

Wongawilli Colliery Modification 2

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Background

Wongawilli Colliery (the Colliery) is a well-established underground coal mine owned by Wollongong Coal Limited (Wollongong Coal), approximately 15 km south west of Wollongong. Mining activities have occurred at the Colliery since 1916, principally producing coking coal for steel production. The Colliery was placed in care and maintenance in May 2019; however, the site is still being managed to ensure it remains in a safe condition.

Wollongong Coal proposes to extend the life of the Colliery by 5 years to enable continued development of the approved North West Mains Development (NWMD) to access the existing Wongawilli Ventilation Shaft 1 and minor surface infrastructure (Modification 2). Approval of the modification will enable the NWMD to be completed, and during this period Wollongong Coal propose to seek separate approval to mine within the North West and South West Domain utilising the existing Wongawilli pit top infrastructure with a 30 year mine life.

Further details can be found in the previous community newsletters, available to download on the Project webpage: <https://emm.mysocialpinpoint.com/colliery>. The webpage also provides information on the Project, the planning approvals process, updates on the Project, and an interactive map for comments regarding the proposed modification. Details about Wollongong Coal can be found on their webpage: <https://wollongongcoal.com.au>.

Project Update

Environmental, economic, and social assessments to support the Project have been undertaken by independent consultants



Wollongong Coal's Community Newsletters provide regular updates on the progress of the Project as detailed environmental, economic, and social impact assessments are undertaken as part of the planning approval process.

Throughout the assessment and approvals process we have been providing community members opportunities to contribute to the environmental impact assessments, including the social impact assessment with opportunities to have your say on the issues that are important to you.

and form part of the modification report. Please find overleaf current outcomes of the environmental, economic, and social assessments. The social impact assessment is still in process.

Environmental assessments are now well advanced, and as such, Wollongong Coal will be holding an information day to provide an overview of the project to the local community and allow for the community to have their say. The information day will provide you with opportunities to learn from the Project team about the Modification and talk to the different technical experts. The session will take place on the 16th December from 8 am to 6 pm at the Dapto Rural Fire Brigade Station (3 Wongawilli Road, Wongawilli).

Wollongong Coal values community feedback on the proposed modification. Should you wish to find out more about the Project, community members are encouraged to attend the information day or reach out to one of the Project team. Contact details are provided overleaf.

Approvals required

The Project requires modification to the existing Colliery State significant development consent (PA 09_0161) under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Therefore, a modification application, supported by a detailed environmental, economic and social assessments, is required to be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). Wollongong Coal has engaged EMM Consulting Pty Ltd (EMM) to prepare the modification report.

Specialists studies

The Project is in the process of preparing environmental, economic, social assessments to support the modification report. Studies undertaken include:

Traffic

A traffic impact assessment has been undertaken to understand the local road network and how ongoing Colliery operations associated with the proposed modification may influence local traffic.

The traffic assessment has determined that the project operation is unlikely to impact the local road network, road upgrade works, or road safety given a reduction in workforce from the current approval. Traffic associated with the project construction and operation is expected to be relatively small and traffic conditions on the road network will remain satisfactory.



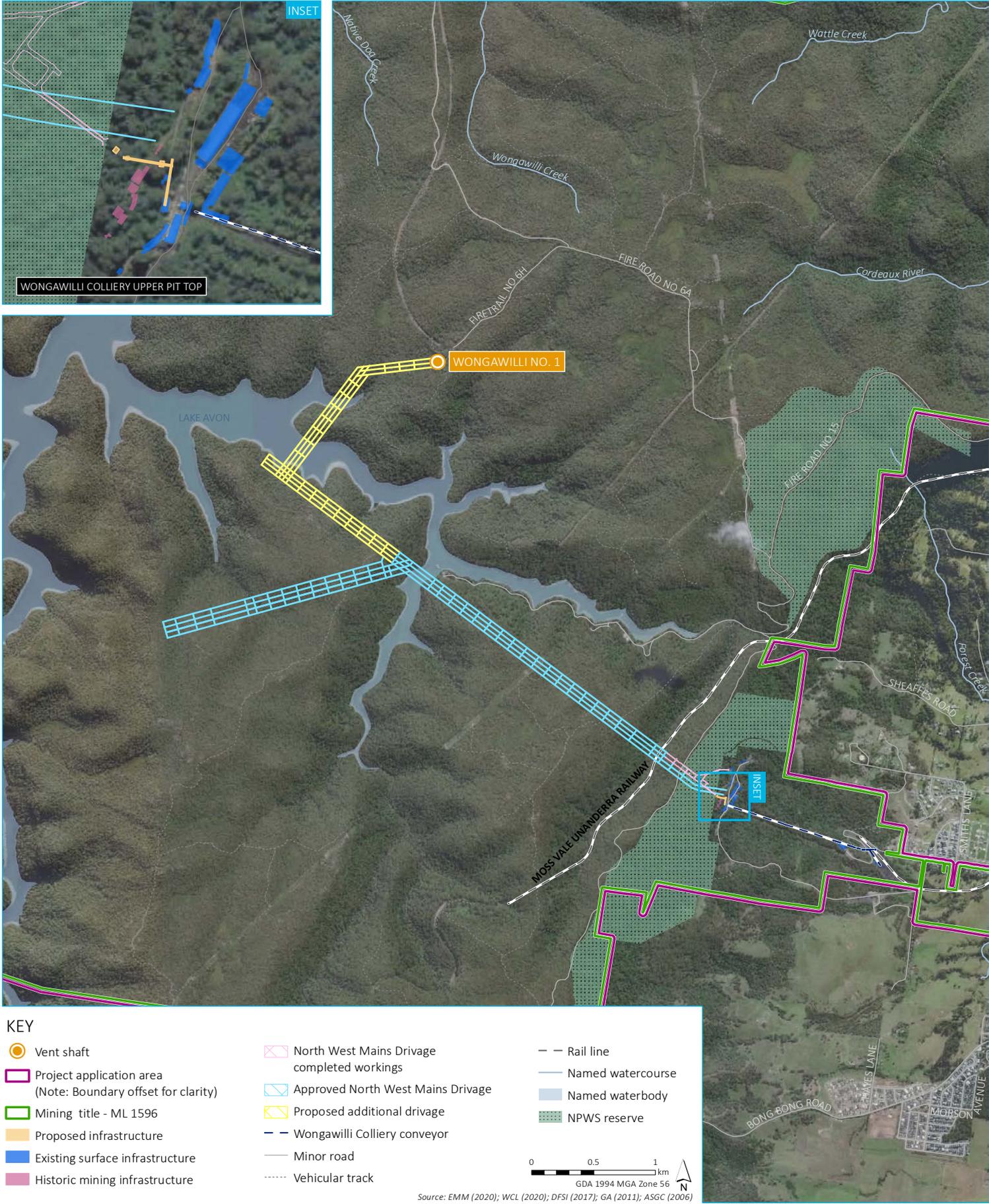


Figure 1 Conceptual Project Layout

Biodiversity

A biodiversity impact assessment has been undertaken to assess the extent of native vegetation, threatened ecological communities, and vegetation integrity within the vicinity of the proposed modification.

The Biodiversity development assessment report (BDAR) has assessed potential impacts to flora and fauna in the area and provided recommendations to mitigate any impacts that may be identified. The proposed modification will include the removal of 0.03 ha of native vegetation for proposed surface infrastructure works.

The assessment has concluded that six biodiversity credits are required to offset direct impacts to two vegetation zones, and four native species with potential habitats in these vegetation zones.

Subsidence and geotechnical

A subsidence and geotechnical assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential surface and sub-surface impacts of the proposed modification. The assessment considers the geotechnical conditions of the Colliery site as well as the proposed modifications to the operation of the mine to ensure that the site is stable and safe.

The assessment has concluded that there is no potential for the proposed NWMD workings to cause any significant surface ground movement. Any surface subsidence is expected to be so small as to be imperceptible. Any potential impacts to natural and built features are expected to be imperceptible.

Historical heritage

A historical heritage impact assessment has been undertaken to determine potential impacts on non-Aboriginal heritage in the area of the proposed modification. The project proposes no removal or demolition of local or State historic heritage sites.

Mitigation measures will ensure that proposed works to and around identified local heritage sites, comprising minor alterations to the fabric of the Breaker Building and the Transfer Bunker or inadvertent damage to the Dumper House caused by use and movement of machinery is appropriately managed during construction. The proposed modification will have no impacts to the heritage value of the Avon Dam and Illawarra Escarpment Landscape Area.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

An aboriginal cultural heritage assessment has been undertaken to determine potential impact on Aboriginal heritage in the area of the proposed modification. The assessment included archaeological investigations of the site, desktop study of past assessments and existing environment, and consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and relevant agencies.

No Aboriginal sites or areas of potential archaeological deposit were identified within the study area during the survey. As a result, the proposed modification has been assessed with low potential to impact Aboriginal sites. Any unexpected finds will be managed by Wollongong Coal as per recommendations set out in the assessment.

Noise and vibration

A noise and vibration impact assessment has been undertaken to determine potential noise emissions, quantify achievable noise levels, and propose mitigation measures to minimise noise impacts in the vicinity of the project as far as practicable.

The project is expected to result in a reduction of potential noise impacts to the surrounding area when compared to current approved operations. Mitigation measures have been identified to minimise noise emissions, including extending the noise barrier along the rail line within the Colliery to reduce noise from train loading and limiting coal train loading to day light hours only.

Wollongong Coal will continue to investigate further mitigation practices to minimise potential sources of noise during operation.

Air quality and greenhouse gas

An air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) impact assessment has been prepared to assess the potential air quality impacts of the proposed modification. The assessment includes proposed Colliery emission sources, modelling to assess potential impacts in the area surrounding the Colliery, and mitigation and management measures to minimise air quality impacts in the vicinity of the project as far as practicable.

The air quality assessment has determined that predicted impacts from Colliery operations will not result in exceedance of any applicable criteria at any neighbouring assessment locations. The GHG assessment determined emissions generated by the Colliery represent approximately 0.291% of total GHG emissions for NSW and 0.071% of total GHG emissions for Australia.

Wollongong Coal will continue to implement mitigation and management measures as approved to reduce the potential for air quality and greenhouse gas impacts to the receiving environment.

Groundwater

A groundwater assessment has been undertaken for the proposed modification to understand current groundwater conditions in the existing environment. This includes assessment of existing water quality, identification of any groundwater dependant ecosystems, and how groundwater interacts with the existing landscape. The assessment also includes groundwater modelling to predict any changes in hydraulic properties to ensure the protection of groundwater and water quality in the area.

The assessment has determined that the project will have little to no impact on groundwater or receptors, including third party bores, groundwater dependent ecosystems, or surface water.

Surface water

A surface water assessment has been undertaken to understand the water systems in and around the proposed modification. The assessment has reviewed existing surface water behaviours at the Colliery, predicted any potential impacts on flow regimes, determined the adequacy of existing water management strategies, and systems and provided mitigation measures to address any surface water impacts.

The assessment has determined that with no observable subsidence or groundwater impacts the project is expected to result in a neutral effect on surface water quality and require no changes to the existing surface water management system.

Economic

An economic assessment has been undertaken to assess the economic benefits and impacts of the proposed modification. The economic assessment includes the modification's potential for economic success by analysing its feasibility, profitability, potential to create local employment and potential to stimulate the economy.

The assessment has determined that the project will provide direct economic activity, including jobs, to the local area of Illawarra SA4, and indirect economic activity to the local area via both wage and non-wage expenditure. Environmental, social and cultural impacts of the project to the local community are not expected to be material from an aggregate economic efficiency perspective.

Social impact

A social impact assessment is currently being undertaken to determine the potential benefits and impacts the proposed modification could have in the community. The assessment will consider the social, economic, environmental, and health and wellbeing of the community in the local and regional areas. An online survey is now available for community members to provide input to the social impact assessment (see details below).

Outcomes of the social impact assessment will be informed by input from community members during consultation activities. Data collected as part of the social baseline and engagement findings, findings from technical studies, previous social impact assessment reports from the same regional area, academic research and relevant government and agency reports will also be used to inform the social impact assessment.

Further information

We look forward to hearing from you as the approvals process continues. We encourage you to attend the information day and/or complete the online survey to have your say, available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/colliery> or scan the QR code with your mobile device.



For further information about the Project please visit the Project web page <https://emm.mysocialpinpoint.com/colliery> or get in touch with the Project Team.

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What's next in the approvals process?

Following public exhibition of the modification report, DPIE will collate any submissions received. Wollongong Coal will then prepare a submissions report which will address any submissions received in regard to the project, for provision to DPIE. DPIE will take into consideration the modification report, public submissions and the submissions report in developing an assessment report and determination.



How can you have your say?

Wollongong Coal values community feedback on the proposed modification. An information day at the Dapto Rural Fire Brigade Station (3 Wongawilli Road, Wongawilli) is proposed on 16th December from 8 am to 6 pm to provide an overview of the project to the local community. An online survey is also currently available for community members and can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/colliery>

Following the completion of the environmental, social, and economic assessments, the modification report will be submitted to DPIE and will be put on public exhibition for a minimum of 21 days, during which time members of the public are able to make submissions to DPIE regarding the modification. These submissions will be reviewed by Wollongong Coal and responses will be prepared and submitted to DPIE to be considered alongside the modification report during determination of approval.