated infrastructure including:

- The construction and operation of an open cut mining operation extracting up to 13 Million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) Run of Mine (ROM) coal to the Templemore Seam;
- Open cut mining fleet including excavator / shovels and fleet of haul trucks, dozers, graders and water carts utilising approximately 400 permanent employees;
- The construction and operation of a Coal Handling and Preparation Plant (CHPP) with a throughput of 13 Mtpa ROM coal;
- The construction and operation of Tailings Drying Areas;
- The construction and operation of a rail spur, rail loop, associated load out facility and connection to the Werris Creek to Mungindi Railway Line;
- The construction and operation of a Mine Access Road;
- The construction and operation of administration, workshop and related facilities;
- The construction and operation of a water pipeline, pumping station and associated infrastructure for access to water from the Namoi River;
- Power transmission lines and related infrastructure; and
- Installation of communications, water management and reticulation infrastructure.

The general layout of the Project is illustrated in Figure 1.

ASTON
RESOURCES

Planning Approvals Process & Environmental Assessment

Aston submitted an Application for Project Approval under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) to the Minister for Planning in August 2010. As a component of this Application, a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) was prepared from which DoP will issue Environmental Assessment Requirements that will be addressed within the EA for the Project.

Aston is currently preparing a detailed EA to be submitted as part of its' Application for Project Approval. This work is being undertaken by Hansen Bailey, a specialist environmental consultancy firm based in Singleton. Specialist technical studies that are currently being undertaken for inclusion in the EA include:

- Ecology;
- Soils & Land Capability;
- Water Resources (surface & ground water);
- Aboriginal & Non-Aboriginal Heritage;
- Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas;
- Acoustics (noise & blasting);
- Geochemistry;
- Traffic & Transport;
- Visual;
- Economics; and
- Social Impact Assessment.

Exploration Activities

The Maules Creek Coal Project Exploration Program commenced in late May 2010 and involves a tactical analysis of the coal seam deposits located generally within the southern portion of the existing Coal Lease 375.

The Exploration Program will comprise of approximately 11,200 m of borehole drilling consisting of a combination of core and open hole drilling techniques and is anticipated to be completed in late 2010. No exploration drilling is currently proposed on privately owned land.

Stakeholder Consultation

Aston is committed to striving for best practice environmental management by establishing and maintaining open and honest two-way communications with local landholders and other stakeholders.

A Stakeholder Consultation Program for the Project is now underway. The Consultation Program will involve the identification of key stakeholders along with the development of stakeholder engagement plans. Engagement with the community will be integrated into the Social Impact Assessment which will be included in the EA document being prepared for the Project. Such information will assist in project planning and developing strategies to address issues of relevance to the community.

A Planning Focus Meeting for the Project was held in Boggabri on 21 July 2010 with various regulatory authorities represented including: DoP; Industry & Investment NSW; Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water; Narrabri Shire Council; Gunnedah Shire Council; Forests NSW; Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities; and other government regulators.

The Stakeholder Consultation Program is aimed at determining the local community's views on the Project, so that they can be carefully considered in the planning approvals process.

Figure 2 illustrates the process by which Aston and Hansen Bailey will brief the community during the approval's process for the Project.

Environmental Monitoring Studies

Aston is establishing an environmental monitoring program throughout, 2010 designed to gather sufficient background information on the local environment to assist in the preparation of the EA. A meteorological monitoring station was commissioned in May 2010 with additional acoustics, air quality, surface water and ground water monitoring is currently being undertaken.

Where To From Here?

Aston will continue to progress its' Exploration Program during the remainder of 2010 to gain contemporary coal quality and coal processing data required for the development of a future coal mining operation.

The preparation of the EA has commenced in parallel with exploration, monitoring and various environmental and community assessment activities. The specialist's EA technical studies are anticipated to continue throughout 2010, with plans in place to submit the EA to DoP in early 2011.

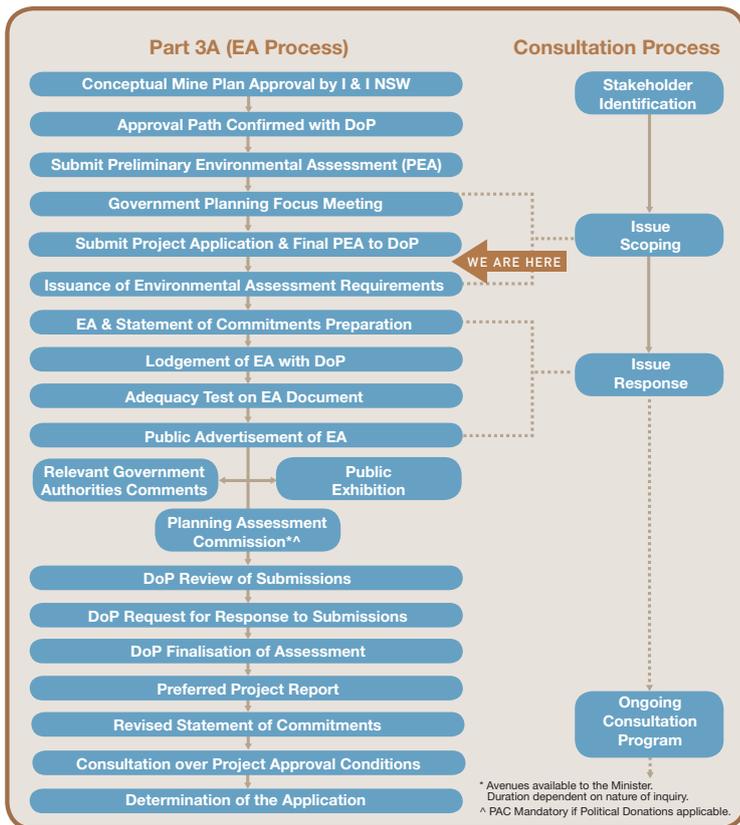


FIGURE 2: PROCESS OVERVIEW

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding the Project or the environmental assessment activities please either visit Aston at their offices at 121 Merton Street, Boggabri, or contact:

Lance Muir
General Manager
Maules Creek
Phone: 02 6749 7800
Email: mcc@astonresources.com

Nathan Cooper
Senior Environmental Scientist
Hansen Bailey
Phone: 02 6575 2000
Email: ncooper@hansenbailey.com.au

