

Tarrawonga Coal Project

Environmental Assessment

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 EA, including a summary of the issues raised by stakeholders. Where relevant, references are provided to the EA sections and/or specialist appendices where the issues are considered and addressed.

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CONSULTATION

3.1.1 Objectives

The level of consultation undertaken during the preparation of this EA is considered to be in accordance with the EARs (Attachment 1) and is adequate and appropriate for a Major Project under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

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

3.1.2 State Government Agencies

Consultation with key NSW State Government agencies in relation to the Project commenced prior to submission of the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment in February 2011. TCPL continues to consult with relevant State Government agencies on a regular basis in relation to the current mining operations at the Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DP&I)

The DP&I has been consulted regularly during the operations of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine specifically in relation to implementation of the existing planning consent requirements, including during assessment of the section 75W modification granted in October 2010 (Section 2.2).

An initial meeting was held with DP&I representatives in January 2011 to provide a Project briefing and to discuss the environment impact assessment and approvals process prior to lodging the Project Application.

The Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment were lodged with the DP&I in February 2011 and the EARs were signed by the Director-General of the DP&I on 7 July 2011.

As the environmental impact assessment of the Project progressed, a second meeting was held with the DP&I on 26 July 2011 to discuss a number of key Project-related issues including:

- refinements to the Project as described in the original Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment, including:
 - relocation of the mine facilities area (Section 2.6.1);
 - refined design of the Northern Emplacement to integrate with the Boggabri Coal Mine (Section 2.5.1);
 - use of a services corridor for the haulage of ROM coal between the Tarrawonga Coal Mine and Boggabri Coal Mine (Section 2.6.2);
 - realignments of Goonbri Road and new intersections (Section 2.6.3); and
 - installation of a low permeability barrier (Section 2.6.4);
- overview of the EA studies and details of the specialist consultants contributing to the EA sections (Sections 1.3 and 1.4);
- design considerations for the permanent Goonbri Creek alignment (Section 2.10.3);
- groundwater licensing requirements (Section 6.4.1 and Appendix A);
- addressing cumulative noise and dust emissions (Sections 4.6 and 4.7);
- Leard State Forest and Project biodiversity offset (Section 4.9);
- potential impacts on agricultural resources (Section 4.3); and
- the general EA consultation programme.

Another meeting was held with the DP&I on 13 September 2011 to present the key findings of the biological surveys and assessments, and to discuss the proposed biodiversity offset strategy for the Project. Representatives from the OEH and the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) also attended the meeting.

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

Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)

The OEH has been consulted regularly during the operations of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, mainly in relation to the existing EPL 12365 (administered by the OEH) and during assessment of the section 75W modification granted in October 2010.

A meeting was initially held with OEH in Armidale on 30 March 2011 to provide a Project briefing, including a discussion on the environmental impact assessment and specialist study programme, the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment and approval timing.

The OEH's comments and specific input to the Project EARs were documented in letters dated 31 March 2011 (NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water [DECCW]) and 8 April 2011 (NSW Heritage Council). A copy of the correspondence is provided in Appendix A of the EARs (Attachment 1).

A second meeting was held with the OEH in Sydney on 13 September 2011 (with DP&I and SEWPaC) to discuss a number of key issues including:

- refinements to the Project as described in the original Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment;
- key findings of the flora and fauna surveys and assessments conducted within the Project area and the proposed biodiversity offset area; and
- the proposed biodiversity offset strategy for the Project.

Key issues raised by the OEH at the meetings were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project EARs documented in the letter dated 31 March 2011 (Attachment 1). In summary these included:

- biodiversity, native vegetation, threatened species, and biodiversity offsets (Sections 4.9 and 4.10);
- noise and air, including construction, operation and transport (Sections 4.6 and 4.7);
- groundwater and surface water (Sections 4.4 and 4.5);
- Aboriginal cultural heritage values (Section 4.13);

- rehabilitation of the final void (Section 5); and
- actions that would be taken to avoid or mitigate impacts or compensate for unavoidable impacts (Sections 4, 5 and 7).

Consultation undertaken with the OEH during the preparation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment is summarised in Appendix K.

Department of Primary Industries

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), including the NSW Office of Water (NOW), and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch were consulted during the preparation of this EA.

Agricultural suitability mapping used for the Agricultural Impact Assessment (Appendix I) was sourced from the DPI. Consultation with the NOW, and the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch of the DPI is discussed below.

NSW Office of Water

The NOW has been consulted regularly during the operation of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, mainly in relation to the existing groundwater licensing requirements (administered by NOW) and during assessment of the section 75W modification granted on 15 October 2010 (DA-88-4-2005 MOD 1).

The NOW's comments and specific input to the Project EARs were documented in their letter dated 28 April 2011. A copy of the correspondence is provided in Appendix A of the EARs (Attachment 1).

A meeting was initially held with the NOW in Tamworth on 12 May 2011 to provide a Project briefing, including background to the existing Tarrawonga Coal Mine operations, and to discuss the scope and data upon which the groundwater and surface water assessments would be based.

A subsequent meeting was held with the NOW on 28 July 2011 to provide an update of the progress of the groundwater and surface water assessment studies.

A presentation of the key findings of the groundwater and surface water assessments was made to the NOW on 23 September 2011. The meeting was attended and presented by the groundwater, surface water and low permeability barrier specialists (i.e. Dr Noel Merrick, Mr Lindsay Gilbert and Mr Allan Watson, respectively). A representative from the Namoi Catchment Management Authority (CMA) also attended the meeting.

These meetings were used to discuss the following:

- existing groundwater/geological data (i.e. exploration drill holes, regional geology mapping, NOW PINNEENA database, groundwater monitoring programs);
- desktop and on-the-ground bore census results;
- groundwater investigation program (i.e. core testwork, vibrating wire and nested piezometer installations, slug/pumping tests and shallow alluvial drill holes);
- regional groundwater model extent and layers;
- transient groundwater model calibration (i.e. a five year period from 2006 to 2010);
- groundwater model predictive runs for the life of the mine and post-mine recovery analysis (Project-only and cumulative);
- proposed approach to groundwater licensing under the *Water Sharing Plan for the Upper and Lower Namoi Groundwater Sources 2003* (the Upper and Lower Namoi Groundwater Sharing Plan) and *Draft Water Sharing Plan for the NSW Murray-Darling Basin Porous Rock Groundwater Sources* (Draft Porous Rock Groundwater Sharing Plan);
- site inspection and reconnaissance (i.e. Goonbri Creek stream condition survey and surface water flow path plan developed in consultation with local landholders);
- design concepts for the permanent Goonbri Creek alignment (i.e. vertical cross-sections, long sections and analysis of hydraulic performance) and the low permeability barrier design;
- 2D seepage modelling results for the low permeability barrier;
- site water balance;
- potential impacts on downstream surface water resources during operations and post-closure, including the final void recovery analysis; and
- mitigation strategies and the proposed Project water management system.

TCPL also consulted separately with the NOW during the preparation of this EA in relation to applying for and obtaining relevant groundwater monitoring licences for the groundwater investigation program works.

Key issues raised by the NOW at the various meetings were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project EARs documented in the letter dated 28 April 2011 (Attachment 1). In summary, these included:

- water sharing plans and their licensing requirements (Section 6.4.1 and Appendices A and B);
- adequate baseline monitoring for calibration of models and to verify predictive assessments (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- potential impacts on surface water and groundwater resources, adjacent licensed water users and groundwater dependent ecosystems (Sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.9 and Appendices A and B);
- mitigation strategies to address unavoidable impacts on surface and groundwater resources, during operations and post-mining (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- measures to maintain upstream flows in Goonbri Creek to the downstream environment (Sections 2.10.3, 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- site water demands, including water infrastructure and vehicles that supply water to site (Section 2 and Appendix B);
- interception of groundwater, including dewatering volumes, zone of depressurisation/drawdown and associated impact and water quality (Section 4.4 and Appendix A), and disposal methods (note: no intercepted groundwater is proposed to be 'disposed' of as part of the Project);
- definition/nomination of alluvial boundary limits including assessment and justification (Section 4.4 and Appendices A and R);
- geomorphological, hydrological and salinity assessment of the surface water and alluvial groundwater systems (Sections 4.4 and 4.5, Appendices A and B and Attachment 4);
- salinity budget, including salt migration to surface water resources and assessment of any salinity discharge changes pre to post-mining (Section 4.5 and Appendix B);
- identification of water resources that are the subject of a water sharing plan that would be affected by the Project (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B); and

- hierarchy of water resources value and dependence, including potential impacts on: yield or flow classes; quality; connectivity between porous/fractured rock, alluvial and surface water sources; environmental dependence; basic landholder rights; and environmental water established and maintained by the water sharing plan rules (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B).

The NOW's submissions in regard to the *Continuation of Boggabri Coal Mine Environmental Assessment* (BCPL, 2010), *Rocglen Coal Mine Extension Project Environmental Assessment* (Whitehaven Coal Limited, 2011), and the *Maules Creek Coal Project Environmental Assessment* (Aston, 2011) have been reviewed. Where relevant to the Project, the issues raised by NOW for these developments have been considered during the preparation of this EA.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch of the Department of Primary Industries

Comments and specific input to the Project EARs from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch of the DPI were documented in a letter dated 19 April 2011. A copy of the correspondence is provided in Appendix A of the EARs (Attachment 1).

A meeting was held with the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch of the DPI in Tamworth on 7 October 2011 to provide a Project briefing, and to describe the environmental studies that have been undertaken (including the aquatic ecology, surface water and biodiversity studies).

Key issues raised by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch of the DPI at the meeting were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project EARs documented in the letter dated 19 April 2011 (Attachment 1). In summary, these included:

- an aquatic ecological assessment of the area which may be directly or indirectly affected by the Project, including quantification of the extent of aquatic and riparian habitat removal and detailed maps showing the proposed realignment of waterways within the Project area (Sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.10 and Appendices A, B and E);
- threatened aquatic species assessment (Appendix E);
- consideration of waterway crossing designs and their effect on the aquatic environment (Section 4 and Appendix R);

- assessment of potential impacts on surface water and groundwater hydrology, erosion and sedimentation, and their associated impacts on aquatic ecology (Section 4 and Appendices A, B and E); and
- compensatory aquatic habitats (Section 4.10 and Appendix E).

Division of Resources and Energy (DRE) (within Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services [DTIRIS])

Consultation with the DRE continues to be undertaken regularly during the operation of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine in relation to the existing mining lease (ML 1579) requirements (administered by the DRE).

TCPL presented the Conceptual Project Development Plan to representatives of the DRE (previously Industry and Investment NSW [I&I NSW]) on 24 February 2011, prior to lodging the Project Application with the DP&I.

The DRE comments and specific input to the Project EARs were documented in a letter dated 19 April 2011. A copy of the correspondence is provided in Appendix A of the EARs (Attachment 1).

In summary, the issues raised by the DRE were in relation to:

- mining titles (Section 6);
- rehabilitation (Section 5);
- potential impacts on agriculture (Appendix I);
- fisheries and aquatic ecological assessment including consideration of threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and waterway crossings (Appendix E);
- hydrological impacts and erosion and sedimentation (Appendix B); and
- compensatory habitats and biodiversity offsets (Sections 4.9 and 4.10 and Appendices E and F).

A meeting was held with representatives of the DRE on 5 September 2011 to provide a Project update and to discuss a number of key issues including:

- refinements to the Project since the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment were lodged;
- the process for obtaining mining titles for the proposed extensions into CL 368 and EL 5967; and

- management of potential impacts on agricultural resources during operations and post-closure, and the proposed rehabilitation and final land use concept for the Project.

The key issues raised by the DRE at the meeting were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project EARs documented in the letter dated 19 April 2011 (Attachment 1).

Roads and Traffic Authority

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority's (RTA) comments and specific input to the Project EARs were documented in a letter dated 11 April 2011. A copy of the correspondence is provided in Appendix A of the EARs (Attachment 1).

The issues raised by RTA in their letter have been considered during the preparation of this EA and specifically addressed in Appendix H.

TCPL consulted with the RTA in August 2011 and subsequently provided the RTA with a copy of the draft road transport assessment report in October 2011.

Namoi Catchment Management Authority

The Namoi CMA's comments and specific input to the Project EARs were documented in a letter dated 7 April 2011. A copy of the correspondence is provided in Appendix A of the EARs (Attachment 1).

In summary, the key environmental issues raised by the Namoi CMA included:

- diversion of Goonbri Creek (Sections 2.6.4 and 2.10.3 and Appendix R) including geomorphologic (Attachment 4 and Appendix B), fauna (Appendix E) and flora (Appendix F) considerations;
- cumulative effects of clearing Leard State Forest and proposed biodiversity offset strategy (Sections 4.9 and 4.10 and Appendices E and F);
- impacts on surrounding agricultural lands (Appendix I);
- groundwater (Appendix A) and surface water (Appendix B) management including diversion of Goonbri Creek and impacts of mine waste rock emplacements and final voids (Sections 4.4 and 4.5);
- adequacy of rehabilitation of the mine site (Section 5) including assessment of soil types, soil stripping, land capability, land use and final landforms (Appendix I); and

- community consultation (Section 3.1.6) including diversion of Goonbri Creek (Sections 2.6.4 and 2.10.3), re-alignment of Goonbri Road (Section 2.6.3) and transport movements/operational hours (Section 2.14).

The Namoi CMA also requested the following documents be considered in this EA (Section 6.6):

- *Extractive Industries Policy* (Namoi CMA, 2009); and
- *Namoi Catchment Action Plan* (Namoi CAP) (Namoi CMA, 2007).

A meeting was held with representatives of the Namoi CMA and NOW on 23 September 2011 and included presentations by the groundwater, surface water and low permeability barrier specialist consultants. In particular the meeting was used to discuss:

- the groundwater model extent, layers and results of transient calibration;
- Project-only and cumulative groundwater model predictions;
- predicted groundwater licensing requirements;
- concept designs and construction considerations for the low permeability barrier;
- 2D seepage modelling results for the low permeability barrier;
- Project water demand, water supply and water licensing;
- potential impacts on downstream surface water resources during operations and post-closure, including the final void recovery analysis; and
- mitigation strategies and the proposed Project water management system.

The key issues raised by the Namoi CMA at the meeting were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project EARs documented in the letter dated 7 April 2011.

In addition to the above, the Namoi CMA was notified as part of the Aboriginal community consultation process (Section 3.1.6).

Where relevant to the Project, the issues raised by Namoi CMA have been considered during the preparation of this EA.

Forests NSW

Forests NSW manage the Leard State Forest in the north of the Project area.

A meeting was held at the Tarrawonga Coal Mine with representatives of Forests NSW on 27 July 2011. In particular the meeting was used to:

- provide an update on the refinements to the Project since the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment were lodged;
- discuss access agreements to the Leard State Forest for the Project;
- discuss the nature and extent of historical forestry and recreation activities in Leard State Forest; and
- discuss recovery of timber and firewood from the parts of Leard State Forest that would be affected by the Project.

No specific Project-related issues or concerns were raised by Forests NSW at the meeting or during subsequent consultation.

3.1.3 Local Government Agencies

Narrabri Shire Council

Prior to lodging the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment, TCPL met with the General Manager of the Narrabri Shire Council in November 2010, and has subsequently met on several occasions to discuss potential Project financial contributions.

A presentation was made by TCPL at the Ordinary Narrabri Shire Council Meeting held on 21 December 2010 to provide an overview of the timing and extent of the proposed Project and potential contributions to the Narrabri Shire.

A copy of the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment was also provided to the Narrabri Shire Council in February 2011.

The Narrabri Shire Council is represented on the Tarrawonga Community Consultative Committee (CCC) (Section 3.2.1).

As the Project is located in the Narrabri LGA (Figure 1-1), consultation with the Narrabri Shire Council has also been undertaken during the preparation of this EA, particularly in relation to the following studies:

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Appendix K);
- Non-Aboriginal Heritage Assessment (Appendix L);
- Road Transport Assessment (Appendix H); and
- Land Contamination Assessment (Appendix Q).

In addition, TCPL continues to implement the existing Contributions Plan and road maintenance agreements with the Narrabri Shire Council in accordance with the Development Consent (DA-88-4-2005) for the Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

A representative of the Narrabri Shire Council also attended the site reconnaissance undertaken as part of the Surface Water Assessment and, with local landholders, provided input to the development of the surface water flow paths figure presented in this EA (Appendix B).

Gunnedah Shire Council

As only the southern portion of the existing sized ROM coal road transport route to the Whitehaven CHPP is located within the Gunnedah LGA (Figure 1-1), consultation with the Gunnedah Shire Council undertaken during the preparation of this EA was primarily in relation to the Road Transport Assessment (Appendix H).

A copy of the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment was provided to the Gunnedah Shire Council in February 2011.

As described in Section 3.2.1, the Gunnedah Shire Council is represented on the Tarrawonga CCC. In addition, Whitehaven continues to implement the existing Contributions Plan and road maintenance agreements with the Gunnedah Shire Council in accordance with the Development Consent for the Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

A meeting was held with the General Manager of the Gunnedah Shire Council on 29 September 2011. At the meeting, TCPL provided an update on the refinements to the Project since the Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment were lodged, and discussed the potential affects of the Project on the local road network (i.e. reduction in mine-related traffic on Blue Vale Road) and marginal increase in the Project workforce.

Association of Mining Related Councils

The Association of Mining Related Councils consists of a number of member councils including the Narrabri Shire Council and Gunnedah Shire Council. Project information was provided to the Association of Mining Related Councils in August 2011 including the Preliminary Environmental Assessment.

3.1.4 Federal Government Agencies

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC)

TCPL lodged a Referral under the EPBC Act with SEWPaC on 18 April 2011. A Project meeting with SEWPaC was subsequently held on 6 May 2011 to discuss the Project and the Referral under the EPBC Act.

On 23 May 2011 a delegate of the Commonwealth Minister declared the Project to be a 'controlled action' for the purposes of the EPBC Act due to potential impacts on the following controlling provisions under Part 3 of the EPBC Act:

- listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A); and
- listed migratory species (sections 20 and 20A).

The delegate of the Commonwealth Minister also determined on 23 May 2011 that the proposed action is to be assessed by accredited assessment under the EP&A Act pursuant to section 87(4) of the EPBC Act.

Appendix B of the EARs (Attachment 1) requires information about the controlled action and its relevant impacts and matters outlined in Schedule 4 of the EPBC Regulations to be addressed in this EA.

A copy of the requirements in Appendix B of the EARs (including Schedule 4 of the EPBC Regulations) is provided in Appendix G, along with references to where the applicable content is provided in this EA.

A presentation and discussion of the findings of the environmental impact assessments including the flora and fauna assessments and proposed biodiversity offset proposal was made to SEWPaC, DP&I and OEH in Sydney on 13 September 2011 (Section 3.1.2).

3.1.5 Infrastructure Owners/Service Providers

Essential Energy (formerly Country Energy)

Essential Energy owns and maintains an 11 kV electricity transmission line along the southern and eastern extent of the Project (Figure 2-3). This line services several farm residences within the Goonbri and Bollol Creek catchments.

TCPL consulted with Essential Energy on 17 November 2010 and 22 August 2011 to provide background information regarding the Project, confirm the capacity and location of existing 11 kV electricity transmission line, and to discuss the requirement to re-align sections of the line during the Project life.

In subsequent consultation, Essential Energy indicated that the approval process and requirements for re-alignment of the 11 kV electricity transmission line would be as described in *Operational Procedure – General Terms and Conditions for the Supply of Electricity to New Subdivisions and Site Developments* (CEOP2015) (Essential Energy, 2011).

3.1.6 Public Consultation

Local Community and Affected Landowners

During the preparation of this EA, Project-specific newsletters were produced by TCPL in April 2011, July 2011 and September 2011 and distributed to inform the local community of the Project Application and to provide updates on progress of the EA and specialist studies. Copies of the Project newsletters are provided in Attachment 5.

A Project community information day was also held at Boggabri Bowling Club on 7 October 2011, to provide an opportunity for the local community to ask TCPL, and the specialists preparing the EA studies, any specific queries or issues of concern relating to the Project. The Project community information day was attended by representatives of:

- TCPL;
- Heritage Computing;
- Gilbert & Associates;
- Allan Watson Associates;
- FloraSearch; and
- Resource Strategies.

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

- cumulative impacts of the Project plus the other nearby mining proposals on the acoustic, air quality and visual amenity of nearby privately owned properties (Sections 4.6, 4.7 and 4.12 and Appendices C, D and J, respectively);
- potential impacts of the Project on local groundwater and surface water use (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- the proposed Project noise and air monitoring programme (Sections 4.6 and 4.7, respectively);
- final void depth, location, rehabilitation strategy and potential long-term impacts on local surface and groundwater resources (Sections 4.4 and 4.5 and Appendices A and B);
- long-term performance of the permanent Goonbri Creek alignment, permanent flood bund and the low permeability barrier (Section 4.5 and Appendices B and R);
- condition assessment of vegetation communities mapped within the Project area and proposed biodiversity offset area (Section 4.9 and Appendix F);
- agricultural capability of the land within the proposed biodiversity offset area (Section 4.3 and Appendix I); and
- design and construction of the realigned sections of Goonbri Road (Section 4.11 and Appendix H).

TCPL continues to liaise with the local community through the established Tarrawonga Coal Mine CCC. A special CCC meeting was held on 2 March 2011 to initiate discussions relating to the Project with the CCC members (Section 3.2.1). At subsequent CCC meetings held on 4 May 2011 and 27 July 2011 TCPL provided updates on the EA and specialist studies and described the refinements to the Project since the Preliminary Environmental Assessment was lodged in February 2011.

In addition, a number of local landholders participated in the bore census undertaken in May 2011 as part of the Groundwater Assessment (Appendix A).

Local landholders also attended the site reconnaissance undertaken in March 2011 as part of the Surface Water Assessment and provided input to the development of the surface water flow paths figure presented in Appendix B.

TCPL has consulted with landholders in the immediate vicinity of the mine with regard to property acquisition where the environmental studies indicate that the predicted air quality and noise impacts may exceed key criteria.

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* (NSW Department of Environment and Conservation [DEC], 2005a). In accordance with these guidelines, TCPL notified the following parties regarding the Project:

- OEH Dubbo Environmental Protection and Regulation Group (EPRG);
- Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC);
- The Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983*;
- Native Title Services Corporation Limited (NTSCORP Limited);
- The National Native Title Tribunal;
- Namoi CMA; and
- Narrabri Shire Council.

The above listed parties were requested to advise TCPL 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 above notifications, TCPL also identified Aboriginal stakeholders with which TCPL had previously consulted in regard to the Project area or nearby Whitehaven operations. These stakeholders were notified and invited to participate in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment.

In addition to the written notifications, a notice was placed in the Namoi Valley Independent (2 November 2010) seeking registrations from interested Aboriginal parties. The notice invited Aboriginal persons or groups who wished to be consulted in relation to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment process for the Project to contact TCPL.

Registrations of interest to the notifications and Public Notice were received from the following Aboriginal stakeholders:

- Aboriginal Native Title Consultants;
- Bigundi Biame Traditional People;
- Bullen Bullen Consultants;
- Cacatua Culture Consultants;
- Giwiir Consultants;
- Gunida Gunyah Aboriginal Corporation;
- Minnga Consultants;
- Min-Min Aboriginal Corporation; and
- Red Chief LALC.

All stakeholders who registered were invited to participate in the assessment.

A detailed description of the consultation undertaken with the registered Aboriginal parties/groups during the preparation of this EA is provided in the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Appendix K) and Section 4.13.

Namoi Catchment Water Study

The Namoi Catchment Water Study is currently under development and is steered by a Ministerial Oversight Committee (MOC) appointed by the (then) NSW Minister for Mineral Resources. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the MOC appointed an independent expert (Schlumberger Water Services) to carry out the study, which released the Phase 2 (of 4) Report in August 2011. The MOC has also appointed a Technical Advisor and liaises with a Stakeholder Advisory Group.

TCPL provided a briefing to the MOC during the study establishment phase and has provided several briefings to the independent expert for development of the numerical model for the study. A representative of TCPL has also been nominated as an alternative member representing coal companies on the Namoi Catchment Water Study Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Community Groups

TCPL has consulted with the Maules Creek Community Council (MCCC), including discussions regarding the Project and the key findings of the specialist studies at the community information day held on 7 October 2011.

The MCCC has provided a detailed submission on the *Continuation of Boggabri Coal Mine Environmental Assessment* (BCPL, 2010) and the *Maules Creek Coal Project Environmental Assessment* (Aston, 2011).

Where relevant to the Project, the issues raised by the MCCC during consultation and in the recent submissions have been considered during the preparation of this EA.

Staff, Contractors and Unions

Approximately 86 full-time on-site personnel (including TCPL staff and contractors) are currently employed at the Tarrawonga Coal Mine. In addition to the mechanisms described in Section 3.2 below, a number of meetings and briefings for employees have been conducted during the development of this EA.

3.2 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT

3.2.1 Community Consultative Committee

The Tarrawonga CCC is established and operates in accordance with the Development Consent (DA-88-4-2005).

The Tarrawonga CCC meets on a quarterly basis and along with TCPL representatives consists of community representatives including local landholders, affected landowners and Narrabri Shire Council and Gunnedah Shire Council representatives.

During the preparation of this EA, briefings on the progress of the Project-related specialist studies were provided and discussed with the members. In summary, issues raised relating to the Project during the Tarrawonga CCC meetings included:

- diverting/changing the Goonbri Creek watercourse (Section 2.10.3 and Appendices A, B and R);
- potential effects on farming (Appendix I) and quality of life, for example dust (Appendix D);
- night-lighting impacts (Appendix J);
- location of mine infrastructure outside of floodplain (Section 2.1.3);
- potential access to the Boggabri Coal Mine Infrastructure Facilities for example, use of the CPP and rail loop (Section 2.5.1);
- continued use of previously approved mitigation measures, for example the 6 m high bund wall (Section 2.6.2, Section 4.6 and Appendix C);
- potential air quality impacts and dust management (Section 4.7 and Appendix D);
- final land use and rehabilitation (Section 5); and
- consideration of shallow groundwater monitoring as part of the groundwater investigation program (Section 4.4 and Appendix A).

3.2.2 Website and Complaints Hotline

TCPL maintains a website within the Whitehaven web domain (www.whitehavencoal.com.au) for the general public to keep up to date with the operations at the Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

The web domain is a significant source of information including:

- mine operations and asset details;
- environmental management, monitoring and reporting information;
- CCC records;
- investor details;
- career opportunities; and
- contact details.

The TCPL web address is provided below:

http://www.whitehavencoal.com.au/operations/tarrawonga_mine.cfm

The TCPL web address also hosts Project-related information, including:

- Project Application and supporting Preliminary Environmental Assessment; and
- Project newsletters.

TCPL has established a dedicated complaints hotline (0429 497 730) that is available 24 hours, 7 days a week for community members who wish to lodge complaints or who have enquiries in relation to TCPL's activities.

3.2.3 Community Programmes and Sponsorships/Scholarships

TCPL plays an active role in local communities through financial contributions to regional events and facilities, including:

- contributions to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter service;
- contribution to the upgrade of the Taylor Oval and its associated facilities in Boggabri;
- various donations and contributions to the Boggabri Hospital, Boggabri pre-school, Boggabri Pool, Gunnedah South School, Gunnedah Urban Landcare, Gunnedah Show Society, Wean Race Club; and
- contributions to the Country Education Foundation of Australia, Dorothea Mackellar Memorial Society (National Poetry Competition), and the Gunnedah Shire Council Community Scholarship Fund.

TCPL would continue to provide funding contributions to community programmes and groups during the life of the Project.

3.2.4 Media

Advertisements regarding the Aboriginal heritage consultation and the Project Community information day appeared in the local newspaper (i.e. *The Courier* and/or *Namoi Valley Independent*).

3.2.5 Public Reporting

In accordance with the Development Consent (DA-88-4-2005) for the Tarrawonga Coal Mine, TCPL produces an Annual Review (previously referred as Annual Environmental Management Reports [AEMRs]) to review the environmental performance of the development. Copies of the previous AEMRs are available on the TCPL website (Section 3.2.2).

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

3.2.6 Suppliers

The existing Tarrawonga Coal Mine supports a number of local and National suppliers, including:

- P.E Harris Earthmoving Pty Limited (scraper fleet);
- Jackson Earthmoving Pty Ltd (dozers);
- Brown's Tyre Service Pty Ltd;
- G & B Ward Earthmoving Pty Ltd (rehabilitation activities);
- Orica Limited (explosives); and
- Toll Transport Pty Ltd (sized ROM coal transport).

Approval of the Project would allow TCPL to continue to support local and National suppliers of the mining operations.