

# **VICKERY EXTENSION PROJECT**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

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# **SECTION 3**

## **CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

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### 3 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

#### 3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONSULTATION

This section describes the consultation undertaken prior to and during the preparation of this EIS, including a summary of the issues raised by stakeholders. Where relevant, references are provided to the EIS sections and/or specialist appendices where the issues are considered and addressed.

##### 3.1.1 Objectives

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

Open communication with stakeholders has been encouraged during consultation. Consultation conducted during the preparation of this EIS has provided the opportunity to identify issues of concern or interest to stakeholders.

##### 3.1.2 State Government Agencies

Whitehaven consults with relevant NSW State Government agencies on a regular basis in relation to its existing operations in the region.

Consultation with key NSW State Government agencies in relation to the Project commenced prior to submission of the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* in January 2016.

##### *Department of Planning and Environment*

A meeting was held with DP&E representatives in January 2016 to provide a Project briefing and to discuss the EIS and approvals process prior to lodging the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment*.

The *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* were lodged with the DP&E in January 2016. SEARs for the Project were issued in 19 February 2016 and revised in July 2018 following finalisation of the Project rail spur and mine layout (Attachment 1).

As the environmental impact assessment of the Project progressed, update meetings were held with the DP&E on 28 January 2016, 7 June 2016, 20 December 2016, 10 April 2017 and 12 June 2018 to discuss a number of key Project-related issues including:

- overview of the EIS studies and details of the specialist consultants contributing to the EIS sections (Sections 1.5 and 1.6);
- the rail spur analysis (Sections 2.4.3 and 6.1.8);
- consultation with local landholders, local councils, the wider community and government agencies;
- measures to address noise, blasting and dust emissions (Sections 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9);
- rehabilitation measures, the proposed final landform design and land use for the Project area (Sections 5.3 and 5.4); and
- the Biodiversity Offset Strategy (Section 4.11.4 and Appendix F).

In addition to the above meetings, other discussions and communications were conducted with the DP&E during the preparation of this EIS, and during the assessment of the SVC for the Project (in December 2015 and January 2016).

On 16 February 2018 Whitehaven requested confirmation that the Project be considered a “*pending or interim planning application*” under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation (Savings and Transitional) Regulation, 2017*. On 12 March 2018 the DP&E confirmed the Project is considered a “*pending or interim planning application*” (as reflected in the SEARs [Attachment 1]).

##### *Office of Environment and Heritage*

Consultation undertaken with the OEH during the preparation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) is summarised in Appendix G.

The OEH’s comments and specific input to the Project SEARs were documented in a letter dated 11 February 2016. A copy of the correspondence is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1).

A meeting was held with the OEH in Dubbo on 10 April 2017 (with the DP&E) to discuss a number of key Project-related issues including:

- refinements to the Project since the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* was lodged in January 2016;
- key findings of the biodiversity surveys and assessments conducted within the Project area;
- key findings of the Aboriginal cultural heritage surveys and assessment; and
- the proposed Biodiversity Offset Strategy for the Project.

Key issues raised by the OEH at the meeting were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project SEARs documented in the letter dated 11 February 2016 (Attachment 1). In summary these included:

- biodiversity impacts and associated offset requirements (Section 4.11 and Appendix F); and
- assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage impacts (Section 4.15 and Appendix G).

Discussions and meetings were held with the OEH during preparation of the Flood Assessment in October 2016, December 2016 and February 2017 to discuss the scope and modelling methodology, application of the Draft FMP, conceptual design of the Project rail spur and predicted impacts.

Discussions were also held with the OEH during assessment of the SVC for the Project in December 2015 and January 2016.

Correspondence was sent to the OEH Heritage Division and OEH North West Region on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

### **Environment Protection Authority**

Whitehaven consults with the EPA regularly as part of the operational management of Whitehaven's existing operations, mainly in relation to existing EPLs for these operations.

The EPA's comments and specific input to the Project SEARs were documented in a letter dated 9 February 2016. A copy of the correspondence is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1).

A briefing letter was sent to the EPA on 31 March 2016 providing information on the Project and offering a meeting to discuss the Project and environmental assessments.

A meeting was held with the EPA in Armidale on 8 February 2017 to provide an update on the Project description and discuss the environmental assessments, with particular emphasis on the noise, air quality and surface water assessments. The discussion addressed the following:

- refinements to the Project since the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* was lodged in January 2016;
- the scope and data upon which the groundwater, surface water, flooding, noise, air and biodiversity studies (Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F, respectively) would be based;
- minimising noise impacts through the implementation of operational controls during adverse weather conditions (Section 4.7.3);
- potential impacts associated with blasting (Section 4.8);
- predicted noise levels in the vicinity of the Project rail spur (Section 4.7); and
- predicted dust levels due to the Project (Section 4.9).

Key issues raised by the EPA at the meeting were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project SEARs documented in the letter dated 9 February 2016 (Attachment 1). In summary these included:

- the scope of the assessment for blasting impacts and proposed management measures and vibration monitoring (Section 4.8);
- assessment of low frequency noise (Section 4.7);
- sediment dam design (Section 4.5); and
- waste management (including tyre disposal) (Section 2.13).

Correspondence was sent to the EPA on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

### *Department of Primary Industries*

A briefing letter was sent to the DPI on 31 March 2016 providing information on the Project and offering a meeting to discuss the Project and environmental assessments.

The DPI's comments and specific input to the Project SEARs were documented in a letter dated 12 February 2016. A copy of the correspondence is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1).

A summary of the consultation is provided below.

### *Department of Industry – Water*

A meeting was held with the DI Water (previously DPI Water) in Tamworth on 8 February 2017 to provide a Project briefing, to discuss the scope and data upon which the Groundwater Assessment, Surface Water Assessment and Flood Assessment were based, and present the findings of the impact assessments. The meeting was attended by groundwater specialist Dr Noel Merrick of HydroSimulations. The discussion included the following:

- existing groundwater/geological data and the Project groundwater investigation program;
- groundwater modelling approach;
- proposed approach to licensing under the NSW *Water Management Act, 2000*;
- proposed design of the Project Water Management System and site water balance considerations;
- flood modelling for the Project (including the Project rail spur); and
- mitigation strategies for impacts on downstream surface water resources.

Key issues raised by the DI Water were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project SEARs (Attachment 1). In summary, these included:

- consideration of the objects and requirements of the NSW *Water Management Act, 2000* (Attachment 6 and Appendices A and B);
- adequate baseline monitoring to calibrate models, verify predictive assessments and identify potential impacts on groundwater resources and adjacent licensed water users (Section 4.4 and Appendix A); and

- identification and assessment of surface watercourses and associated riparian vegetation that may be affected by the Project (Sections 4.5, 4.11 and Appendices B and F).

Correspondence was sent to the DI Water on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

### *Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture*

A meeting was held with the DPI Agriculture in Tamworth on 9 May 2017 to provide a Project briefing, to discuss the scope and data upon which the Agricultural Impact Statement was based, and present the findings of the assessment. The discussion included the following:

- existing agricultural enterprises and land uses in the Project area and surrounds;
- soil surveys conducted to characterise the soil resources in the Project mining area;
- conceptual design of the Project rail spur in consideration of existing agricultural enterprises;
- potential impacts on agriculture as a result of the Project; and
- mitigation measures for managing impacts on soil resources and agricultural activities.

Key issues raised by the DPI Agriculture were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project SEARs (Attachment 1). In summary, these included:

- consideration of the cumulative impacts on agriculture due to the development of the Approved Mine and the Project (Appendix H);
- consideration of socio-economic impacts on agricultural enterprises (Appendices H, J and R);
- detailed description in the EIS of consultation activities undertaken for the Project and Project alternatives considered (this section, Appendix R and Section 6); and
- detailed description of rehabilitation activities and schedule and soil management (Appendix H and Section 5).

Correspondence was sent to the DPI Agriculture on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

### *Department of Primary Industries – Lands*

Discussions have been held with the DPI Lands in Tamworth to provide information on the Project. The discussions included the following:

- identification of travelling stock reserves and Crown reserves in the vicinity of the Project;
- impacts to the public road network; and
- impacts to public access to reserves and Crown Land as a result of the Project.

Key issues raised by the DPI Lands were generally consistent with the comments and input to the Project SEARs (Attachment 1). In summary, these included:

- consideration of the impacts to Crown reserves and how access to these areas will be maintained (Appendix H and Section 2);
- consideration of impacts to road users due to closure of parts of Braymont Road and Shannon Harbour Road (Appendix I); and
- consideration of impacts to Travelling Stock Reserves (Appendix H and Section 2).

### *Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries*

A Project summary letter presenting the findings of the Aquatic Ecology Assessment was sent to the DPI Fisheries in May 2017.

Correspondence was also sent to the DPI Fisheries on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

### *Division of Resources and Geoscience in the Department of Planning and Environment (formerly Division of Resources and Energy)*

On 7 April 2017, the administration of legislation allocated to the Minister for Resources was transferred to the DP&E.

Whitehaven regularly consults with the Division of Resources and Geoscience in the Department of Planning and Environment (DRG) as part of the operational management of Whitehaven's other operations.

Whitehaven presented the Conceptual Project Development Plan (CPDP) to representatives of the DRG<sup>1</sup> on 16 December 2015, prior to lodging the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* with the DP&E. The DRG provided its endorsement of the CPDP to the DP&E on 25 January 2016.

The DRG's comments and specific input to the Project SEARs were documented in a letter dated 12 February 2016. A copy of the letter is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1). In summary, the issues raised by the DRG were in relation to:

- rehabilitation and mine closure, including proposed rehabilitation objectives (Section 5);
- consideration of final void and emplacement options, final land use, performance standards and completion criteria, monitoring and research and post-closure maintenance (Section 5); and
- disposal of coal reject material (Section 2.9 and Appendix M).

Whitehaven has continued consultation with the DRG throughout the preparation of the EIS, including a site inspection in May 2016, as part of the DRG's assessment of the strategic value of the Project resource.

A Project summary letter presenting the findings of relevant assessments was sent to the DRG in April 2017.

Correspondence was sent to the DRG on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

### *NSW Roads and Maritime Services and Transport for NSW*

The RMS and Transport for NSW comments and specific input to the Project SEARs were documented in letters dated 19 February 2016 and 15 February 2016, respectively. A copy of both letters is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1). Key issues raised by the RMS and Transport for NSW include:

- detailed assessment of the Project on the capacity, efficiency and safety of the rail network, including level crossings (Sections 2.7.3, Section 4.13 and Appendix I);

<sup>1</sup> At that time, the DRG was the Division of Resources and Energy, however all consultation is referred to as "DRG" in this section.

- construction and operational impacts of the Project on the road network (Section 4.13 and Appendix I); and
- appropriate consultation is undertaken with relevant agencies (this section).

Briefing letters were sent to the RMS and Transport for NSW on 31 March 2016 providing information on the Project and offering a meeting to discuss the Project and environmental assessments.

An on-site meeting was held with the RMS on 1 March 2017 to discuss the proposed rail spur overpass of the Kamilaroi Highway. Following the meeting, RMS provided written comments to Whitehaven on 27 April 2017 regarding:

- the requirement for the conceptual overpass design to include a road safety audit prepared by an independent road safety auditor;
- the requirement for the maintenance of Safe Intersection Sight Distance at nearby rural property accesses to the Kamilaroi Highway;
- potential road line markings and upgrades for the Kamilaroi Highway at the location of the rail overpass;
- clearance requirements for the rail overpass;
- consideration of flood impacts to the Kamilaroi Highway as a result of the overpass construction (Appendix C);
- the requirement for Whitehaven to enter into a Works Authorisation Deed with the RMS; and
- the requirement for the operator of the rail spur to enter into a Safety Interface Agreement with the Narrabri Shire Council and the RMS.

Communications between Whitehaven and the RMS continued during August and September 2017 discussing refinements to the proposed rail spur overpass location.

The RMS's comments have been considered in the conceptual design of the rail overpass and in the impact assessments for this EIS. Whitehaven will further consider the RMS's comments during the detailed design of the rail spur, and acknowledges the requirements for the Work Authorisation Deed and the Safety Interface Agreement.

Project summary letters presenting the findings of relevant assessments were sent to the RMS and Transport for NSW in May 2017.

Correspondence was sent to the RMS and Transport for NSW on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project in the form of a briefing paper. An offer to arrange a briefing to discuss the changes was also extended.

Transport for NSW responded in a letter dated 17 July 2018, providing suggestions for inclusion in the EIS. In summary, these included:

- consideration of impacts on road networks including the safe and efficient transport of inbound freight, road and transport of inbound freights, road transport of ROM coal from nearby mines and operational traffic (Section 2.14 and Appendix I);
- detailed design of the rail spur, rail loops and rail bridges;
- rail operational requirements (Section 2.7, Section 4.12 and Appendix I); and
- appropriate consultation undertaken with relevant agencies and infrastructure owners (this section).

Whitehaven would continue to consult with the RMS and Transport for NSW following lodgement of the EIS, determination of the Project and detailed design of the Project rail spur and Kamilaroi Highway rail overpass.

#### **Other State Government Agencies**

The following State Government agencies were provided with a letter summarising the Project and an offer for a Project briefing in March 2016:

- NSW Heritage Division (within the OEH);
- NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS);
- North West Local Land Service;
- Dams Safety Committee; and
- NSW Health.

These State Government agencies did not provide specific input to the SEARs and did not request a meeting with Whitehaven to discuss the Project.

Whitehaven provided the NSW Heritage Division (within the OEH) with an update on the Project and a summary of the Historic Heritage Assessment in May 2017.



Correspondence was sent to NSW Health and the North West Local Land Service on 5 and 6 July 2018, respectively, providing an update on the Project in the form of a briefing paper. An offer to arrange a briefing to discuss the changes was also extended.

### 3.1.3 Local Government Agencies

#### *Gunnedah Shire Council*

The Gunnedah Shire Council is represented on the Community Consultative Committees (CCCs) for Whitehaven's existing/approved mining operations in the region, including the Approved Mine and the Tarrawonga, Rocglen and Sunnyside Coal Mines.

Whitehaven implements contributions plans and road maintenance agreements (e.g. for Blue Vale Road) with the Gunnedah Shire Council in accordance with the arrangements for these existing mines.

The Gunnedah Shire Council's comments and specific input to the Project SEARs are documented in a letter dated 12 February 2016. A copy of the letter is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1).

Meetings were held with the Gunnedah Shire Council in February, May and November 2016 and July 2018 to provide updates on the refinements to the Project since the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* was lodged, discuss the potential effects and benefits of the Project and discuss the results of relevant environmental assessments (e.g. transport and socio-economic).

Whitehaven and the Gunnedah Shire Council also discussed updates to the Approved Mine Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) to incorporate the Project.

#### *Narrabri Shire Council*

The Narrabri Shire Council is represented on the CCCs for Whitehaven's existing/approved mining operations in the region, including the Approved Mine and the Tarrawonga and Maules Creek Coal Mines.

The Narrabri Shire Council's comments and specific input to the Project SEARs is documented in a letter dated 19 February 2016. A copy of the letter is attached to the SEARs (Attachment 1).

Meetings were held with the Narrabri Shire Council in April, May and November 2016 and July 2018 to provide updates on the refinements to the Project since the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* was lodged to discuss the potential effects and benefits of the Project and to discuss the results of relevant environmental assessments (e.g. transport and socio-economic).

Whitehaven and the Narrabri Shire Council also discussed updates to the Approved Mine VPA to incorporate the Project.

### 3.1.4 Federal Government Agencies

#### *Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy*

Whitehaven lodged a Referral under the EPBC Act with the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy (DEE) on 12 February 2016. A Project meeting with the DEE was subsequently held on 2 March 2016 to discuss the Project and the Referral under the EPBC Act.

During assessment of the Referral under the EPBC Act, Whitehaven provided additional information to address a number of information requests made by the DEE. The DEE subsequently declared the Project a Controlled Action on 14 April 2016 (EPBC 2016/7649).

Following the refinement of the Project rail spur design, Whitehaven subsequently requested a variation of the proposal to take action in accordance with section 156B of the EPBC Act. The DEE accepted the variation request on 17 February 2017.

Whitehaven met with the DEE in June 2018 to provide an update on the Project and the assessment of potential impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).

Following revisions to the Project rail spur alignment and removal of the Blue Vale Open Cut from the Project mine plan, Whitehaven requested a further variation to the referred action on 28 June 2018. The DEE accepted the variation request on 17 July 2018.

### 3.1.5 Federal and State Ministers

As part of pre-lodgement EIS consultation, Whitehaven met with a number of Ministers, and/or Ministerial staff, at the Commonwealth and State levels, to provide a description of the Project.



### 3.1.6 Infrastructure Owners and Service Providers

#### *Siding Springs Observatory*

The Siding Springs Observatory is located approximately 115 km to the south-west of the Project. As such, the Project is within the Dark Sky Region, as defined in the *Dark Sky Planning Guideline* (DP&E, 2016).

A briefing package was sent to the Australian Astronomical Observatory on 31 March 2016 providing information on the Project and offering a meeting to discuss the Project and environmental assessments. An update on the Project and a summary of the Visual Assessment were sent to the Australian Astronomical Observatory in May 2017.

Correspondence was sent to Siding Springs Observatory on 5 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

#### *Essential Energy*

Essential Energy operates a 66 kV powerline near the south-western extent of the Project (Figure 1-3). This line previously serviced the existing infrastructure area at the Vickery Coal Mine (Section 2.4.1) and would be used to service the mine infrastructure area (Section 2.4.6).

Whitehaven consulted with Essential Energy in November 2012 in the context of the Approved Mine to confirm the capacity and location of the existing powerline and to discuss the requirement to re-align sections of the line to service the mine infrastructure area.

Essential Energy indicated that the approval process and requirements for realignment of the powerline would be as described in Chapter 5 of the *National Electricity Rules* (Australian Energy Market Commission, 2012) and *Operational Procedure – General Terms and Conditions for the Supply of Electricity to New Subdivisions and Site Developments* (Essential Energy, 2011).

The *National Electricity Rules Version 78* (Australian Energy Market Commission, 2016) was released on 4 February 2016 and supersedes the 2012 version.

Whitehaven consulted further with Essential Energy during August and September 2017 to confirm the detailed design requirements for the power supply works.

Correspondence was sent to Essential Energy on 6 July 2018, providing an update on the Project description and scope of assessment.

#### *TransGrid*

TransGrid operates a 132 kV powerline that runs generally parallel, and to the west of, the Kamilaroi Highway.

Whitehaven consulted with TransGrid in August and September 2017 to confirm clearance requirements between the proposed rail spur and the powerline.

#### *Australian Rail Track Corporation and Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator*

Product coal from the Project would be transported by rail on the network owned by the ARTC.

Meetings were held with the ARTC and Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator (HVCCC) to provide a Project briefing and to discuss the proposed rail spur and Project use of the existing rail network.

The ARTC wrote to Whitehaven on 25 January 2018, describing the process to obtain access to the rail network and providing advice that the Project can be accommodated within its network.

Correspondence was sent to the ARTC and the HVCCC on 6 July 2018, providing an update on the Project in the form of a briefing paper. An offer to arrange a briefing to discuss the changes was also extended, noting that further consultation with the ARTC would be undertaken regarding the Project rail spur.

#### *Other Infrastructure Owners and Service Providers*

In addition to those described above, Whitehaven consulted with the following infrastructure owners and service providers during preparation of the EIS:

- Pacific National;
- Aurizon;
- Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group;
- Port Waratah Coal Services; and
- Telstra.

### 3.1.7 Nearby Mining Companies and Tenement Holders

Whitehaven regularly meets with Idemitsu regarding operation of the Boggabri, Tarrawonga and Maules Creek Coal Mines.

The Development Application Area is covered by PEL 1 held by Australian Coalbed Methane Pty Limited and operated by Santos (QNT) Pty Ltd on behalf of the titleholder.

Whitehaven wrote to Santos (QNT) Pty Ltd in May 2017 to provide a Project briefing and notify it of its intention to lodge a Development Application for the Project.

### 3.1.8 Public Consultation

#### *Local Community and Landowners*

A Project-specific newsletter was produced by Whitehaven in April 2016 and distributed to inform the local community and to provide an update on progress of the EIS and specialist studies.

During development of the EIS, Whitehaven met with a number of local landholders to discuss the Project and relevant environmental assessments. Key issues raised by local landholders related to potential noise and air quality impacts (Appendices D and E), visual amenity impacts (Appendix L), changes to flooding characteristics (Appendix C) and potential impacts to the Namoi River and groundwater resources (Appendices A and B).

The issues raised by the landholders were used to inform the conceptual design of the rail infrastructure and management measures to mitigate potential noise impacts associated with mining activities and rail transport.

Whitehaven presented updates on the Project and environmental studies at the Boggabri Business and Community Progress Association meetings during 2016 and 2017. Key issues raised during these meetings related to potential changes to flooding characteristics and potential impacts on Namoi River flow (Appendix C).

Project-specific fact sheets have been prepared by Whitehaven and will be distributed to the local community to provide a summary of the Project and key environmental assessments conducted as part of the EIS during the public exhibition period.

A number of local landholders also provided agricultural land use information as part of the Agricultural Impact Statement (Appendix H).

#### *Aboriginal Community*

Aboriginal community consultation was undertaken in accordance with the OEH's policy *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010* (NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water [DECCW], 2010a) and clause 80C of the NSW *National Parks and Wildlife Regulation, 2009*.

In accordance with these guidelines, Whitehaven notified the following parties regarding the Project in September 2015:

- Dubbo OEH Environmental Protection and Regulation Group office;
- Gunnedah Shire Council;
- Narrabri Shire Council;
- National Native Title Tribunal;
- Native Title Services Corporation Limited (NTSCORP);
- North West Local Land Services (previously the Namoi Catchment Management Authority);
- Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC); and
- Office of the Registrar, *Aboriginal Land Rights Act, 1983*.

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

A large number of Aboriginal stakeholders were identified as having registered an interest in the community consultation process associated with the Approved Mine. All existing Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) who had previously registered an interest in the Approved Mine were automatically registered for the consultation process associated with the Project.

In addition to the written notifications, a public notice was placed in the *Namoi Valley Independent* (8 October 2015) seeking registrations from interested Aboriginal parties.

Subsequent to the completion of the registration process and following further mine planning, Whitehaven identified additional potential alignments for the proposed rail spur. Accordingly, a second registration process was undertaken.

This second registration process undertook the same approach outlined above, including the following:

- Project notifications were distributed 2 December 2015;
- registration invitations (and registration letters to existing RAPs) were distributed 22 December 2015; and
- a public notice was published in the *Namoi Valley Independent* on 7 January 2016.

As a result of the registration process undertaken for the Project, a total of 68 RAPs registered an interest in the Project. A list of the RAPs for the Project is provided in Table 3-1.

All RAPs were invited to participate in the assessment and were provided with a copy of the ACHA for review and comment on 18 March 2016.

Following revisions to the Project rail spur alignment and removal of the Blue Vale Open Cut from the Project mine plan, Whitehaven distributed a revised draft ACHA to all RAPs on 29 June 2018.

A detailed description of the consultation undertaken with the RAPs during the preparation of this EIS is provided in the ACHA (Appendix G) and is summarised in Section 4.15.

### 3.1.9 Social Impact Assessment

The Social Impact Assessment for the Project was prepared by Elliott Whiteing (Appendix R).

In addition to the consultation described above, and for the Approved Mine, Elliott Whiteing conducted consultation specifically for the Social Impact Assessment. This included interviews held in July and August 2018 with local landowners, Gunnedah Shire Council, Narrabri Shire Council, local service providers (e.g. NSW RFS, aged care, education, emergency and health services, real estate agents), local businesses, business groups and the Red Chief LALC.

## 3.2 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT

### 3.2.1 Community Consultative Committee

A CCC has been established for the Approved Mine. The first CCC meeting was held on 4 June 2015 where it was agreed that the CCC would meet annually prior to construction of the Approved Mine, with extraordinary meetings held as required.

CCC meetings relating to the Project were held on 11 April 2016, 15 June 2016 and 16 November 2016, 1 March 2017 and 6 August 2018. Updates on the Project and environmental studies were provided to the CCC during these meetings. The March 2017 meeting included a tour of the Project site for CCC members.

The CCC consists of representatives from the local community, Narrabri Shire Council, Gunnedah Shire Council and Whitehaven.

### 3.2.2 Media

Whitehaven maintains a website within the Whitehaven web domain ([www.whitehavencoal.com.au](http://www.whitehavencoal.com.au)) for the general public to keep up to date with the operations at its existing mines as well as new developments, including the Project.

The web domain is a significant source of information including:

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

The Whitehaven web address also hosts Project-related information, including the *Project Description and Preliminary Environmental Assessment* for the Project and Project newsletters and fact sheets.

**Table 3-1**  
**List of Registered Aboriginal Parties for the Project**

Registered Aboriginal Party	
Aboriginal Native Title Consultants	Bill Mitchell
AGA Services	Brian Draper
AT Gomilaroi Cultural Consultancy	Bronwyn Spearim
Bigundi Biame Traditional People	Cindy Foley
Bullen Bullen Consultants	Dulcie Robinson
Buwarra Consultants	Jacko Woodbridge
Cacatua Culture Consultants	James Foley
Deslee Talbott Consultants	Jordan Green
Edgerton-Kwiemble Environmental Heritage and Cultural Aboriginal Corporation	Judith Walters
Giwiir Consultants	Kim Mitchell-Robinson
Gomeroi Namoi Traditional Owners	Linda Roser
Gomeroi Native Title Applicants	Lorraine Robinson
Gomery Cultural Consultants	Madeline McGrady
Goomeroi Yorta Yorta	Marvonnia Welsh
Gunida Gunyah Aboriginal Corporation	Matthew Green Senior
Gunjeewong Cultural Heritage Corporation	Nakita Silver
Gunnedah Elders Justice Committee	Natasha Rodgers
Hunter Valley Cultural Consultants	Patricia Reynolds
Min-Min Aboriginal Corporation	Raymond Welsh Junior
Minnga Consultants	Reg Talbott
Muswellbrook Cultural Consultants	Robert Miller
Ngurrimbaa-Gunidjaa Traditional Owners	Robert Mitchell-Robinson
Red Chief LALC	Roger Matthews
T&G Culture Consultants	Ronald Long
T’N’L Site Trackers	Sonny Fitzroy
Traditional Owner of Gomeroi Country	Stacey Walters
Upper Hunter Heritage Consultants	Stephen Matthews
White Cockatoo	Tyan Silver
W&Y Rodgers Consultant	Loretta Long
Yinarr Cultural Services	Veronica Long
Alfred Priestley	Darryl Crowley
Anthony Munro	Jinbai McGrady
Aunty Joan Suey	Wade Natty
Aunty Joyce Dorrington	Shirley Talbott

The Whitehaven website will continue to be updated with Project information following the commencement of public exhibition of the EIS.

Advertisements regarding the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation appeared in the local newspaper (i.e. *Namoi Valley Independent*).

Whitehaven also commissioned roadside billboards within the Project region to notify the public of the Project.

### 3.2.3 Community Programs and Sponsorships/Scholarships

Whitehaven has a Donations and Sponsorship Policy in place which directs its discretionary support of charities and community organisations that benefit health, education, whole of community and/or representative level Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sporting achievements within the reach of its operations.

Whitehaven 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.

Whitehaven would continue to provide funding contributions to community programs and groups during the life of the Project.

### 3.2.4 Public Reporting

In accordance with the Project Approvals and relevant mining tenement conditions for the Tarrawonga, Rocglen, Canyon, Maules Creek and Sunnyside Coal Mines and the Approved Mine, Whitehaven produces an Annual Review to report the environmental performance of each of the mining operations (and, in the case of the Canyon Coal Mine, rehabilitation activities).

Copies of Annual Reviews are available on the Whitehaven 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).

### 3.2.5 Suppliers

Whitehaven's existing operations support a number of local, regional and National suppliers, including:

- Pete Brien Roofing & Plumbing Pty Ltd.
- Pursehouse Rural.
- Hayman's Electrical.
- Sicada Fire & Safety Pty Ltd.
- Quirindi Engineering.
- Civeo Pty Ltd.
- Duncan Spraying Pty Ltd.
- Marathon Tyres Pty Ltd.
- Mackellar Excavations Pty Ltd.
- Stripes Engineering Services Pty Ltd.
- Country Mile Signs.
- Werris Creek Concreting & Excavation.
- Specialised Civil Services Pty Ltd.
- Willow Tree Gravels Pty Ltd.
- BOON Haulage & Earthmoving.
- Pirtek Tamworth.
- Johnstone Concrete & Landscape Supplies.

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