

# Annual Review

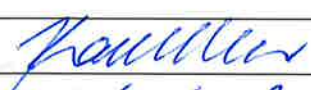
## Vickery Coal Project

Name of operation	Vickery Coal Project
Name of operator	Whitehaven Coal Mining Ltd
Development consent/project approval number	SSD-5000
Name of holder of development consent/project approval	Whitehaven Coal Mining Ltd
Mining lease number	ML 1471, CL 316
Name of holder of mining lease	Whitehaven Coal Mining Ltd (ML 1471), Whitehaven Coal Mining Pty Ltd (CL 316)
Water licence number	Not applicable <sup>1</sup>
Name of holder of water licence	Whitehaven Coal Mining Ltd
MOP start date	Not applicable
MOP end date	Not applicable
Annual review start date	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2017
Annual review end date	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2017

I, Jamie Frankcombe, certify that this audit report is a true and accurate record of the compliance status of Vickery Coal Project for the period January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2017, and that I am authorised to make this statement on behalf of Whitehaven Coal Mining Pty Ltd.

*Note. a) The Annual Review is an 'environmental audit' for the purposes of section 122B (2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Section 122E provides that a person must not include false or misleading information (or provide information for inclusion in) an audit report produced to the Minister in connection with an environmental audit if the person knows that the information is false or misleading in a material respect. The maximum penalty is, in the case of a corporation, \$1 million and for an individual, \$250,000.*

*b) The Crimes Act 1900 contains other offences relating to false and misleading information: section 192G (Intention to defraud by false or misleading statement—maximum penalty 5 years imprisonment); sections 307A, 307B and 307C (False or misleading applications/information/documents—maximum penalty 2 years imprisonment or \$22,000, or both).*

Name of authorised reporting officer	Jamie Frankcombe
Title of authorised reporting officer	Director- Whitehaven Coal Mining Ltd
Signature of authorised reporting officer	
Date	12/02/2018

<sup>1</sup> Vickery Coal Project Environmental Assessment referenced a number of water licences for the Project however development, and hence utilisation of licences, is yet to commence.

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## 1 STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The compliance status of the Vickery Coal Project as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Statement of Compliance**

Were all conditions of the relevant approval(s) complied with? <sup>1</sup>	
Development Consent SSD-5000	Yes
EPBC 2012/6263	Yes
Coal Lease 316	Yes
ML 1471	Yes
Authorisation 406	Yes

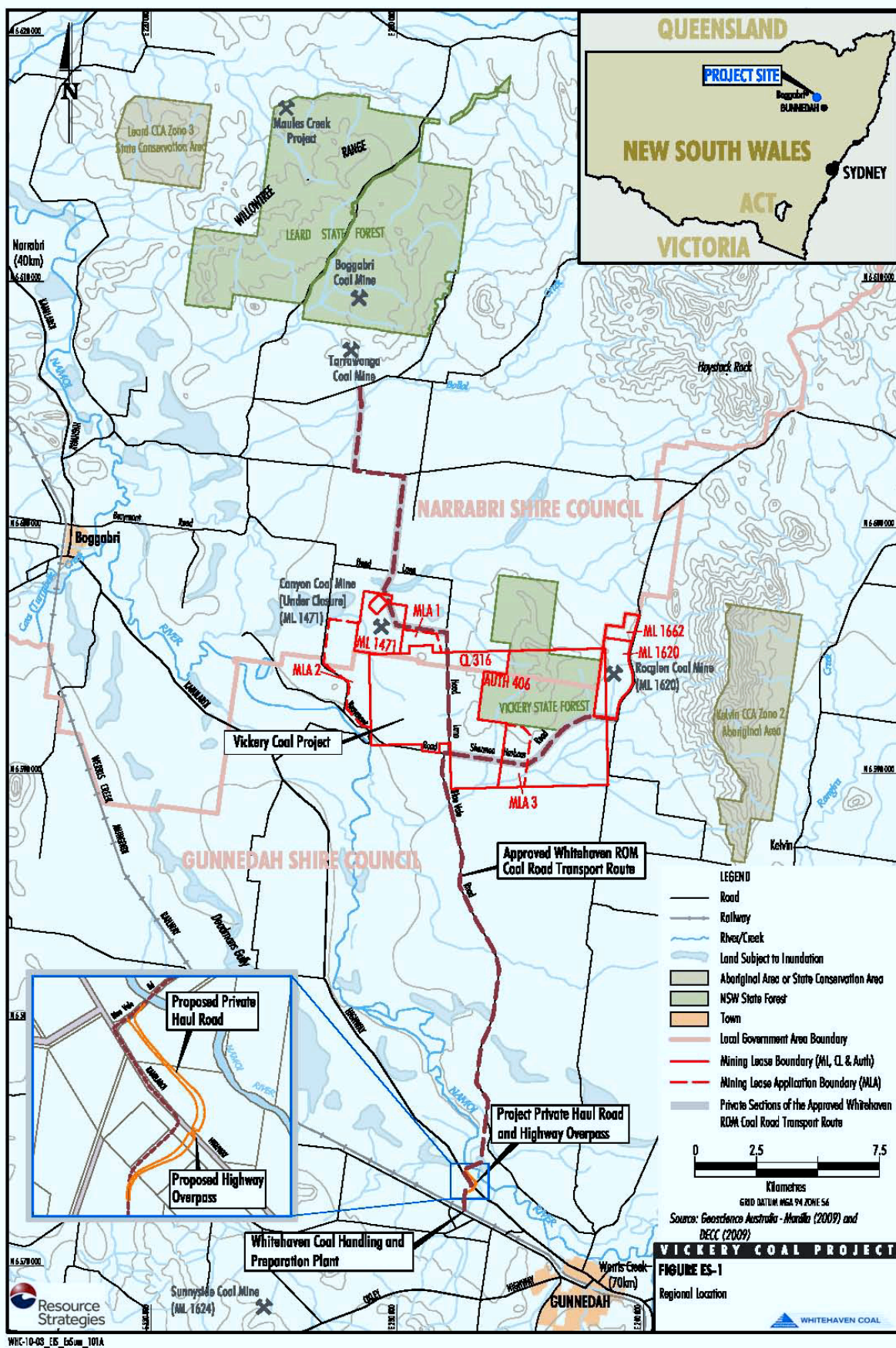
<sup>1</sup> Vickery Coal Project Environmental Assessment referenced a number of water licences for the Project, however development, and hence utilisation of licences, is yet to commence.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

This is the third Annual Review (AR) produced for the Vickery Coal Project (VCP), and has been prepared in accordance with Condition 4 (Schedule 5) of Development Consent SSD-5000. The AR follows the format required by the NSW Government Annual Review Guideline (October, 2015).

The VCP is located approximately 15 kilometres (km) south-east of Boggabri and approximately 25 km north of Gunnedah in New South Wales (Refer Figure 1). Mining operations at the previous Vickery Coal Mine ceased in 1998, when approval from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) was granted to suspend operations and complete rehabilitation works on-site. Rehabilitation activities at the open cut and waste emplacement areas are now complete and the site is currently in closure. Whitehaven acquired 100 percent (%) of Coal Lease (CL) 316 and Authorisation (AUTH) 406 from Rio Tinto Limited in January 2010.

The current VCP (SSD 5000) to which this AR relates was granted on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Operations are yet to commence under SSD 5000.



## 2.1 Mine Contacts

The management personnel responsible for the VCP and their relevant contact details are as follows:

- Mr Nigel Wood, General Manager, Open Cut Operations - oversees open cut operations for the Whitehaven Group. Contact: (02) 6741 9309.
- Mrs Madeline Whitten, Environmental Officer– oversees day to day environmental performance across the site. Contact: (02) 6740 5009

## 3 APPROVALS

### 3.1 Tenements, Licences, and Approvals

Table 2 identifies the approvals in place for the VCP at the end of the reporting period, the issuing / responsible Authority, dates of issue, expiry date and relevant comments.

**Table 2 - Tenements, Licences and Approvals**

Issuing / Responsible Authority	Type of Lease, Licence, Approval	Date of Issue	Expiry	Comments
Department of Planning and Environment (DP&E)	Development Consent SSD-5000	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2044	
Department of the Environment	EPBC 2012/6263	17 <sup>th</sup> May 2012		
Division of Resources and Geoscience	Authorisation 406	29 <sup>th</sup> November 1988	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2019	
Division of Resources and Geoscience	ML 1471	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2000	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	

Issuing / Responsible Authority	Type of Lease, Licence, Approval	Date of Issue	Expiry	Comments
Division of Resources and Geoscience	Coal Lease 316	5 <sup>th</sup> June 1988	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2033	Renewal took effect on 27 May 2012

## 4 OPERATIONS SUMMARY

### 4.1 Mining Operations

No mining operations have commenced for the VCP (refer Table 3).

**Table 3 – Production Summary**

Material	Approved Limit	Previous Reporting Period (actual)	This Reporting Period (actual)	Next Reporting Period (forecast)
Waste Rock/Overburden	1,269 Mbcm <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0
ROM Coal/Ore	4.5 Mtpa <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0
Coarse Reject	n/a	0	0	0
Fine Reject (Tailings)	n/a	0	0	0
Saleable Product	n/a	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Environmental Impact Statement – Life of Mine

<sup>2</sup> Development Consent SSD-5000

### 4.2 Next Reporting Period

Operations forecast for the next reporting period are expected to be limited to environmental monitoring.

## 5 ACTIONS REQUIRED FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL REVIEW

There were no actions required from DP&E in relation to the 2016 Annual Review.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE**

The following sub-sections document the implementation and effectiveness of the various control strategies adopted at the VCP.

### **6.1 Air Quality**

#### **6.1.1 Criteria**

The air quality criteria applicable to the VCP are specified in SSD-5000 Schedule 3, Tables 8, 9 & 10, which are summarised below.

- Acceptable mean annual increase in deposited dust – 2 g/m<sup>2</sup>/month.
- Mean annual dust deposition (all sources) – 4 g/m<sup>2</sup>/month.
- Mean annual Total Suspended Particulate (TSP) matter (all sources) concentration – 90 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
- Mean annual PM<sub>10</sub> particulate level – 30 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
- 24 hour average PM<sub>10</sub> particulate level – 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

#### **6.1.2 Dust Monitoring**

Construction of the VCP is yet to commence and as such no air quality monitoring for compliance purposes is undertaken.

#### **6.1.3 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No key environmental performance/management issues were identified during the reporting period.

#### **6.1.4 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No improvements are proposed within the next reporting period.

### **6.2 Biodiversity**

#### **6.2.1 Threatened Flora**

Investigations into the occurrence of threatened flora within the Project Approval Area were undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment by Niche Environment and Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd, between November 2011 and January 2013.



The investigation identified one threatened flora species, Winged Peppercress (*Lepidium Monoplocoides*) which has potential to be affected by the Project. The location within the Project Approval Area where the Winged Peppercress was identified and an additional area where the species was identified outside the Project Approval Area have been fenced to provide protection from livestock.

### **6.2.2 Threatened Fauna**

Investigations into the occurrence of threatened fauna within the Project Approval Area were undertaken by Niche Environment and Heritage Pty Ltd as part of the Environmental Assessment between the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2011. These investigations identified that 25 threatened fauna species could potentially be affected by the Project. These species and their potential for impact are available in the EIS available on the Whitehaven Coal website.

Construction of the VCP is yet to commence and as such no monitoring of threatened fauna was conducted during the reporting period.

### **6.2.3 Biodiversity Offsets**

Tarrawonga Coal Mine (TCM) Revised Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) draft was submitted to DPE for NSW approval on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017. TCMs approved Biodiversity Offset Strategy includes the Willeroi West BOA for maintaining and improving 1,660ha of native woodland and forest adjacent to the south eastern boundary of Mount Kaputar National Park. VCPs approved Biodiversity Offset Strategy includes the Willeroi East (Offset Area 1) BOA for maintaining and improving 1,671ha of native woodland and forest adjacent to Willeroi West BOA and the south eastern boundary of Mount Kaputar National Park; as well as Offset Areas 2 to 5 covering 391.5ha located to the south and east of Boggabri.

A summary of the VCP Biodiversity Offset Strategy (BOS) implementation, undertaken in conjunction with the neighbouring Tarrawonga Coal BOS, during the reporting period follows:

#### ***Offset Security Management***

During the reporting period, WHC continued to negotiate with OEH and NPWS regarding the potential to transfer parts of the Willeroi BOA to National Parks Estates as per the letter from NPWS dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 2017 outlining the WHC BOAs that NPWS were interested in.

WHC have requested extensions from DPE and DoEE for the timing of securing these offset areas until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 to allow negotiations on which BOAs to be transfer to Parks Estate to finalise with the residual BOAs to be secured via conservation agreements.

### ***Infrastructure Management***

During the reporting period, maintenance of signage and gates at the Willeroi BOA were undertaken as required to continue to restrict unauthorised access and prevent inadvertent livestock grazing.

### ***Weed Management***

WHC coordinated routine formal weed monitoring/inspections undertaken across Willeroi BOA in February, April, August and November 2017. The priority weeds for control were noted as general broadleaf weeds (Biosecurity Act 2015 priority and general biosecurity duty species) as well as legacy noxious weeds inherited from previous owner's management regimes such as Coolatai Grass, St John's Wort, Sweet Briar and Common Prickly Pear. The weed monitoring/inspections ensure that timely and prioritised weed control is undertaken on a seasonal basis with the spatial information directly given to spraying contractors to identify what, where, when and how to target appropriate resources across the Willeroi BOA for weed control.

During the reporting period, WHC implemented a comprehensive weed control program across the Willeroi BOA including 409.3ha treated between January and December 2017 targeting primarily Coolatai Grass and St John's Wort infestations as well as Broadleaf and Pear species as required. Only appropriately qualified and experienced weed contractors (AQF3 accreditation or higher for use of herbicide) were engaged to undertake weed control works for WHC.

### ***Feral Animals Management***

WHC coordinated routine formal feral animal monitoring across the Willeroi BOA in February, April, August and November 2017. The adoption of a "monitor, measure and manage" approach to feral animal management will allow WHC to implement adaptive management in response to changes being measured through monitoring in feral animal abundance specific to the different geographical regions of the Willeroi BOA. Feral animal monitoring utilises the relevant methodologies for specific feral animals generally in accordance with the NSW DPI *Monitoring Techniques for Vertebrate Pests* (2005) so that a

range of methods can be used such as transects/spotlighting, sand pads, camera traps where practicable and relevant to specific offset areas/properties. Monitoring demonstrated that there were some feral animal species in moderate abundance such as the European Red Fox, Feral Pig and Feral Goat. The feral animal monitoring ensures that timely and prioritised feral animal control is undertaken on a seasonal basis identifying what, where, when and how to target appropriate resources across the Willeroi BOA for feral animal management.

During the reporting period, WHC implemented a comprehensive feral animal control program across the Willeroi BOA with fox baiting and pig trapping undertaken in March (6 Foxes and 1 Wild Dog baited from 24 baits presented and 32 Feral Pigs trapped), June (no baiting undertaken to allow Feral Goat harvesting and 4 Feral Pigs trapped), August (6 Foxes baited from 32 baits presented and 9 Feral Pigs trapped) and November 2017 (5 Foxes and 2 Wild Dogs baited from 32 baits presented and 1 Feral Pig trapped). The Feral Goat harvesting during the reporting period resulted in 185 captured with the Feral Goats on sold to an abattoir. Only appropriately qualified and experienced feral animal contractors (appropriate feral animal management qualifications, NSW gun licence and pesticide accreditation where relevant) were engaged to undertake feral animal control works for WHC.

### ***Revegetation Management***

In accordance with the draft BMP revegetation schedule focusing on cleared non-native grassland (former cultivation) and derived native grasslands; WHC organised 293ha of due diligence assessments of potential Box Gum and non-EEC/CEEC Woodland revegetation across the Willeroi West BOA investigating potential ecological constraints and heritage sites within areas required to be disturbed as part of the revegetation ground preparation process. During the reporting period, revegetation ground preparation (tractor and excavator augured holes to a depth >0.3m every 10m to relieve compaction, improve permeability and infiltration to increase sub-surface soil moisture ahead of tree planting) was completed over 79ha of the Willeroi West BOA between September and October 2017. The ecology due diligence identified 87ha of natural regeneration revegetation not requiring additional active revegetation of the cleared non-native grassland and derived native grasslands.

### ***Heritage Management***

An aboriginal heritage survey was undertaken in January 2017 in accordance with the draft Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Strategy for the Willeroi BOA which identified 18 new aboriginal heritage sites (19 sites in total at Willeroi BOA) that required 1.8km of identification/demarcating fencing to be installed.

#### ***Habitat Management***

During the reporting period, no habitat augmentation was undertaken in accordance with the draft BMP.

#### ***Soil & Erosion Management***

During the reporting period, no specific treatment or soil erosion mitigation works were undertaken.

#### ***Grazing Management***

Willeroi BOA was destocked at the end of 2015 and during the reporting period, grazing was continued to be excluded from the Willeroi BOA.

#### ***Bushfire Management***

Fuel load monitoring was undertaken in October 2017 with the overall Willeroi BOA grassland fuel coverage assessed as 50% (considered 'Normal' on the CFA Grassland Curing Guideline, July 2010) and the average fuel load of 2.5 t/ha considered to be low (July 2010). In accordance with the draft BMP, WHC undertook maintenance and upgrade of fire break tracks in February 2017 and then again in August/September 2017 with 44.7km and 79.6km of tracks respectively maintained to a zero fuel barrier standard across the Willeroi BOA.

#### ***Monitoring Program***

During the reporting period, the first ecological monitoring program of the Willeroi BOA was designed and implemented in accordance with the draft BMP. Vegetation and habitat monitoring was completed in October 2017; while bird survey for winter migratory species was undertaken in August 2017 with the full fauna monitoring undertaken in November 2017.

### ***Independent Biodiversity Audit***

During the reporting period, an Independent Biodiversity Audit for TCM was undertaken during July 2017 with some administrative non-compliances identified regarding Willeroi BOA to be addressed with submission of a Conservation Bond in February 2018 and the draft BMP to be updated to address heritage management.

#### **6.2.4 Weeds**

Weed spraying was undertaken during the reporting period over two days in June 2017. Spot spraying was used to target African Boxthorn and Prickly Pear.

#### **6.2.5 Feral Animal Control**

Feral animals are not a significant land management issue within the project boundary, and are limited to isolated occurrences of pigs, foxes, hares and rabbits. In view of the low frequency of occurrence, and in the absence of an extensive programme by all surrounding landowners, no broad scale feral animal control programme was considered warranted during the reporting period. Whitehaven Coal personnel will continue to monitor feral animal occurrences and implement necessary control programmes if and when necessary.

#### **6.2.6 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No key environmental performance/management issues were identified during the reporting period.

#### **6.2.7 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No improvements are proposed within the next reporting period.

### **6.3 Blasting**

#### **6.3.1 Criteria**

Blasting criteria for the VCP are noted in SSD-5000, however they are not relevant for this reporting period, as no blasting has been undertaken onsite.

#### **6.3.2 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No blasts were undertaken during the reporting period.

#### **6.3.3 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No blasting is proposed within the next reporting period.

## **6.4 Operational Noise**

### **6.4.1 Criteria**

SSD-5000 details the noise criteria for site operations and coal haulage, however there was no requirement for noise monitoring during the reporting period.

### **6.4.2 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No key environmental performance/management issues were identified during the reporting period.

### **6.4.3 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No improvements are proposed within the next reporting period.

## **6.5 Aboriginal Heritage Management**

### **6.5.1 Environmental Management Measures**

An assessment of the cultural heritage of the mine site was conducted by Landskape in 2012.

A total of 34 Aboriginal cultural heritage sites (including those sites that had been previously recorded and were reinspected as part of the field surveys) were identified during the field surveys of the Project mining area. See Figure 2.

Six sites were identified in the proposed haul road and overpass Project area. The sites comprise 25 scatters of stone artefacts, one containing axe-grinding grooves, and 15 isolated finds of stone artefacts.

The majority of sites located within the Project mining area were associated with the open plains and the banks of ephemeral streams or drainage lines. Lower artefact densities occurred along the ridge top and upper slope areas. Stone assemblages are generally small in size ranging from single artefacts to 67 artefacts discovered in one scatter.

A number of small to medium artefact scatters were located in the proposed haul road and overpass area on the banks of the Namoi River. The largest scatter (AHIMS site number 20-4-0037) comprised approximately 57 flakes and one core.

### **6.5.2 Consultation**

No soil stripping has been undertaken for the VCP. No additional Aboriginal cultural heritage items have been discovered and no consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders was conducted during the reporting period.

### **6.5.3 Environmental Management Measures**

Given the status of the site the environmental management measures for Aboriginal Heritage are limited to ensuring that any identified heritage sites remain undisturbed.

### **6.5.4 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No key environmental performance/management issues were identified during the reporting period.

### **6.5.5 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No improvements are proposed within the next reporting period.



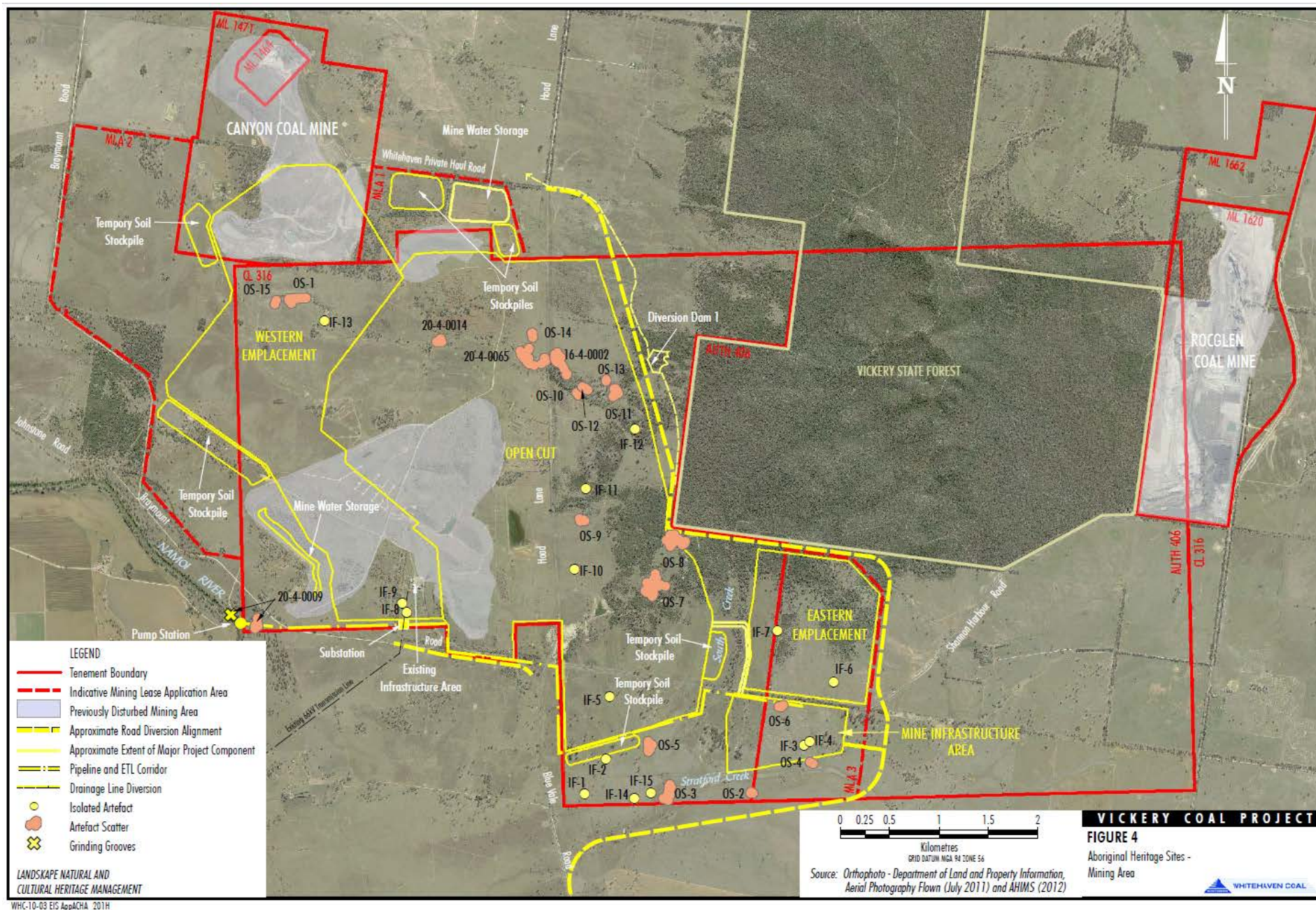


Figure 2- Aboriginal Heritage Sites- Proposed Mining Area



## **6.6 Natural Heritage**

There are no features of natural heritage within the Project Approval area and hence no specific management procedures are required.

## **6.7 Bushfire Management**

### **6.7.1 Environmental Management Measures**

VCP is located within an area of cleared agricultural land. Whitehaven Coal personnel liaise with the local Rural Fire Service, as required.

There have been no bushfire incidents on, or adjacent to, the mine site since SSD-5000 as granted.

### **6.7.2 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No key environmental performance/management issues were identified during the reporting period.

### **6.7.3 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No improvements are proposed within the next reporting period.

## **6.8 Waste Management**

### **6.8.1 Environmental Management Measures**

No waste generating activities were undertaken at the VCP during the reporting period.

### **6.8.2 Key Environmental Performance/Management Issues**

No key environmental performance/management issues were identified during the reporting period.

### **6.8.3 Proposed Improvements to Environmental Management**

No improvements are proposed within the next reporting period.

## 6.9 Meteorological Monitoring

Meteorological monitoring is undertaken south of the Project Area as shown in EA Figure 4.14. A summary of weather data for the reporting period is shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 - 2017 Summary Weather Data**

Month (2016)	Rain (mm)	Minimum Wind Speed (m/s)	Average Wind Speed (m/s)	Maximum Wind Speed (m/s)	Average Wind Direction (degrees)
Jan	69.6	0	2.0	16	185
Feb	8	0	1.7	11.5	194
Mar	67.8	0	2.1	9.7	121
Apr	8.2	0	1.9	7.9	148
May	63.6	0	1.1	6.9	151
Jun	49.4	0	1.5	6.8	159
Jul	10.6	0	1.0	6	188
Aug	18.4	0	1.3	7.5	197
Sep	10.2	0	1.3	12.6	240
Oct	74.4	0	1.8	9.6	182
Nov	93.2	0	1.8	11.6	111
Dec	36	0	1.5	10.2	215

## 6.10 Environmental Performance Summary

An environmental performance summary for VCP is presented in Table 5 below.

**Table 5 – Environmental Performance**

Aspect	Approval Criteria / EIS Prediction	Performance during the reporting period	Trend / Key Management Implications	Implemented / proposed management actions
Biodiversity	EPBC 2012/6263 and 3(33) of SSD-5000, requiring the translocation and protection of the Winged Peppercross within the disturbance boundary.	The area of Winged Peppercross has been successfully fenced off and signposted for protection.	Nil	Upon approval of the Biodiversity Management Plan the translocation of the Winged Peppercross will be undertaken.

## **7 WATER MANAGEMENT**

### **7.1.1 Surface Water Management**

No surface water monitoring was undertaken during the reporting period, as construction of the VCP is yet to commence.

### **7.1.2 Discharges**

There were no wet weather discharges during the reporting period.

### **7.1.3 Water Take**

During the reporting period no water was used on site.

## **7.2 Groundwater Management**

### **7.2.1 Environmental Performance/Management**

No groundwater monitoring for compliance purposes has been undertaken during the reporting period, as construction of the VCP is yet to commence.

There has been no requirement for provision of any compensatory water supply during the reporting period, as construction of the VCP is yet to commence.

## **7.3 Rehabilitation Performance during the Reporting Period**

### **7.3.1 Status of Mining and Rehabilitation**

No disturbance has yet been undertaken for the VCP, and as such there has been no requirement for rehabilitation (refer Table 6).

**Table 6 – Rehabilitation Status**

Mine Area Type <sup>1</sup>	Previous Reporting Period (Actual) 2016 (ha)	This Reporting Period (Actual) 2017 (ha)	Next Reporting Period (Forecast) 2018 (ha)
A. Total Mine Footprint	0	0	0
B. Total Active Disturbance	0	0	0
C. Land Being Prepared for Rehabilitation	0	0	0
D. Land Under Active Rehabilitation	0	0	0
E. Completed Rehabilitation	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Refer Annual Review Guideline (p.11) for description of mine area types.

### **7.3.2 Post Rehabilitation Land Uses**

Two final rehabilitation land uses are to be established at Vickery, being land suitable for grazing (780 ha), and native forest/woodland (1,360 ha).

### **7.3.3 Renovation or Removal of Buildings**

No renovation or removal of buildings occurred during the reporting period.

#### **7.3.4 Other Rehabilitation Undertaken**

No additional rehabilitation of exploration areas, infrastructure, shafts, adits, dams, fence lines or bunds occurred during the reporting period.

#### **7.3.5 Departmental Sign-off of Rehabilitated Areas**

Departmental sign-off has not been requested for any rehabilitated areas.

#### **7.3.6 Variations in Activities against MOP/RMP**

Not applicable.

#### **7.3.7 Trials, Research Projects and Initiatives**

No rehabilitation trials, research projects or other initiatives were undertaken during the reporting period.

#### **7.3.8 Key Issues to Achieving Successful Rehabilitation**

No specific issues in achieving rehabilitation success have been determined to date.

#### **7.4 Actions for Next Reporting Period**

No specific rehabilitation actions are proposed for the next reporting period.

### **8 COMMUNITY**

No complaints were received during the 2017 reporting period, consistent with the previous reporting period.

The latest Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meeting for the site during the reporting period was held in March 2017.

Community contributions are managed in accordance the Whitehaven Coal Donations and Sponsorship Policy.

## **9 INDEPENDENT AUDIT**

No independent audit was undertaken of VCP during the reporting period. The first scheduled independent audit will take place within 2 years from the commencement of construction.

## **10 INCIDENTS AND NON-COMPLIANCES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD**

### **10.1 Reportable Incidents**

No environmental incidents occurred at VCP during the reporting period.

### **10.2 Non-compliances**

There were no non-compliances found during the reporting period.

### **10.3 Regulatory Actions**

No regulatory actions were received for the VCP during the reporting period.

## **11 ACTIVITIES TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD**

The following measures will be continued, or implemented, in the next reporting period to improve the environmental or community performance of the operation:-

- Continued undertaking of CCC meetings;
- Continued weed and feral animal control, as required; and
- Continued environmental monitoring and reporting, as required.