Appendix D
Biodiversity MNES report

EMM
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Hunter Valley Operations North Continuation Project

Biodiversity MNES Assessment Supporting the Public Environment Report

FINAL

August 2026

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Hunter Valley Operations North Continuation Project

Biodiversity MNES Assessment Supporting the Public Environment Report

FINAL

Prepared by
Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited

On behalf of
HV Operations Pty Limited

Project Director: Allison Riley
Project Manager: Kate Connolly
Report No.: 4948/R25
Date: August 2026

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Document Status

Rev No.	Reviewer Name	Date	Approved for Issue Name	Date
Final Following Public Exhibition	Kate Connolly	3/08/2026	Kate Connolly	3/08/2026

Executive Summary

The Project

Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) is a multi-pit open cut mining complex approximately 24 kilometres (km) north-west of Singleton in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales (NSW). HVO comprises two mine sites separated by the Hunter River, HVO North and HVO South. While the two mine sites are approved under separate development consents, they are operated as one complex with fully integrated environmental management systems. The HVO Continuation Project (the Project) broadly comprises the continuation of the life of HVO North and HVO South, from the current approved mining completion dates of 2026 and 2030 respectively, to the end of 2045 at HVO North and 2042 at HVO South.

Approval Pathway and Assessment Method

The Project was referred under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) on 16 April 2025. On 27 October 2025, the delegate for the minister determined, that the action is a controlled action and that the proposed activity be assessed by a Public Environment Reports (PERs), one for the HVO North and one for the HVO South Projects, respectively. This Biodiversity Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) Assessment Report has been prepared to support the HVO North PER.

Relevant to this report, the HVO North Action would likely result in a significant impact on listed threatened species and communities including:

- *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*.
- Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*).
- Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*).

The bilateral assessment process under the EPBC Act is not being used to assess impacts to relevant MNES for the Project. Following consultation with Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), the assessment of impacts to biodiversity has used the assessment framework established under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) to determine the impacts of the Projects on MNES. Similarly, the identification of biodiversity offset needs has utilised the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (BAM) to determine the quantum of impacts required to compensate for the residual impacts of the Project.

The HVO Complex has been assessed by extensive desktop and literature review and surveyed for biodiversity over many years and seasons (which included detailed vegetation mapping and threatened ecological community delineation, targeted threatened flora transect searches and species-specific fauna surveys). A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) was prepared in accordance with the BAM and exhibited to support an environmental impact statement (EIS) (Umwelt 2022) that accompanied State significant development (SSD) applications for the Project under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). Following amendments to the Project, an updated BDAR (Umwelt 2025) was prepared to support an Amendment Report with a further revision to this BDAR submitted in February 2026 (Umwelt 2026).

Information from the most recent BDAR (Umwelt 2026) has been reviewed and methodology and assessment outcomes relevant to MNES have been incorporated in this report.

Key Impacts on MNES

The landscape within and surrounding the **HVO North** biodiversity impact assessment area (BIAA) is characterised by extensive historical clearing for agricultural, mining and rural development. Woodland habitat in the HVO North BIAA is generally characterised by regrowth with much of the land within the BIAA associated with native and exotic grasslands and varying conditions of mine rehabilitation. Areas of native vegetation and habitat have been surveyed for its biodiversity value and assessed in accordance with the BAM.

The following table outlines the MNES **likely** to be significantly impacted as a result of the **HVO North Action**.

Table ES.1 Impacts to MNES Likely to be Significantly Impacted

MNES	Habitat Type	Impact Area
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	Woodland	142.9
	Derived components	8.5
	Mine rehabilitation	14.9
Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	Derived native grasslands and sparse woodland	305.5
	Mine rehabilitation habitat	642.5
Swift parrot	Foraging resources	69.0
	Other associated habitat	136.4

Avoidance and Minimisation

Targeted avoidance and minimisation measures were implemented to reduce the HVO North Action impact on areas of higher value vegetation and habitat, including (but not limited to):

- Locating impacts predominantly in previously mined and/or disturbed areas, and areas approved to be disturbed.
- Refinement and location selection of the Lemington Road realignment to remove all direct impacts to *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*.
- Careful consideration of proposed transmission line easement alignments to avoid areas of higher quality vegetation and habitats, and to provide for maximum vegetation and habitat retention in easement corridors.
- Habitat retention following decommissioning of existing transmission lines.

HVO has committed to the design and implementation of a comprehensive biodiversity mitigation strategy to mitigate the unavoidable impacts of the Project.

Biodiversity Offset Requirements

All residual impacts on biodiversity are currently proposed to be offset in accordance with the BAM in accordance with the BC Act. HVO proposes to stage the retirement of credits to align with main development activities of the HVO North Action as defined by five primary stages. The biodiversity offset strategy will be developed in consultation with the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, based on the offset options available under the BC Act and NSW Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (BC Regulation) and other measures as approved by the DPHI and Commonwealth DCCEEW.

Whilst not precluding other options provided under existing legislation, it is HVO's intention that the primary offset strategy for the Project will focus on purchasing credits on the market both locally and regionally as per the like-for-like offsetting rules outlined in the BC Regulation. Where suitable, paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund, which contributes to regionally strategic offset outcomes, will also be undertaken.

Following the application of avoidance and minimisation measures, the BAM-C assessment identified the following biodiversity ecosystem credits required to offset the impacts of the HVO North Action.

Table ES.2 Biodiversity Credit Obligations Associated with MNES

Species/TEC	HVO North Action Total Credits
Likely Significant Impact	
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	4824
Hunter Valley Delma^	4223
Swift parrot	5801
Unlikely Significant Impact	
White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC	202
Regent honeyeater	5840
Spotted-tailed quoll	8176
Large-eared pied bat	6120
Grey-headed flying-fox	6588
White-throated needletail	6734
Brown treecreeper	5801

Please note: credits in this table are not cumulative and credits assigned to EPBC-listed species are captured through the ecosystem credit component (i.e. vegetation offsets) of the offsetting obligations unless otherwise noted.

^Species generates species credits only and ecosystem credits are not relevant to this species.

Abbreviations

Acronym/Term	Description
BIAA	Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
BAM	Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020
BC Act	NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
BCD	Biodiversity Conservation Division
BDAR	Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
BMP	Biodiversity Management Plan
BOS	Biodiversity Offset Strategy
CEEC	Critically Endangered Ecological Community
DAWE	Former Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
DCCEEW	Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DNG	Derived Native Grasslands
DPE	Former NSW Department of Environment and Planning
DPHI	NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
EEC	Endangered Ecological Community
EP&A Act	NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
EPBC Act	Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
HVO	Hunter Valley Operations
HVO Complex	The combined operations of HVO North and HVO South.
HVO Complex BIAA	Area requiring assessment for potential impacts to MNES (threatened species and communities) as a result of both the HVO North and South Actions.
HVO North Action	All activities for which approval is sought at HVO North under the EPBC Act.
HVO North Action Area	The HVO North Action Area is consistent with the proposed State Development Consent boundary sought under the NSW EP&A Act (SSD-11826681).
HVO North BIAA	Area requiring assessment for potential impacts to MNES (threatened species and communities) as a result of the HVO North Action.
HVO South Action	All activities for which approval is sought at HVO South under the EPBC Act.
HVO South Action Area	The HVO South Action Area is consistent with the proposed State Development Consent boundary sought under the NSW EP&A Act (SSD-11826621).
HVO South BIAA	Area requiring assessment for potential impacts to MNES (threatened species and communities) as a result of the HVO South Action.
LLS Act	NSW *Local Land Services Act 2013*
IBRA	IBRA Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
JV	Joint venture
LGA	Local Government Area
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
NP	National Park
NSW	New South Wales

Acronym/Term	Description
The Project	The HVO Continuation Project in its entirety, encompassing the continuation of the life of the complex, i.e. both HVO North and HVO South, within their respective proposed Action Areas.
PCT	Plant Community Type
PMST	Protected Matters Search Tool
SSD	State Significant Development
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
TBDC	NSW Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection
TSSC	Commonwealth Threatened Species Scientific Committee
VIS	Vegetation Information System

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) is a multi-pit open cut mining complex, comprising two mine sites separated by the Hunter River, HVO North and HVO South (**Figure 1.1**). While the two mine sites are approved under separate development consents granted under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), they are currently operated as one complex (HVO Complex) with fully integrated environmental management systems. Existing approved operations at HVO North and HVO South are shown in **Figure 1.2.**

Significant coal resources remain across the HVO Complex beyond what is currently approved for extraction under the existing development consents. HVO has undertaken extensive investigations into a long-term plan for the complex beyond the approved mine life to increase recovery of the remaining coal resources using existing infrastructure, while balancing social, environmental and economic outcomes. Based on the outcomes of these investigations, HVO is seeking the relevant approvals, at both a State and Federal level, for the HVO Continuation Project (the Project).

Broadly, the Project comprises the continuation of the life of HVO North and HVO South, from the current approved mining completion dates of 2026 and 2030 respectively, to the end of 2045 at HVO North and 2042 at HVO South. The continuation of mining across the HVO Complex will increase resource recovery from the existing operation, predominantly by mining through previously mined areas, extracting coal from deeper seams and to the extent of existing mining tenements.

HVO aims to maintain separate development consents under the EP&A Act for HVO North and South, as is currently the case, and has submitted two State significant development (SSD) applications to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) under the EP&A Act to enable the continuation of both operations.

Referrals under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for the Project were submitted to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on 16 April 2025, being:

- EPBC 2025/10177 – HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (the HVO North Action).
- EPBC 2025/10176 – HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (the HVO South Action).

On 27 and 28 October 2025 respectively, a delegate of the Minister for the Environment determined that approval is required before the proposed the HVO North Action and HVO South Project can commence as they are likely to have a significant impact on the following matters protected by the EPBC Act:

- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A)
- Coal seam gas or large coal mining development with impact on water resources (sections 24D and 24E).

The delegate also determined that the proposed actions will be assessed by public environment reports (PERs); one for HVO North and one for HVO South. The Commonwealth DCCEEW subsequently issued final guidelines for the content of the PERs (the PER Guidelines) in correspondence dated 26 February 2026.

1.2 Action Area and Interactions

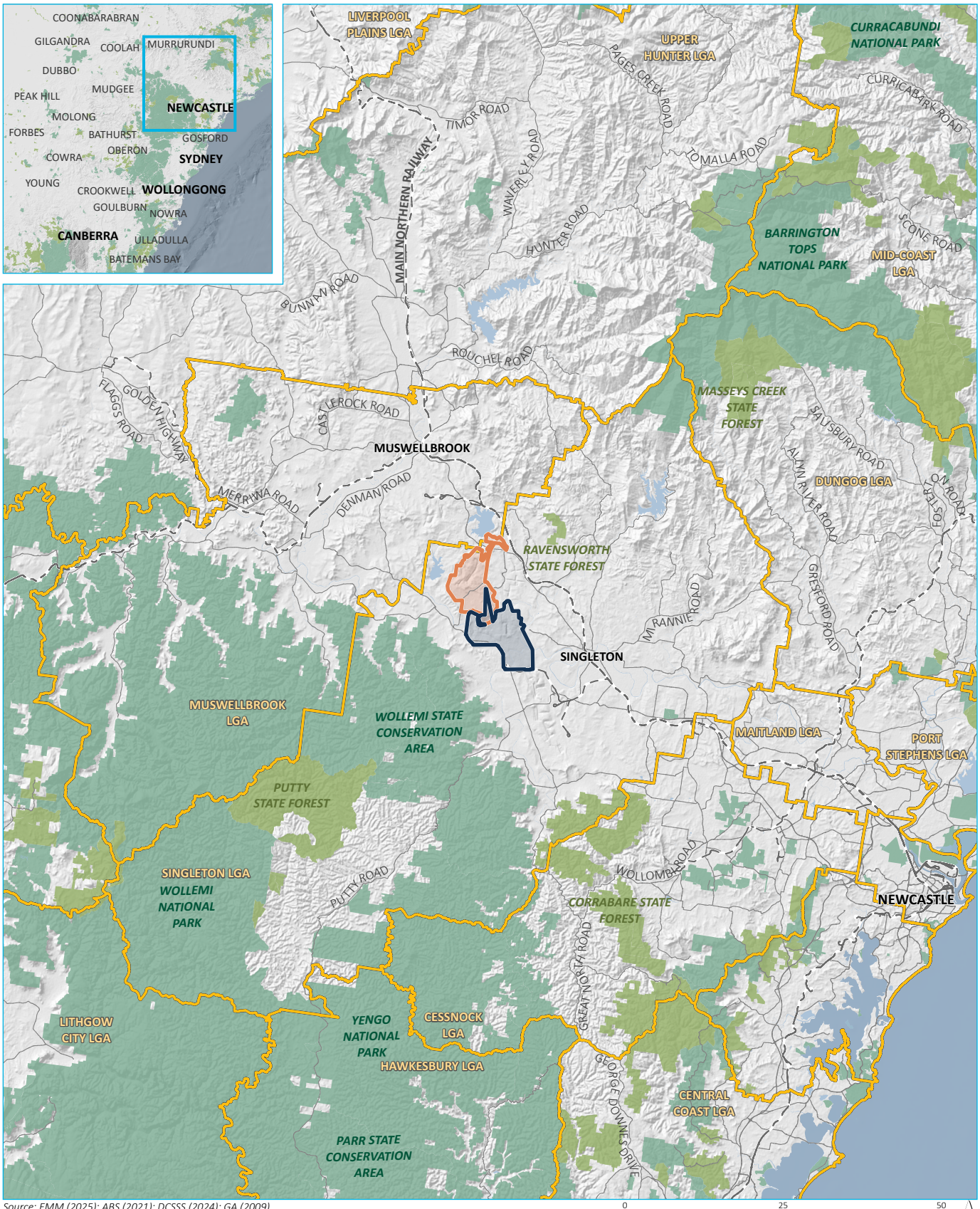
This report relates to mining operations at **HVO North** from 1 January 2027 only, i.e., the HVO North Continuation Project (the HVO North Action). A separate Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) assessment will be submitted for activities proposed at HVO South. This approach is consistent with the approvals being sought under the EP&A Act for the Project.

The HVO North Action Area is shown in **Figure 1.3**, which is defined as the proposed development consent boundary of the HVO North Action sought by the SSD application under the EP&A Act.

1.3 Definition of Proposed Action

Except for certain areas that are excluded, the proposed HVO North Action is the carrying out of the development as defined by the Project description (see **Section 1.4**).

The areas where surface disturbance is proposed as part of the HVO North Action have been divided into domains, based on the level of existing disturbance in the area and the required level of assessment under the EPBC Act. A summary of these domains is provided in **Section 1.5** and described within the PER to which this MNES Report is appended.



Source: EMM (2025); ABS (2021); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 25 50 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

KEY

- Existing HVO North development consent boundary (DA 450-10-2003)
- Existing HVO South project approval boundary (PA 06_0261)

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve
- State forest
- Local government area

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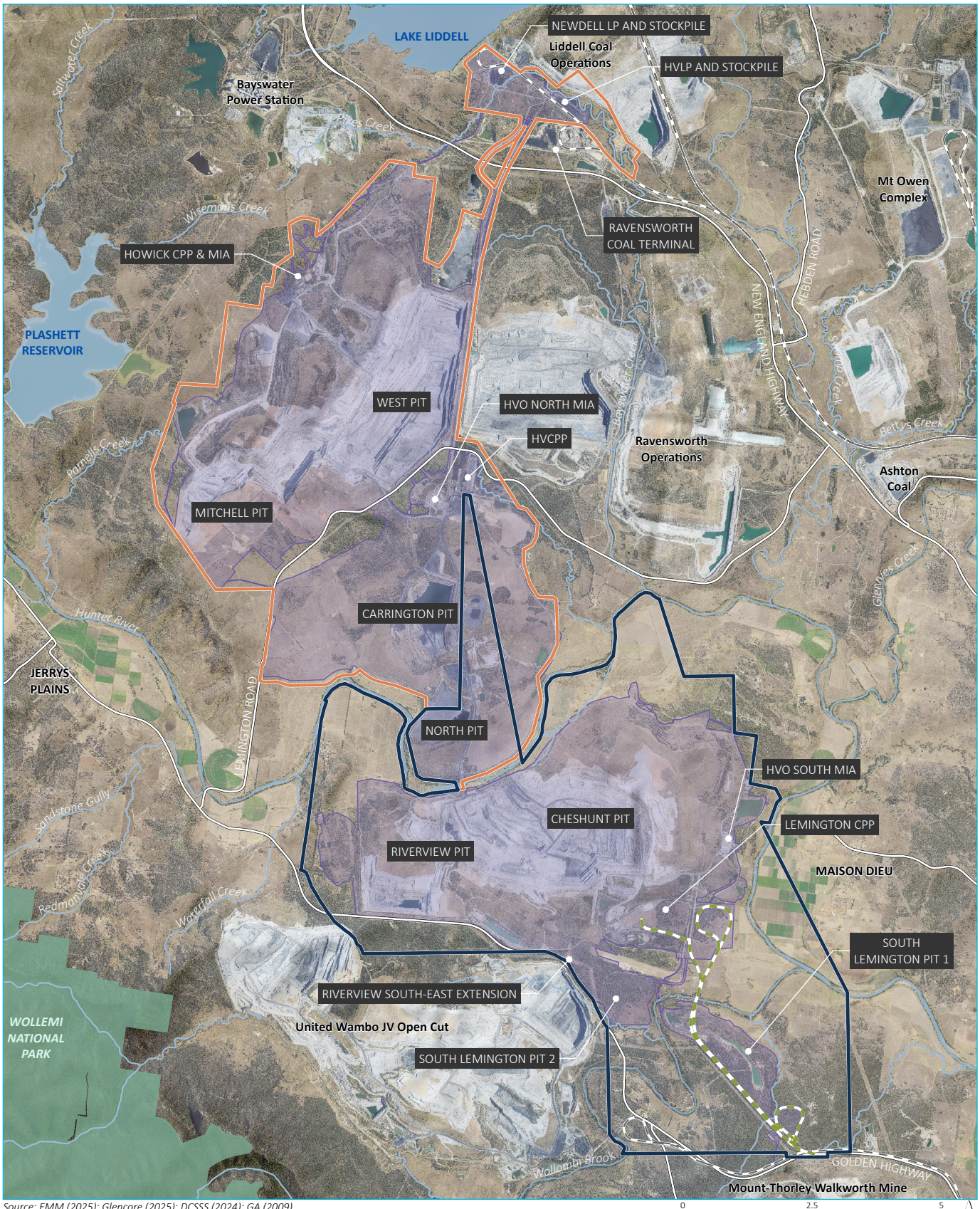
- NPWS reserve
- State forest

Locality plan

HVO Continuation Project
HVO North MNES Report
Figure 1.1

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Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

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GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

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KEY

- Existing HVO North development consent boundary (DA 450-10-2003)
- Existing HVO South project approval boundary (PA 06_0261)
- Existing and approved disturbance area
- South Lemington Rail Loop and haul route (approved, not yet constructed)

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve

HVO existing environment

HVO Continuation Project
HVO North MNES Report
Figure 1.2

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1.4 Project Description

A summary of the key components of the HVO North Action are listed below, and shown on **Figure 1.3**:

- Continuation of mining operations at HVO North from 1 January 2027 until 31 December 2045.
- A small increase in the mining extent (between the existing West and Mitchell Pits and Carrington Pit).
- Produce up to 26 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of run-of-mine (ROM) coal from across the HVO Complex.
- Extraction of an additional approximate 214 Million tonnes (Mt) of ROM coal from the HVO Complex over the life of the Project.
- Infrastructure upgrades, as listed below:
    - Realignment of Lemington Road and construction of a new bridge over the Hunter River.
    - HVO North site access road relocation off the existing Lemington Road.
    - An increase in the capacity of Parnells Dam from approximately 1 gigalitres (GL) to approximately 4 GL.
    - Realignment of transmission and telecommunication lines that are currently within the proposed mining footprint.
    - HVO North Mine Infrastructure Area upgrade.
    - Construction of the North Void flood protection levee, Mitchell clean water diversion, Mitchen Dam, Carrington West Wing Levee and Mitchell East Levee.
    - Ancillary activities as required to facilitate operations.
    - Access roads to facilitate service provider access.
    - Use of demountable/temporary buildings in construction compounds as required.
    - Upgrade of the existing Newdell Load Point (LP) train loading facility and construction of a new product stockpile; or extension of the Hunter Valley Load Point product coal stockpile, including the closure of a section of Liddell Station Road. While approval for both options is sought, only one will be constructed.
- Coal haulage from the Hunter Valley Coal Preparation Plant (HVCPP) to the Ravensworth Operations ROM pad, via internal haul roads.
- Revision and implementation of the tailings management strategy.
- Amendments to the approved final landform.

Other than as modified above, all activities that are currently approved under the existing HVO North development consent (Development Consent DA 450-10-2003) issued under the EP&A Act are intended to continue. Key aspects and outcomes of the approved development at HVO North that will remain the same under the HVO North Action include the following:

- The maximum allowable annual ROM coal extraction and processing rate of Mtpa.

- Receipt of ROM coal from HVO South via internal haul roads for processing at all CPP facilities approved for HVO North.
- Approved heights of overburden emplacement areas.
- Continued avoidance of the Aboriginal heritage site known as Carrington Mine – Colluvial Deposit 1 (CM-CD1).
- Operating hours, annual workforce numbers and associated operational traffic generation.

1.5 Domains

Domains are relied upon to describe and differentiate between the activities that will take place across the HVO North Action area. The HVO North Action Area and relevant Domains are summarised below in **Table 1.1** and illustrated in **Figure 1.4**.

Key assumptions which have informed the identification of the Domains include:

- Areas that are within the approved operations disturbance area under the existing HVO North development consent but are not forecast to be disturbed by 31 December 2026 (end date for mining under current consent), have been assessed.
- Rehabilitated areas that are proposed to be re-disturbed as part of the HVO North Action have been assessed, and where MNES have been identified, they have been included as a potential impact of the HVO North Action.

Table 1.1 Summary of Domains within the HVO North Action Area

Domain	Name	Description	Total Area (ha)	Relevance to the Action
1	Active mining area and associated disturbance areas as at 31 December 2026	Areas in a disturbed condition as at the end date for mining under the existing HVO North development consent. The HVO North Action includes mining activities within the domain will continue until the completion of the HVO North development consent.	2,774	No assessment required.
2a	Rehabilitation as at 31 December 2026 which will not be re-disturbed	Areas of existing rehabilitation not proposed to be disturbed by the HVO North Action, in which approval is sought as part of the Action. HVO will continue to undertake general maintenance and land management activities such as water management including erosion control structures and associated infrastructure including communications, pest and weed management, access track service and maintenance of established rehabilitation aligned with the rehabilitation objectives required by NSW approval.	868	No assessment required.

Domain	Name	Description	Total Area (ha)	Relevance to the Action
2b	Rehabilitation as at 31 December 2026 which will be re-disturbed as part of the action	Areas of rehabilitation proposed to be disturbed from 1 January 2027. This is based on the assumption that mining and rehabilitation activities proposed to be undertaken between lodgement of the referral and 31 December 2026 are completed as forecast.	1,024	Assessed via both field survey and desktop assessment.
3	Biodiversity impact assessment area (BIAA) (as per State SSD application)	Areas where additional surface disturbance is proposed as part of the Project and approval is required under the EP&A Act for this disturbance. Area is consistent with the assessment in the State SSD application. There is currently no approval to disturb in this domain under the EP&A Act or the EPBC Act.	903	Assessed in accordance with the BAM.
4	Additional BIAA (surface disturbance requiring additional assessment under the EPBC Act)	Areas not included in other domains which are already approved for disturbance under the existing State approval under the EP&A Act, but will not be disturbed until after 1 January 2027 and will be subject to the new SSD approvals being sought.	403	Assessed in accordance with the BAM.
5	Approved for disturbance under EP&A Act, but not seeking approval to disturb under the EPBC Act	Existing State approved disturbance areas which are not proposed to be disturbed as part of the HVO North Action. No further assessment of this area is proposed within the referrals.	43	No assessment required – no disturbance proposed.
6	Previously referred under the EPBC Act	Areas previously referred by HVO under the EPBC Act, namely EPBC 2016/7640 and EPBC 2016/7641.	258	No further assessment required.

1.6 Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

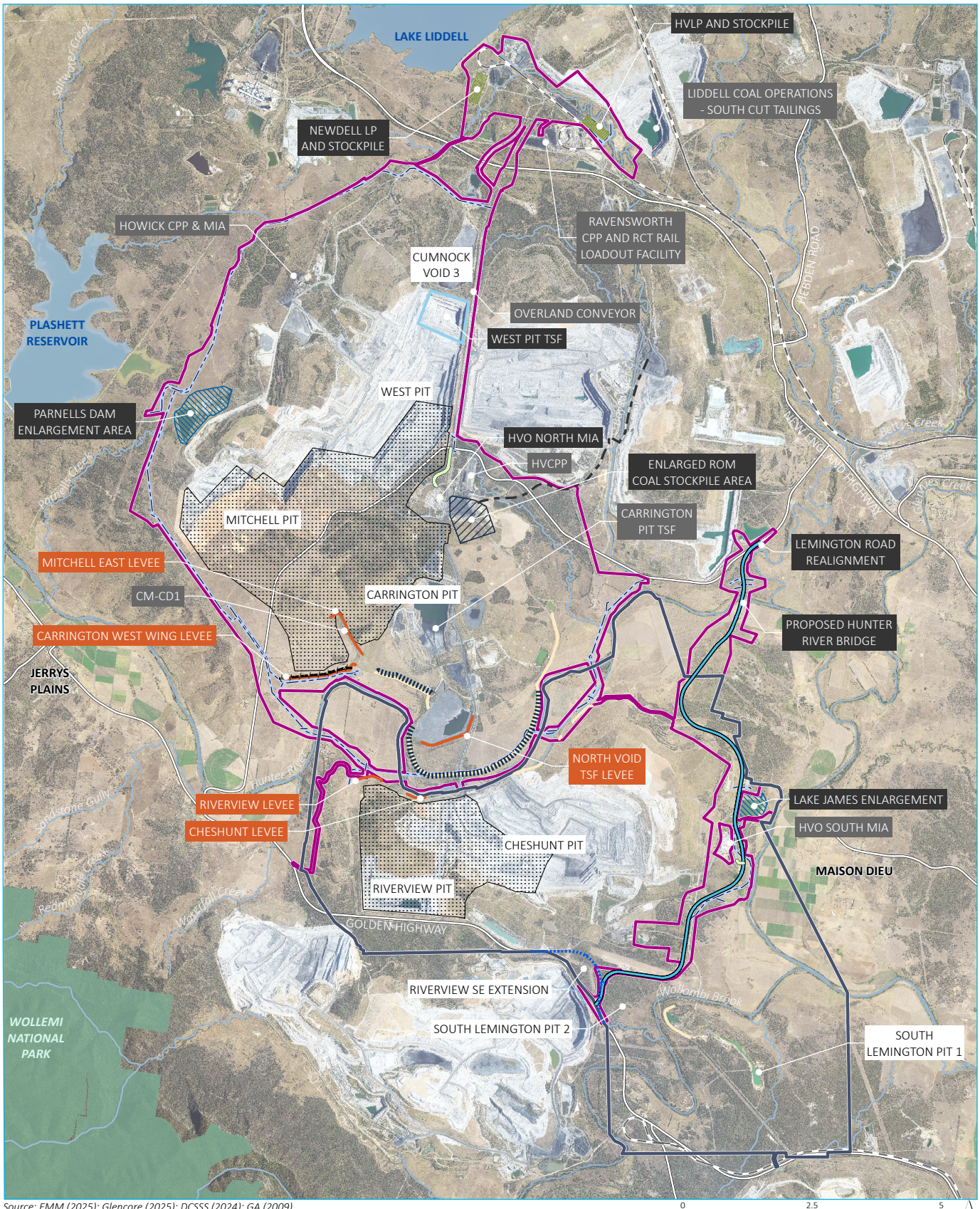
The HVO North BIAA constitutes areas of HVO North outside of existing and approved disturbance areas, and areas containing vegetation that will be impacted by the HVO North Action. The HVO North BIAA represents the disturbance proposed by the HVO North Action and comprises native vegetation and habitat for MNES occurring across the three domains requiring assessment (being Domains 2b, 3 and 4), as detailed in **Table 1.2.**

All survey effort, results and impacts in the HVO North BIAA and the HVO South BIAA have been reported together throughout this report. As such, this MNES report will present the cumulative survey effort across both BIAAs and report on the results and impacts as they relate to HVO North, as all survey effort within both BIAAs is considered critical for providing context. These areas are shown on **Figure 1.4**.

The HVO North BIAA is primarily dominated by derived native vegetation types (i.e. native and exotic grasslands, shrubland, scattered trees in grassland, mine rehabilitation) and highly modified and exotic vegetation.

Table 1.2 HVO North – Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

Domain	Domain Description	HVO North BIAA (ha)
Domain 2b	Areas of rehabilitation proposed to be disturbed from 1 January 2027. This is based on the assumption that mining and rehabilitation activities proposed to be undertaken between lodgement of the referral and 31 December 2026 are completed as forecast.	1,024
Domain 3	Areas where additional surface disturbance is proposed and approval is required under the EP&A Act for this disturbance. Area is consistent with the assessment in the State SSD application. There is currently no approval to disturb in this domain under the EP&A Act or the EPBC Act.	903
Domain 4	Areas not included in other domains which are already approved for disturbance under the existing State approval under the EP&A Act, but will not be disturbed prior to 1 January 2027 and will be subject to the new SSD approvals being sought. There is currently no approval to disturb in this domain under the EPBC Act.	403
Total Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area (ha)		**2,330**



Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 2.5 5 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

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KEY

- HVO North Action Area
- HVO South Action Area
- Existing low permeability barrier wall
- Existing levee

Proposed HVO continuation project element

- Approved barrier wall (not yet constructed)
- Alternative Golden Highway alignment
- Lemington Road realignment
- Levee
- Mine access road
- Proposed haul route to Ravensworth Operations
- Proposed transmission line relocation
- Dam enlargement
- Mining area
- Product stockpile
- ROM coal stockpile area
- West Pit TSF

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve

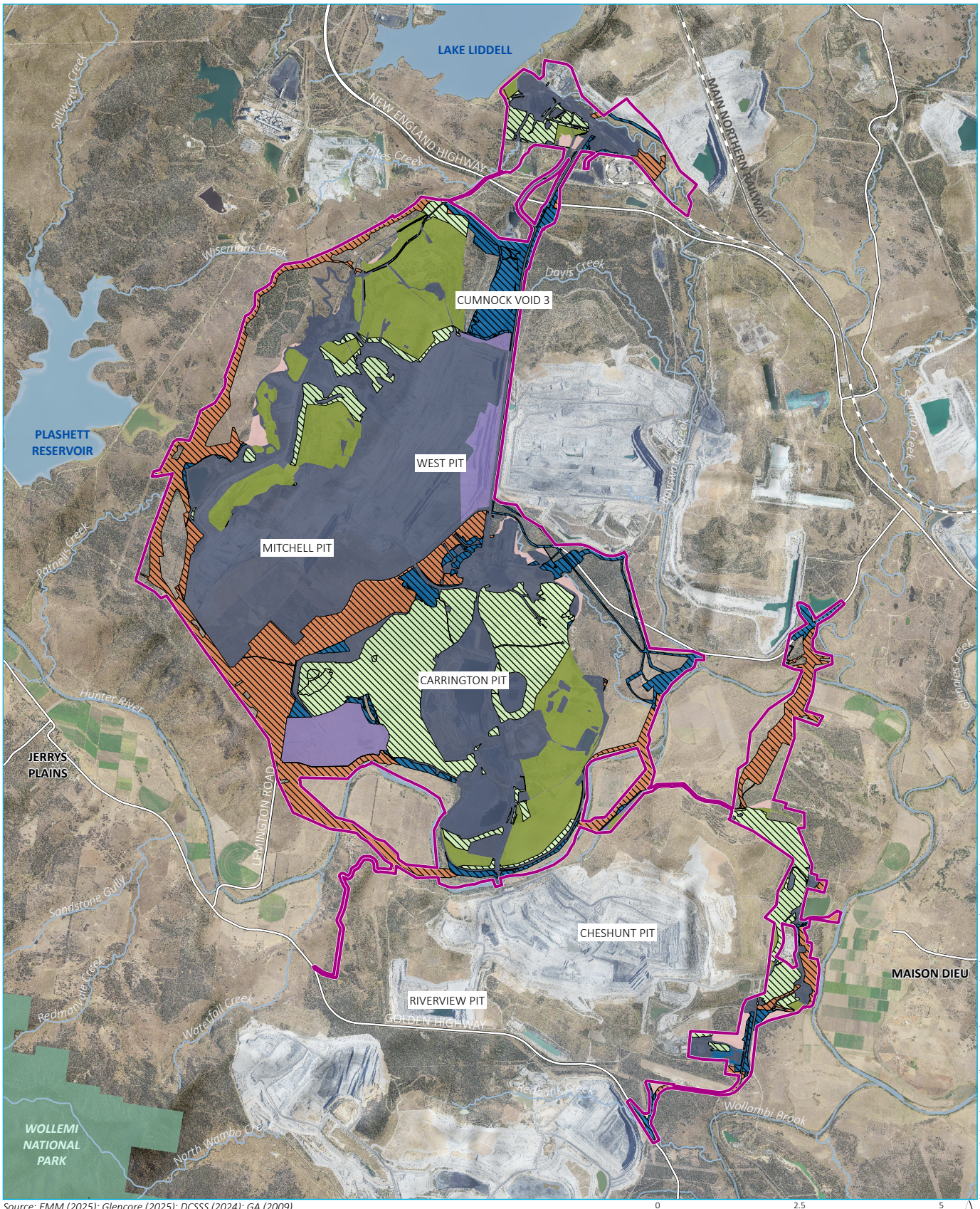
Label format

- Existing item
- Levee
- Project related item

Proposed conceptual layout

HVO Continuation Project
HVO North MNES Report
Figure 1.3

EMM
creating opportunities



Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 2.5 5 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

KEY

- HVO North Action Area
- HVO North biodiversity impact assessment area
- Domain 1 | Active mining area and associated disturbed areas at 31 December 2026
- Domain 2a | Rehabilitation as at 31 December 2026- not to be re-disturbed
- Domain 2b | Rehabilitation as at 31 December 2026- to be re-disturbed as part of the action
- Domain 3 | BIAA (as per State DA)
- Domain 4 | Additional BIAA (surface disturbance requiring assessment under the EPBC Act only)
- Domain 5 | State approved area but not seeking EPBC Act approval to disturb
- Domain 6 | Prior EPBC Act referral areas

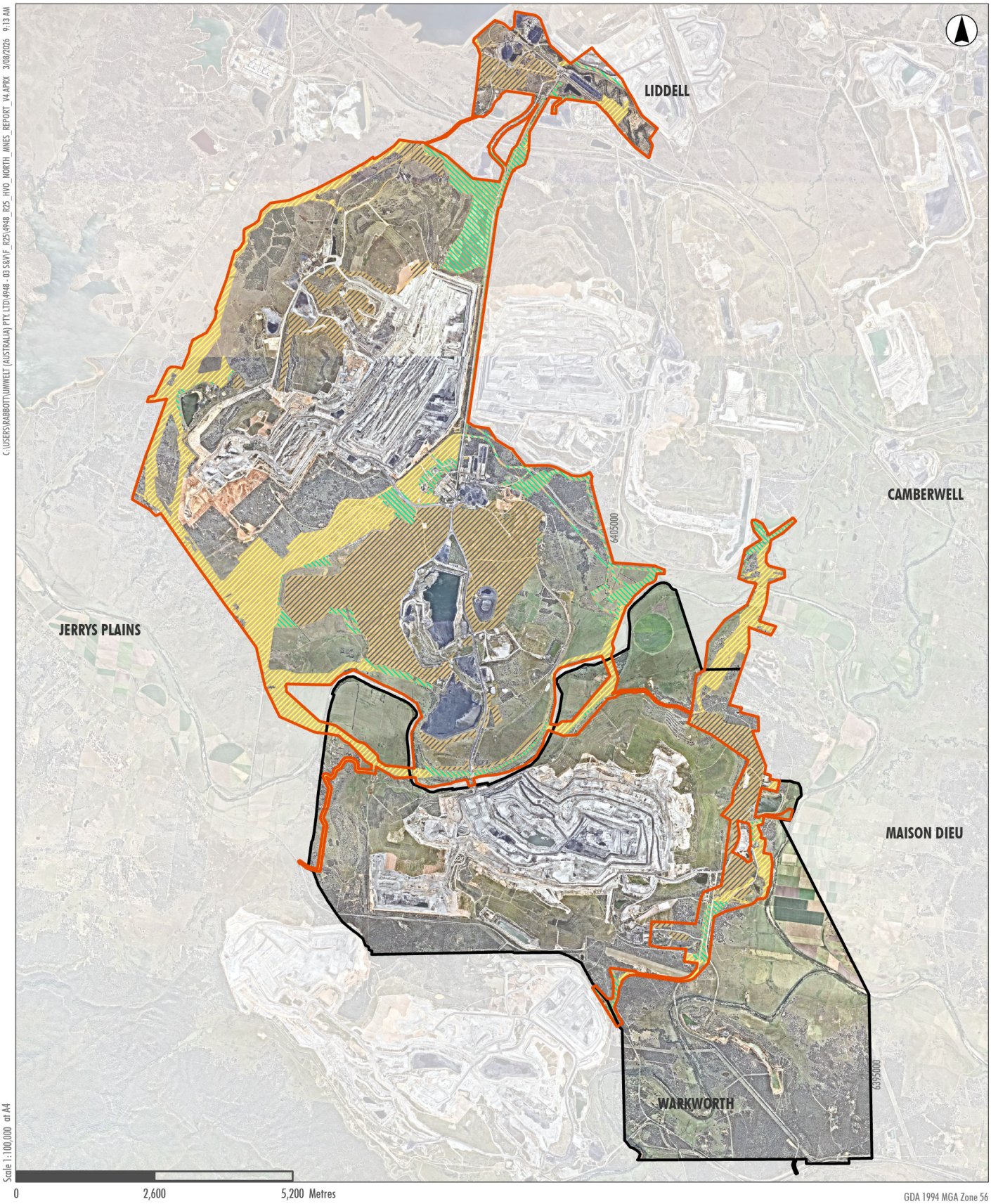
Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve

Domain plan

HVO Continuation Project
HVO North MNES Report
Figure 1.4

EMM
creating opportunities



Legend

- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO South Referral Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

Domain

- Domain 2b: Rehabilitation as at December 2026 - to be re-disturbed from 1 January 2027
- Domain 3: BIAA (as per State DA)
- Domain 4: Additional BIAA (surface disturbance requiring assessment under the EPBC Act only)

FIGURE 1.5

HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

1.7 Local and Regional Context

The central Hunter Valley has been largely cleared of intact native vegetation, primarily for agriculture but also other land uses, such as mining and urban development. Similar land use patterns occur in the vicinity of the HVO North BIAA, which are surrounded by agricultural land and coal mining operations, with small and scattered patches of native vegetation.

The most significant intact vegetation occurring in the wider locality is within Wollemi National Park (NP), which is located approximately 2.8 km to the southwest at the nearest point to the HVO North BIAA and represents a significant refuge area between remnant patches of vegetation in the central Hunter Valley. Ravensworth State Forest is also located in the wider locality, 6.7 km to the northeast at the nearest point to the BIAA (refer to **Figure 1.1**). The vegetation in Wollemi NP and Ravensworth State Forest is important for functionality as a fauna refuge in an otherwise widely cleared landscape. The Hunter River, which broadly divides the HVO North and HVO South sites, provides a narrow corridor across the landscape for fauna that utilise riparian vegetation as movement habitat.

The HVO North BIAA occurs entirely in the Sydney Basin Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) Bioregion and the Hunter subregion. The Hunter Valley is considered to be of great ecological significance given that it represents the only major break in the Great Eastern Escarpment (linking coastal and inland areas of NSW) and includes an overlap between tropical and temperate climate zones (McVicar T.R et al. 2015). The landscape within the HVO North BIAA has been shaped by historical clearing for mining, agricultural and rural development.

1.8 Commonwealth Approval Pathway

There is one existing approval under the EPBC Act relating to HVO, EPBC 2016/7640, which allows for the continuation of coal mining operations in areas within the HVO Complex that were previously approved under the EP&A Act after the commencement of the EPBC Act.

A second referral (EPBC 2016/7641) was also submitted relating to the extension of open cut coal mining operations at HVO South and the proposed deeper mining in the Bayswater Seam within the Riverview Pit area. This action was considered not likely to significantly impact on a water resource and was determined as not a controlled action by the Minister on 20 March 2018.

On 15 September 2023, HVO lodged two referrals for the Project under the EPBC Act with the Commonwealth DCCEEW, as follows:

- 2023/09651 – HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project.
- 2023/09652 – HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project.

On 13 December 2023, a delegate of the Minister for the Environment determined that approval is required before the proposed actions can commence, as they are likely to have a significant impact on the following matters protected by the EPBC Act:

- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A).
- Coal seam gas or large coal mining development with impact on water resources (sections 24D and 24E).

The delegate also determined on 13 December 2023 that the proposed actions would be assessed through PERs; one for HVO North and one for HVO South.

The referrals were withdrawn on 1 October 2024, in anticipation of proposed amendments being made to the Project which includes, amongst other things, a significant reduction in the coal mined at the HVO Complex.

As stated above, the Project was referred under the EPBC Act on 16 April 2025. On 27 October 2025, the delegate for the minister determined, that the action is a controlled action and that the proposed activity be assessed by a PERs, one for the HVO North and one for the HVO South Projects, respectively. This Biodiversity Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) Assessment Report has been prepared to support the **HVO North** PER.

- Relevant to this report, the HVO North Action would likely result in a significant impact on:
- Listed threatened species and communities (section 18 & section 18A).
- Coal seam gas or large coal mining development with impact on water resources (sections 24D and 24E).

The bilateral assessment process under the EPBC Act is not being used to assess impacts on MNES for the Project. Following consultation the Commonwealth DCCEEW, the assessment of impacts to biodiversity has used the assessment framework established under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) to determine the impacts of the Projects on MNES. Similarly, the identification of biodiversity offset needs has utilised the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (BAM) to determine the quantum of impacts required to compensate for the residual impacts of the Project.

The HVO Complex has been assessed by extensive desktop and literature review and surveyed for biodiversity over many years and seasons (which included detailed vegetation mapping and threatened ecological community delineation, targeted threatened flora transect searches and species-specific fauna surveys). A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) was prepared and exhibited to support the two SSD applications for the Project under the EP&A Act in accordance with the BAM and following the amendments to the Project, updated BDARs have been prepared to support an Amendment Report lodged with DPHI in August 2025. Following review from the NSW DCCEEW, the BDARs were revised and re-issued to the Department in February 2026.

Information from the BDAR has been reviewed and methodology and assessment outcomes relevant to MNES have been incorporated in this report.

2.0 Survey and Assessment Methods

The information outlined in this report is based on the results of both desktop-based literature review and database searches along with comprehensive biodiversity surveys undertaken over multiple years and seasons. The HVO North and HVO South Projects have been surveyed as a whole, due to the common features, adjacent footprint areas and parallel assessment timeframes. This section outlines the surveys undertaken across both the HVO North and HVO South BIAAs, however the assessment outcomes and results in subsequent chapters are focused on HVO North only.

2.1 Desktop Literature and Database Review

A review of previous documents and reports relevant to the Project was undertaken. This included regional vegetation mapping reports, site-specific monitoring surveys, ecological surveys undertaken within and in the vicinity of the BIAAs and also relevant ecological database searches. The information obtained was used to inform survey design and assist in the assessment of potentially occurring threatened and migratory species and threatened ecological communities (TECs). Relevant documents included:

- Biodiversity Assessment Methodology 2020 and BAM-C (Version 1.3.0.00).
- NSW State Vegetation Type Map (Current release C2.0.M2.1) (State Government of NSW and NSW DCCEEW 2024).
- The Vegetation of the Central Hunter Valley, NSW (Peake 2006).
- Greater Hunter Native Vegetation Mapping (Sivertsen et al 2011).
- Upper Hunter State Vegetation Map (OEH 2018b).
- Plot to PCT Assignment Tool, accessed April 2025 (DPHI 2025)
- DPHI BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife (DPHI 2025a) search, accessed April 2025.
- Vegetation Information System (VIS) Classification Database (DPHI 2024b), accessed March 2025.
- DPHI Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) (DPHI 2024c), accessed March 2025.
- Protected Matters Search Tool (DCCEEW 2025) for known/predicted EPBC Act-listed TECs, accessed September 2025.
- Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (Umwelt 2026).
- Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (Final Following Exhibition) (Umwelt 2023).
- Preliminary Documentation Report for EPBC 2016/7640 (EMM 2016).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – Hunter Valley Operations Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Niche 2015).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – Greater Ravensworth Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Umwelt 2015a).

- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – United Collieries Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Umwelt 2015b).
- Review of Ecological Assessments for Warkworth Extension EA and HVO South Modification Projects (Umwelt 2011).
- HVO North Modification 3, Carrington West Wing Ecology Assessment (Biosis Research Pty Ltd 2010).
- National Flying Fox Monitoring Viewer – https://www.environment.gov.au/webgis-framework/apps/ffc-wide/ffc-wide.jsf accessed April 2025.

Prior to field surveys, digital imagery (aerial photographs) of the BIAA and surrounds were viewed to identify spatial patterns in vegetation, land use and landscape features. This informed field survey design of the BIAAs.

2.2 Landscape Features

Refer to **Table 2.1** for a summary of the relevant landscape features that pertain to the BAM assessment for the Commonwealth Domains (Domains 2b, and 4). Domain 3 (State Assessment Area) is as per the assessment in the BDAR (refer to **Appendix D**).

Table 2.1 HVO North Landscape Features

Landscape Features	HVO North
IBRA Bioregion	Sydney Basin
IBRA Subregion	Hunter
NSW Mitchell Landscape (dominant)	Central Hunter Foothills
Native Vegetation Cover	31%
Strahler (1952) Streams	9th Order – Hunter River 5th Order – Bayswater Creek 4th Order – Unnamed tributary of the Hunter River southwest of Carrington Billabong 3rd Order – Parnells Creek and Farrells Creek Numerous unnamed 1st and 2nd Order creeks
Important and Local Wetlands	Not present
Areas of Geological Significance and Soil Hazard Features	None identified
Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value	Not present
Connectivity Features	Hunter River
Priority Investment Areas	None identified

Throughout all field surveys and investigations, reconnaissance observations were undertaken to confirm the extent and condition of landscape features and native vegetation cover in the locality. Refer to the sections below for further detail on survey effort and timing.

2.3 Biodiversity Surveys

Biodiversity surveys were undertaken in accordance with the BAM and in consideration of relevant Commonwealth guidelines and included:

- vegetation integrity plot surveys and rapid vegetation assessments
- vegetation and TEC delineation
- threatened species surveys.

A summary of these methods is provided in the sections below.

2.3.1 Floristic and Vegetation Surveys

2.3.1.1 Vegetation Integrity Plot Surveys

A total of 155 vegetation integrity plots were conducted over 34 survey days in March, June, August, September and October 2020, April 2021, May 2023 and December 2023, February, March and June 2025 and June 2026 across the HVO Complex BIAAs (refer to **Figure 2.1**). Plot data was collected in accordance with requirements under the BAM. Plots undertaken in March, June and August 2020 are subject to data currency considerations, noting these were undertaken more than 5 years before this current assessment. These plots, while important for contextual purposes, are not included in the BAM-C and are not relied on for minimum plot requirements in accordance with the BAM or for calculating vegetation integrity scores. Furthermore, some plots are now irrelevant due to vegetation zones no longer proposed to be subject to disturbance. All relevant plots conducted from September 2020 to June 2026, totalling 92, are included in the reporting henceforth. Where plots are contextual only, this is noted.

Table 2.2 outlines the floristic plot survey effort and areas of the vegetation zones across the HVO North and South BIAAs (inclusive of the wider easement area, which is not proposed for impact). It is acknowledged that some BAM plots and rapid assessments were undertaken outside the BIAAs. This is due to the ongoing refinement and avoidance measures of the proposed additional disturbance footprint throughout the assessment process. The surveys in these locations are considered representative of the vegetation zones they have been assigned to.

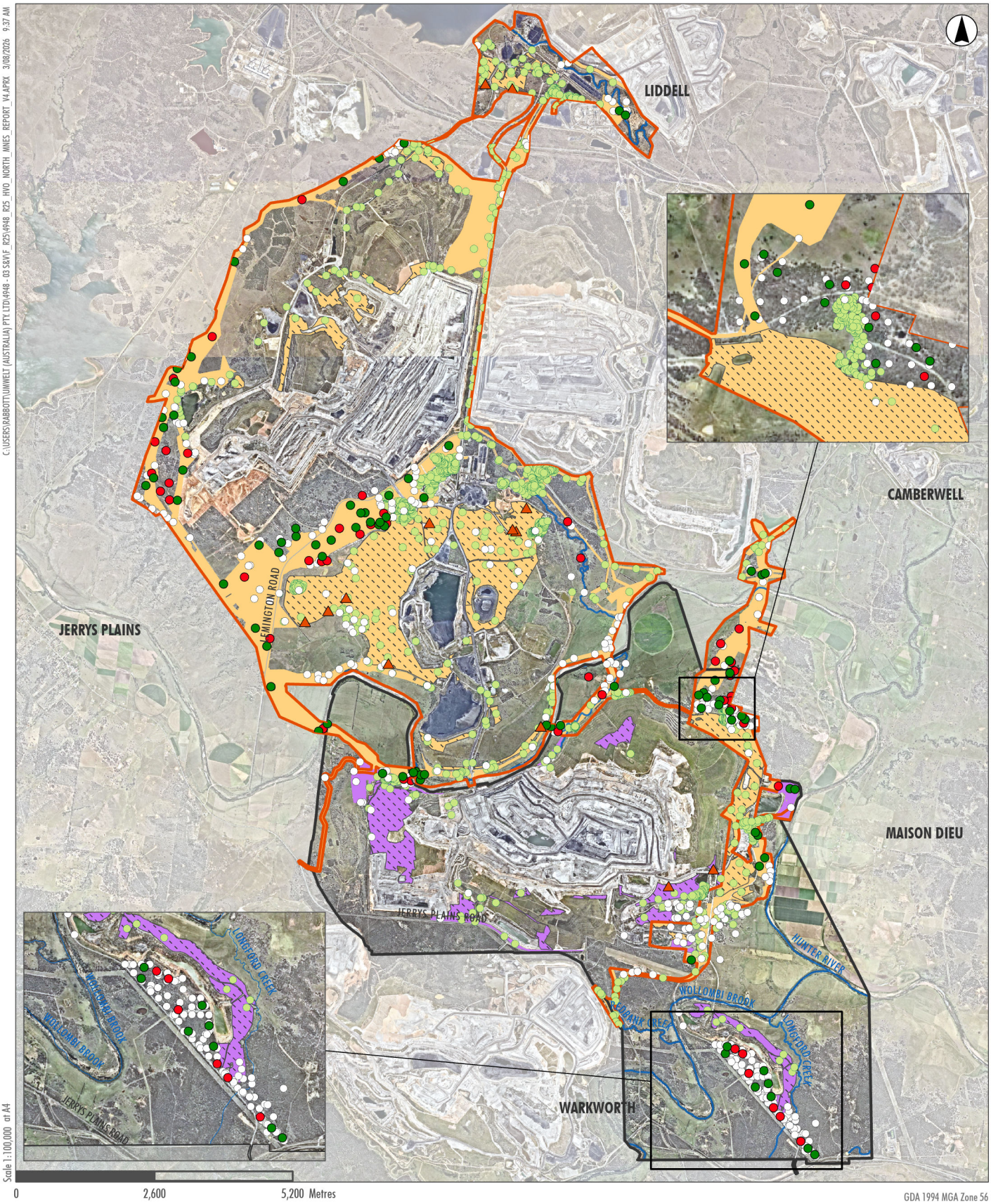
Table 2.2 Summary of Vegetation Survey and Vegetation Zones in the HVO Complex Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

Plant Community Type (PCT)	Condition	Area (ha)		
		HVO North BIAA	HVO South BIAA	Total
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	*Moderate*	100.3	3.9	104.2
	Thinned Woodland	13.3	1.9	15.2
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3	1.0	17.3
	Plantation	57.7	3.0	60.7
	Scattered Regeneration	90.8	3.9	94.7
	Cooba Woodland	62.9	8.6	71.5
	Bulloak Variant	40.0	0.0	40.0
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	1.6	0.0	1.6
	Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland	391.1	7.2	398.3
	Exotic Grassland	213.4	28.9	242.3
	Mine Rehabilitation (conforming to a PCT)	14.9	48.3	63.2
	TOTAL for PCT 3431	**1002.3**	**106.7**	**1109.0**
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	*Moderate*	7.3	0.0	7.3
	TOTAL for PCT 3485	**7.3**	**0.0**	**7.3**
4015 - Central Hunter Riparian Forest	*Moderate*	4.2	1.4	5.6
	TOTAL for PCT 4015	**4.2**	**1.4**	**5.6**
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	Moderate	4.2	0.0	4.2
	TOTAL for PCT 4081	**4.2**	**0.0**	**4.2**
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	*Moderate*	5.1	0.0	5.1
	Low to Moderate	8.2	0.4	8.6
	Cooba Woodland	0.2	0.6	0.8
	Derived Native Grassland	9.2	0.0	9.2

Plant Community Type (PCT)	Condition	Area (ha)		
		HVO North BIAA	HVO South BIAA	Total
	Exotic Grassland	160.4	17.0	177.4
	TOTAL for PCT 4089	**183.1**	**18.0**	**201.1**
Total Native Vegetation		**1201.1**	**126.1**	**1327.2**
Non-Native Vegetation and Cleared Lands				
Mine Rehabilitation (not conforming to a PCT)	*Plantation*	351.6	126.7	478.3
	Cooba Woodland	211.8	37.2	249.0
	Exotic Grassland	436.9	48.1	485.0
	TOTAL Mine Rehabilitation (not conforming to a PCT)	**1000.3**	**212.0**	**1212.3**
Cleared and non-vegetation land	Cleared	67.8	25.7	93.5
	Dams/Waterbodies	60.5	0.1	60.6
	TOTAL Cleared and non-vegetation land	**128.3**	**25.8**	**154.1**
Total Non-native Vegetation and Cleared Lands		**1128.6**	**237.8**	**1366.4**
	TOTAL BIAA	**2329.7**	**363.9**	**2693.6**

2.3.1.2 Rapid Vegetation Assessments

Rapid assessments were also completed at 168 locations across the HVO Complex BIAAs during the field surveys. An additional 160 rapid assessments were completed in the wider locality. Additional survey was undertaken in May 2023 to determine the biodiversity values of additional Domains, including Domains 2b and 4. An additional 1,341 vegetation notes were completed that document the floristic composition and condition of mine rehabilitation. Each comprised the recording of the dominant canopy and understorey species. The data from the rapid assessments were primarily used to aid in the delineation and refinement of vegetation mapping.



Legend

- HVO South Referral Area
- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- HVO South Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Category 1 - Exempt Land
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots for Credit Calculations
- Rapid Assessment Location
- Vegetation Notes
- Drainage Line
- Road

FIGURE 2.1

Floristic Survey Effort

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

2.4 Vegetation Mapping and TEC Delineation

2.4.1 Vegetation Mapping Techniques

Vegetation mapping was undertaken using best-practice techniques to delineate vegetation communities across the HVO Complex BIAA. Vegetation mapping involved the following key steps:

- Review of existing vegetation mapping (Peake 2006, Biosis 2010, Sivertsen *et al* 2011, Niche 2015, EMM 2016, Umwelt 2015a, Umwelt 2015b) within and surrounding the HVO Complex BIAA.
- Review of digital airborne imagery to explore vegetation distribution patterns as dictated by change in canopy texture, tone and colour, as well as topography.
- Preparation of a draft vegetation community map based on interpretation of digital airborne imagery and preliminary delineation of vegetation community floristics.
- Ground-truthing of previous vegetation mapping.
- Revision of vegetation community floristic delineations based on plot and semi-quantitative rapid assessment data and ground-truthing.
- Vegetation communities were delineated through the identification of repeating patterns of plant species assemblages in each of the identified strata.

Vegetation communities in the HVO Complex BIAA were mapped on-screen overlaying high resolution aerial photographs from 2022, provided by HVO. Mapping was undertaken using the Manifold System 8.0 Enterprise Edition GIS in a 32-bit mode. Use of GIS allowed zooming to a relatively large scale. Generally, the minimum mapping unit for a vegetation zone was 0.1 ha, however mapping was occasionally completed at a finer scale in order to map narrow bands of vegetation, such as along drainage lines, fence lines and roadsides and disturbed land along access tracks and other areas, where relevant.

Following the positive identification of the Hunter Valley Delma in rehabilitation habitats associated with Domain 2b in 2026, additional BAM vegetation integrity (VI) plots were completed and a review of more recent (January 2026) high resolution aerial photography was undertaken to refine the vegetation zone mapping across Domain 2b.

2.4.2 Delineation of Threatened Ecological Communities

Vegetation communities identified in the HVO Complex BIAA were compared to TECs listed under the EPBC Act and an assessment of similarity with the Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) listing and conservation advice and/or policy statements. *The following approach was used:*

- full-floristic plot assessment, semi-quantitative rapid assessments and meandering survey to determine floristic composition and structure of each PCT
- soil sampling and geomorphological assessment to identify areas likely to contain aeolian sands
- application of TEC diagnostic characteristics and condition thresholds, as identified in the listing advice provided by the TSSC
- comparison with published species lists, including lists of 'important species' as identified on the listing advice provided by the TSSC

- comparison with habitat descriptions and distributions for listed TECs
- assessment using guidelines and recovery plans published by the Commonwealth DCCEEW
- comparison with other assessments of TECs in the region.

The TECs listed under the EPBC Act that are relevant to the HVO North Action and the specific survey and assessment methods undertaken are detailed in **Table 2.3** below.

Table 2.3 EPBC Act TECs and Survey and Delineation Methods

Threatened Ecological Community	Survey Methods and TEC Delineation
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland critically endangered ecological community (CEEC)	**Sampling Protocols** • 15 0.04 ha (20 m x 20 m) floristic plots in the HVO Complex BIAA (2 floristic plots in the wider locality). • 51 rapid assessments in the HVO Complex BIAA. • 544 vegetation notes in the CEEC. • Relevant key diagnostic characteristics for the *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* were recorded. Areas with the highest apparent number of different native plant species were targeted for sampling in patches. • Consideration was afforded to areas of significant variation in vegetation, landscape qualities and management history within patches. **TEC Delineation** Vegetation communities were compared to the key diagnostic characteristics and condition thresholds outlined in the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015) for *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*. Areas of vegetation were excluded from the community when the relevant key diagnostics and/or conditions thresholds were not met including where: • patches were located on alluvial flats, river terraces or aeolian sands • patches were less than the minimum 0.5 ha (woodland component) condition threshold • patches were not consistent with woodland or forest with a projected canopy cover of at least 10%, or native trees density of at least 10 native tree stems per 0.5 ha • the key diagnostic characteristic for the canopy was not met, in which the canopy was not dominated by one or more of the four characteristic species: • spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) • narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) • slaty box (*Eucalyptus dawsonii)* • grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) • the canopy was dominated by bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) and one or more of the four characteristic eucalypt species were largely absent • contraindicative species, namely broad-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus fibrosa*), were not largely absent, or • the perennial native understorey vegetative cover was less than 50%.

Threatened Ecological Community	Survey Methods and TEC Delineation
Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC	**Sampling Protocols** • Three 0.04 ha (20 m x 20 m) floristic plots in the wider locality. One additional plot within the HVO Complex BIAA and 10 in the wider locality were assigned to this TEC, but are considered ecotonal with adjoining communities. • Five rapid assessments in the HVO Complex BIAA. • Six vegetation notes in the CEEC. • Soil sampling at 46 locations and geomorphological assessment of potential aeolian sands. • Relevant key diagnostic characteristics for the *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* were recorded. **TEC Delineation** Vegetation communities were compared to the key diagnostic characteristics outlined in the *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2016). Vegetation was assessed as consistent with the CEEC when they satisfied the relevant key diagnostic characteristics: • occurs on aeolian sands of the Warkworth Land System • is a mid to low woodland (occasionally forest), with a projected crown cover of at least 10% • a ground layer is present (although it may vary in development and composition), and contains a sparse to thick layer of native shrubs, bracken, grasses and/or other native herbs • is characterised by multiple flora species listed in the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2016), although not all species need be present and • occurs as a patch at least 0.1 ha in size. Condition thresholds have not been applied because less than 500 ha of the ecological community remains (TSSC 2016). Derived native grasslands are not included in the CEEC, except where they fill a gap in, or at the edge of a patch, or between two patches less than 30 m apart (TSSC 2016).
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC	**Sampling Protocols** • Three 0.04 ha (20 m x 20 m) floristic plots, with a 20 m x 30 m extension being searched for additional native understorey species in areas identified as having potential to conform to the CEEC due to the presence of the characteristic tree species. These plots are located adjacent to the HVO Complex BIAA. • Three rapid assessments in the HVO Complex BIAA. • Two vegetation notes in the CEEC. • Relevant key diagnostic characteristics for the White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC were recorded. **TEC Delineation** Vegetation communities present were compared to the information contained in the *White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC* Policy Statement (DEH 2006a). Vegetation was assessed as consistent with the CEEC using the flowchart provided in the Policy Statement, which included areas where:

Threatened Ecological Community	Survey Methods and TEC Delineation
	• white box (*Eucalyptus albens*), yellow box (*E. melliodora*) or Blakely's red gum (*E. blakelyi*) is, or was, at least one of the most common overstorey species • the patch has a predominantly native understorey • the patch is a minimum of 0.1 ha in size • a sufficient number of specified native understorey species are present. In the event that the last point is not met, the patch can be assessed as being the CEEC if the patch is at least 2 ha in size and it contains an average of 20 or more mature trees per hectare, or contains native regeneration of the dominant eucalypts.
Hunter Valley Weeping Myall (Acacia pendula) Woodland CEEC	**Sampling Protocols** • One 0.04 ha (20 m x 20 m) floristic plot. Searched for native as per Table A1 of Appendix A of the Conservation Advice. • Two vegetation notes in the CEEC. • Relevant key diagnostic characteristics for the *Hunter Valley Weeping Myall (Acacia pendula) Woodland* were recorded. • TEC Delineation • The minimum condition of a patch for this communities includes: • The patch of the ecological community must be 0.1 ha or more in size. • AND • At least 10 native plant species, from the list of native plants at Table A1, **Appendix A**, are present in a sample plot; • AND • Non-native perennial plants account for no more than 70 % of the vegetation cover in each vegetation layer of the patch (including annual plus perennial life histories).

2.4.3 Threatened Species Surveys

Surveys were undertaken for the threatened species considered to have reasonable potential to occur in the HVO Complex BIAAs based on database reviews, including the EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) (DCCEEW 2024a) and NSW BioNet Atlas (Atlas) (DPE 2025a). Surveys included species-specific surveys and on-ground searches in suitable habitat throughout the HVO Complex BIAA. Additionally, opportunistic surveys were undertaken for these species in conjunction with the flora survey methods described above. Flora and fauna survey locations are shown in **Figure 2.2** and **Figure 2.3** respectively, with methods detailed in **Table 2.4** below**.**

Habitat assessments were undertaken across the HVO Complex BIAAs in June and August 2019, March 2020, May, August, September, October and November 2023 and March 2025 to identify potential habitat for threatened species. Habitat features, including hollow-bearing trees, hollow logs, active nests and waterbodies, were recorded on a handheld GPS to inform further survey effort.

Table 2.4 Threatened Species Survey Methodology Summary

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Targeted threatened flora transect surveys Following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020f). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses. Sampling and opportunistic observations were undertaken during all floristic and vegetation plot surveys.	All threatened flora species.	10 days in October 2020 with 2 ecologists (20 person days) 1 day in October 2021 with 6 ecologists (6 person days) 1 day in August 2022 1 day in September 2023 with 2 ecologists (2 person days) 1 day in November 2023 5 days in October 2025	Surveying threatened plants and their habitats NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method (DPIE 2020f). Draft guidelines for surveying Australia's threatened orchids (DoE 2013a). NSW Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) (DPIE 2021).
Diurnal bird surveys Undertaken during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. The surveys also included targeted call playback surveys for swift parrot and regent honeyeater as well as targeted habitat assessments for any suitable winter foraging resources.	Swift parrot Regent honeyeater Southern glossy black cockatoo Gang-gang cockatoo woodland birds	24 person hours across 40 locations from 3–6 June 2019 and 12–15 August 2019 19 person hours across 19 locations from 6–10 July 2020 42 person hours across 42 locations from 14–18 and 29 August 2023 23–26 June 2025 14–19 and 26–27 August 2025	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened birds (DEWHA 2010a). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2024c). Important habitat mapping for swift parrot and regent honeyeater (DPE).
Searches for hollow-bearing trees and nesting/roosting habitat Searches were undertaken across the BIAAs. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests.	All hollow dependent threatened fauna species.	23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 4–6 November 2025	NSW TBDC (DPHI 2024c).

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Amphibians – nocturnal spotlighting and call playback surveys Targeted green and golden bell frog surveys were completed. Surveys included call playback, which consisted of a period of quiet listening for five (5) minutes followed by broadcasting green and golden bell frog calls over a 15-watt directional loud hailer for approximately four (4) minutes. Following call playback, spotlighting and active searches of banks with emergent vegetation and overhanging trees were completed. Each dam or area of deemed suitable habitat was surveyed twice over four consecutive nights, within the seasonal survey period.	Green and golden bell frog	4 consecutive nights (8 person hours) across 17 dams, drainage line or river edge locations from 23–26 March 2020 (call playback) 4 consecutive nights (7 person hours) across 17 dams, drainage line or river edge locations from 23–26 March 2020 (nocturnal spotlighting) 7 dams within and surrounding the BIAAs from 23–27 October 2023 (6.83 person hours) 3–6, 10–13, 24–27 March 2025	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened frogs (DEWHA 2010b).
Mammal - Nocturnal spotlighting and call playback surveys Spotlighting was undertaken at sites located in suitable habitat between 10–30 minutes and involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Call playback was conducted with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. Species calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes.	Southern greater glider Koala	23–26 March 2020 (7 person hours over 4 consecutive nights across 16 locations) 23–26 March 2020 (9.8 person hours across 16 locations) 6–9 July 2020 (6.4 person hours over 4 consecutive nights across 15 locations) 3–6, 10–13, 24–27 March 2025	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DSEWPC 2011b). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2024c). Koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide (DPE 2022).

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Chorus echolocation detector surveys & opportunistic encounters A Chorus echolocation detector was placed at each end of the culvert, with recording set to continuous. Surveys also included late afternoon searches for opportunistic encounters with microbats followed by conducting a dusk survey at each end of the culverts to observe any microbats exiting the potential roosts. The microbat ultrasonic call data was processed and analysed by Dr Anna McConville Ecologist/Director of Echo Ecology and Surveying.	Large-eared pied bat	13 recording nights over 4 nights in six locations in March 2020. Two targeted culvert locations in the locality of the BIAAs. Surveys focused on two (2) culverts across two (2) locations over two (2) nights, totalling eight (8) trap nights in October 2023. Acoustic recorders deployed 11–13 June 2025	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened bats (DEWHA 2010b). The BIAAs are not within areas that constitute the following habitat constraint as noted in the TBDC and the 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats survey guide': 'within two kilometres of rocky areas containing caves, overhangs, escarpments, outcrops, or crevices, or old mines or tunnels'.
Thermal drone surveys Thermal drone flight paths were undertaken in areas of suitable koala habitat in accordance with the BAM (2020). Detection methods included hot spot alert, shape detection, characteristic trait, drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight. Survey times were between 21:00–06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures.	Koala	All potential koala habitat was subject to thermal drone surveys between 12 and 20 July 2023.	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DSEWPC 2011b). A review of koala habitat assessment criteria and methods (Youngentob et al. 2021). Koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide (DPE 2022).

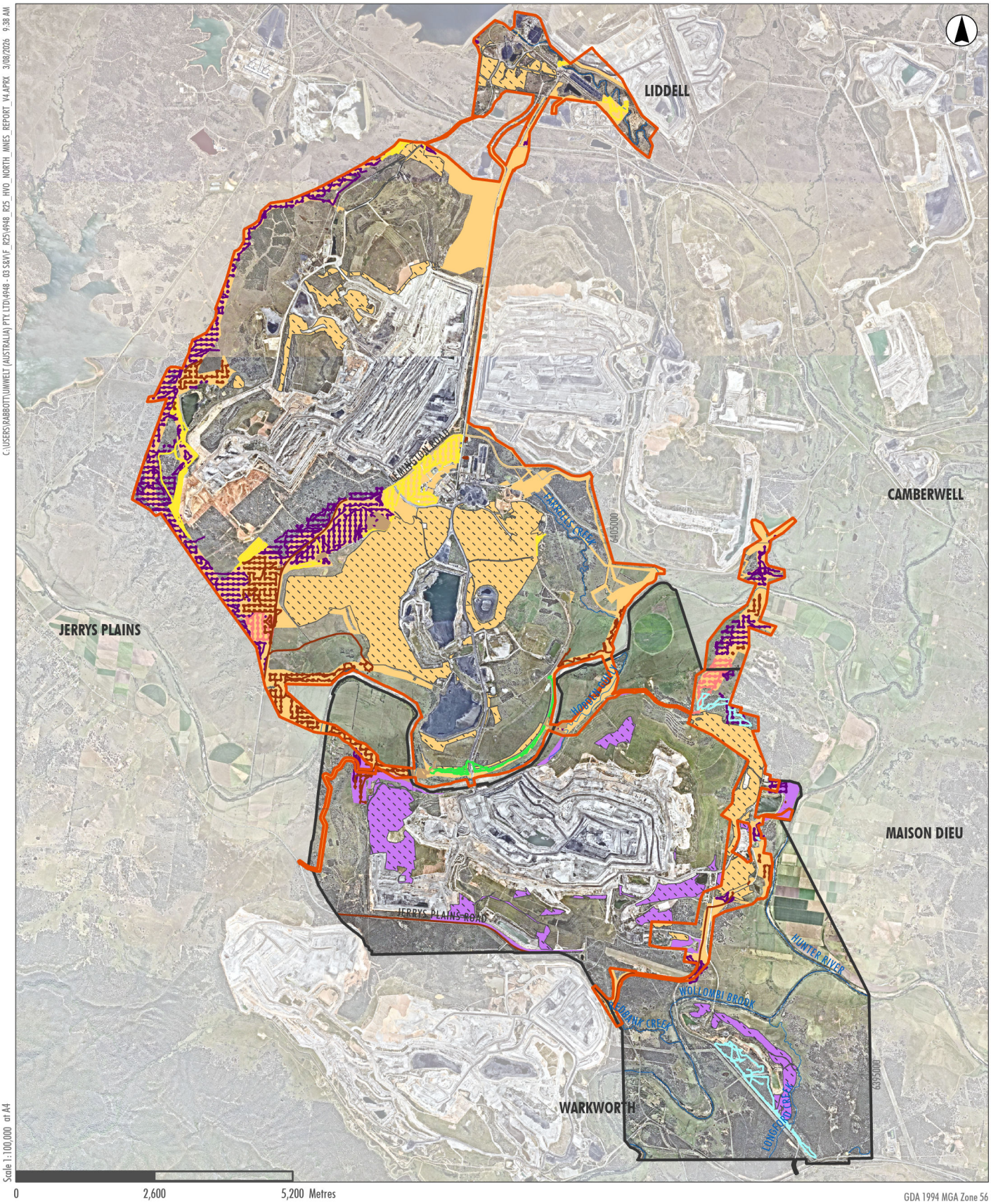
Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Koala Spot Assessment Technique (SAT) Koala SATs were undertaken on and around the base of 30 trees at each survey site. The searches focused on signs of presence including scats at the base of trees and characteristic scratches on tree trunks.	Koala	6–10 July 2020 29 May – 2 June 2023 5-9 June 2023. 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 11–13 June 2025	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DSEWPC 2011b). Phillips, S., and Callaghan, J. (2011). The Spot Assessment Technique: a tool for determining localised levels of habitat use by Koalas Phascolarctos cinereus. Australian Zoologist 35(3): 774–780. A review of koala habitat assessment criteria and methods (Youngentob et al. 2021). Koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide (DPE 2022)
Pitfall trap arrays 64 pitfall trap arrays were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of 10 m of drift-fence with a 20 L bucket with a lid at either end. The lid was elevated 2 to 3 cm (using sticks) above the lip of the bucket. Leaf litter and small twigs were placed in the bottom of each bucket to provide shelter for trapped animals.	New Holland mouse Hunter Valley delma	29 May – 2 June 2023 5–9 June 2023 10–14 July 2023 17–21 July 2023 24–28 July 2023 7–11 August 2023.	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DSEWPC 2011b). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2025c).

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Delma sp. artificial habitat surveys Tile grids consisted of 50 tiles, at 5 m spacing between tiles, arranged in a grid of 10 tiles by five. This survey was undertaken in consideration of the methods outlined in the *EPBC Act Referral Guidelines for the vulnerable striped legless lizard Delma impar* (DSWPC 2011c).	Hunter Valley delma	**2020 Survey** 10 tile grids installed on 13 August 2020, checked weekly for 6 weeks from 22 September to 28 October 2020. Six of these tile grids were relocated between 4 and 6 November 2020 (following confirmation of the species in relevant vegetation zones). 4 additional tile grids were also installed between 4 and 6 November 2020 and the 14 installed grids checked weekly between 12 November to 8 December 2020. **2021 Survey** 4 tile grids installed between 27 and 29 July 2021 and checked weekly between 7 October and 20 December 2021. **2026 Survey – mine rehabilitation** 32 tile grids installed in mine rehabilitation and checked weekly between 2 March and 11 May 2026.	Striped legless lizard SPRAT profile (DAWE 2021a). Referral guidelines for the striped legless lizard, *Delma impar* (DSEWPC 2011c). Survey guidelines for Australia's Threatened Reptiles (DSEWPC 2011a). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2025c). BOS Helpdesk advice (December 2025)
Funnel traps 17 collapsible funnel trap arrays were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of a 10 m drift fence with 10 collapsible funnel traps positioned equidistantly along the each side of the drift fence. Collapsible funnels were positioned so that they were flush with the ground.	New Holland mouse.	29 May – 2 June 2023.	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DSEWPC 2011b). NSW TBDC (DPIE 2024c).

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Daytime searches for grey-headed flying-fox breeding camps Conducted concurrently with threatened flora and fauna surveys undertaken comprehensively across the BIAAs.	Grey-headed flying-fox.	12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 14–15, 18–19, 26–27 August 2025 4-6 November 2025	Survey guidelines for Australia's Threatened Bats (DEWHA 2010). 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method (DPIE 2021). NSWTBDC (DPIE 2024c). National Recovery Plan for the Grey-headed Flying-fox (DAWE 2021b). National Flying-Fox Monitoring Viewer (DCCEEW 2023b).
Remote Camara Surveys The remote camera survey was undertaken partially within the optimal survey period May to August. At each site, a Swift Enduro remote camera or Bushnell Trophy Cam HD was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected.	Spotted-tail quoll Southern greater glider Koala	126 trap nights across 9 locations from 24 March–8 July 2020. Within and surrounding the BIAAs. 19 cameras and 1381 trap-nights from 17 August until 30 October 2023. 22 October – 17 December 2025. 16 December 2025 – 3 February 2026	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DEWHA 2010c). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2025c).

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Land-based Area Search/ Diurnal Bird Surveys Land-based area searches Suitable hollows (i.e. hollows greater than 7 centimetres in diameter and more than 3 metres above the ground) were identified in June. These suitable hollows were revisited and observed over the two days, totalling 3.3 person hours, with the intent to identify breeding activity. Surveys were undertaken during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity), using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars to aid identification as needed. Diurnal bird surveys Undertaken during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity), diurnal bird surveys comprised 15–20 minutes of observation by two ecologists using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars to aid identification.	Gang-gang cockatoo Glossy-black cockatoo	200 person hours of Surveys across the BIAA from 23–26 March and 12–16 October and 19–23 October 2020. 36 hours of surveys of 36 potential hollow locations across the BIAA from 14–18 and 29 August 2023. Surveys from 30–31 October 2023. Hollows suitable for Gang-gangs in Domain 4. 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 Hollows suitable for gang gangs.	Gang-gang cockatoo was listed after the Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened birds, therefore the guidance in the TBDC was considered. The land-based area search approach recommended by DEWHA (2010c), incorporating the description of breeding habitat from BioNet Atlas TBDC (DPIE 2024c).
Photograph Comparison Comparison of the photos of legless lizards were recorded at HVO to determine if they demonstrated the morphological features of the newly described Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) and compared these with features of striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*). This assessment focused on photos that clearly showed the scalation of the head due to the main distinguishing morphological features of *Delma vescolineata* compared with other *Delma* sp. being that the third labial scale occurs directly under the eye opposed to occurring before the eye towards the snout.	Hunter Valley delma Striped legless lizard	The photos that showed the side profile of the individuals head were confirmed to be *Delma vescolineata*. The legless lizards attributed to striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*) at HVO prior to identification of the newly-described Hunter Valley delma, are therefore considered to be *Delma vescolineata*.	Striped legless lizard SPRAT profile (DAWE 2021a). Referral guidelines for the striped legless lizard, *Delma impar* (DSEWPC 2011c). Survey guidelines for Australia's Threatened Reptiles (DSEWPC 2011a). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2025c).

Survey Method	Relevant MNES	Survey Effort	Relevant Guidelines and Resources
Targeted bird of prey nest searches Targeted bird of prey nest searches were undertaken. Suitable nest tree sand stags were recorded and inspected for large nests.	White-bellied sea-eagle	300 people hours of surveying across the BIAA from: 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October and 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023.	Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened birds (DEWHA 2010a). NSW TBDC (DPHI 2025c).



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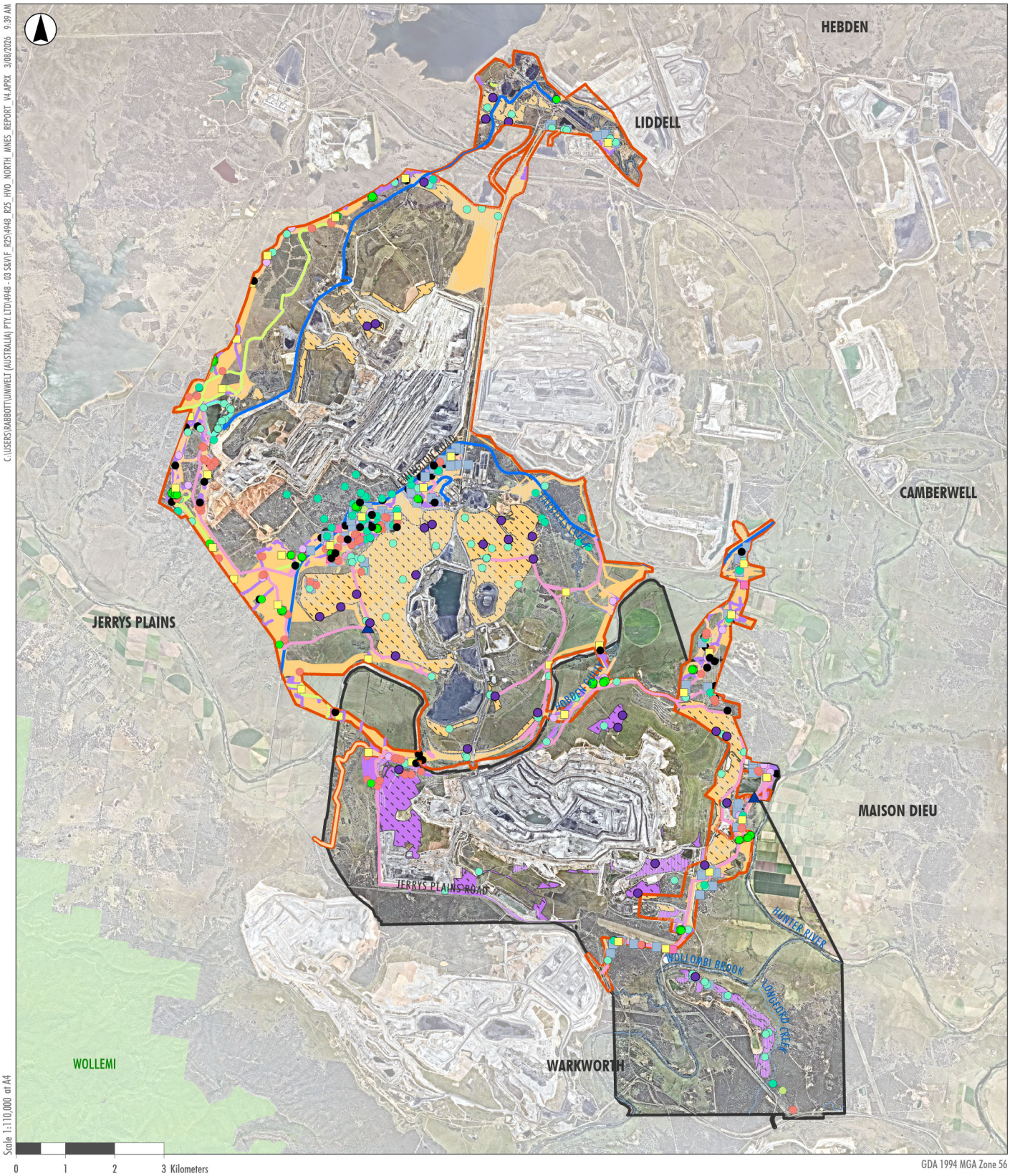
Legend

- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO South Referral Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- HVO South Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Category 1 - Exempt Land
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (February 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)
- Targeted RRG Traverses (August 2022)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (September 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)
- Road
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 2.2

Threatened Flora Survey Effort

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO South Referral Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- HVO South Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Category 1 - Exempt Land
- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May-June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019-2020; August - October 2023, August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023, October-December 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020-2021)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2026)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Search for Microbat Roosting in Culverts (October 2023)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March-April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Green and golden bell frog call playback and spotlighting surveys for Commonwealth Assessment
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

FIGURE 2.3

Threatened Fauna Survey Effort

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

2.5 BAM-C Assessment for MNES

Following consultation with DCCEEW, the assessment of impacts to biodiversity has used the assessment framework established under the BC Act to determine the impacts of the Project on MNES. Similarly, the identification of biodiversity offset needs has utilised the BAM to determine the quantum of impacts required to compensate for the residual impacts of the HVO North Action.

As outlined in **Section 1.5**, Domain 3 represents the Development Footprint as per the SSD application submitted under the EP&A Act. This area has been assessed in accordance with the BAM and an offset credit obligation has already been determined as reported in the BDAR (refer to **Appendix D**). Relevant impacts to MNES that occur in Domain 3 are assessed in this report, however the BAM-C assessment has not been altered, other than reporting on any MNES-related offset obligations.

Domains 2b and 4 represent the additional areas for the Project that require Commonwealth approval. As agreed with DCCEEW, these areas have been assessed in accordance with the BAM, focusing on the MNES considered likely or with the potential to be significantly impacted by the HVO North Action as per the controlled action decision.

For the HVO North Action the following MNES are considered likely to be significantly impacted:

- *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*
- Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*)
- Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*).

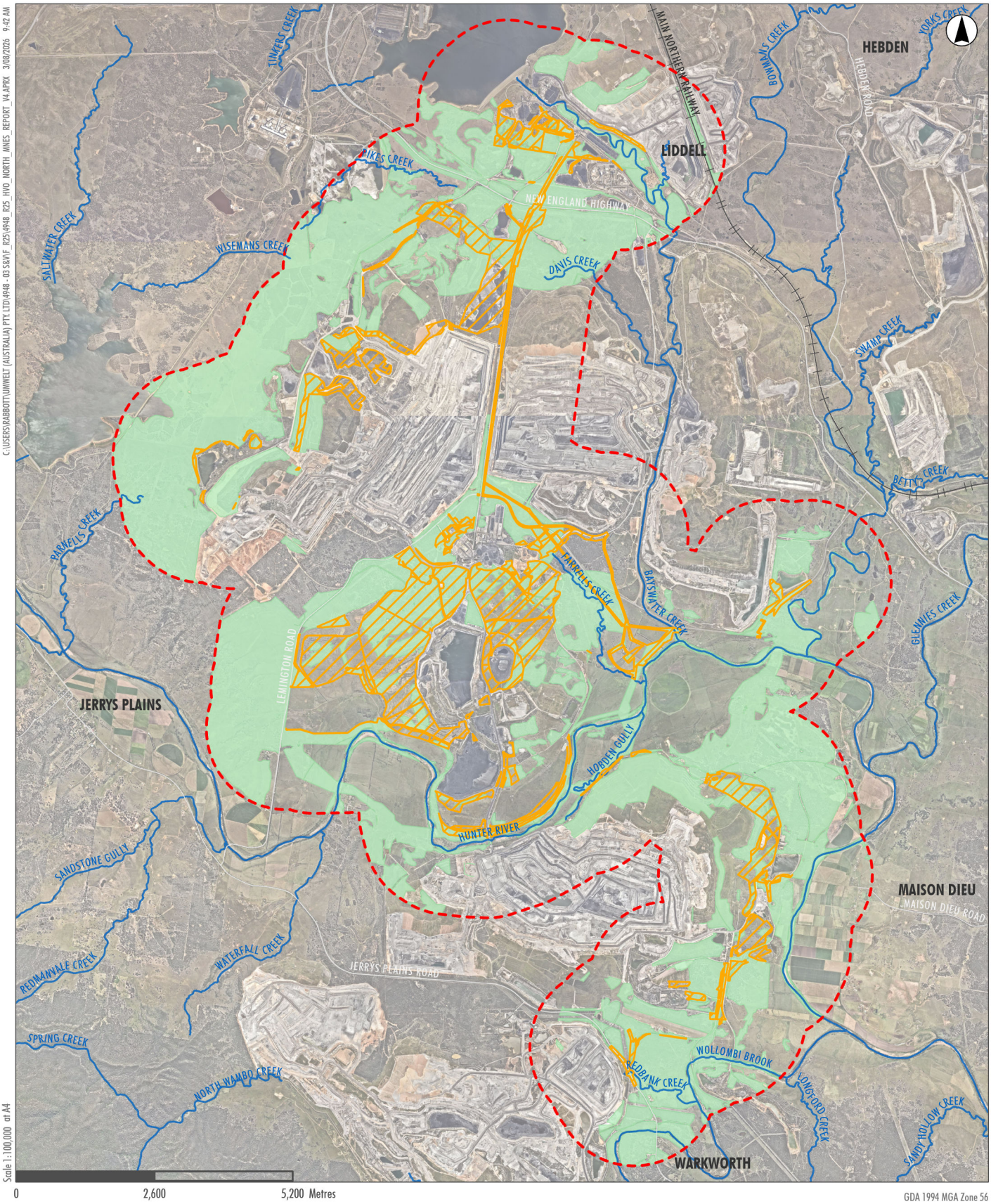
And the following MNES considered to have the potential to be significantly impacted:

- Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*)
- Large-eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*).
- White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC.

Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC is also noted by the Commonwealth DCCEEW in the PER Guidelines, however, as discussed in the Referral, this community has been entirely avoided by the HVO North Action (refer to **Section 5.2.1.1** for more detail).

As per the BAM, suitable habitat as per associated PCTs and important habitat mapping has been used to estimate the impact of the HVO North Action on these entities, however where relevant, further information from Commonwealth conservation advices, recovery plans and supplementary information has been used to guide the assessment.

A separate BAM-C assessment has been prepared for Domains 2b and 4 (as well as impacts to Hunter Valley Delma in Domain 2b) to determine the offsetting requirements for the additional areas of impact relevant to the Commonwealth approval pathway. Details of the assessment are outlined in **Table 2.5**. **Figure 2.4** shows the 1,500 m buffer and native vegetation cover applied in the BAM-C. Credit obligations for Domain 3 are also reported here as per the outcomes presented in the BDAR.



Legend

- Domain 2B and 4
- 1500m Buffer
- Native Vegetation in the 1500m Buffer
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 2.4

BAM-C Assessment for Domain 2b and 4

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

Table 2.5 Additional BAM-C Assessment Detail for Commonwealth Assessment Areas

BAM Assessment Details	
Site Name	HVO North Commonwealth Assessment
Domains Assessed	Domain 2b and 4
LGA	Singleton Council Muswellbrook Shire Council
Assessment Type	Major Project (Site-based)
Assessment ID	Domain 4 - 00060513/BAAS17005/25/00060514 Domain 2b - 00060513/BAAS17005/26/00065129 Domain 2b (Hunter Valley Delma) - 00059988/BAAS17005/25/00059989
Contributing BAM Accredited Assessors	Kate Connolly (BAM-C Assessment and Report Preparation) Allison Riley (Report Preparation)

3.0 Matters of National Environmental Significance

3.1 Likelihood of Occurrence

Threatened species, TECs and wetlands of international importance listed under the EPBC Act having the potential to occur in the HVO North BIAA have been identified based on the results of the searches of the BCD Atlas of NSW Wildlife Database (DPE 2023a) and DCCEEW Protected Matters Database (DCCEEW 2024a) and are outlined in **Section 3.0** and included in **Appendix A.**

Additionally, migratory species listed under international agreements being the Bonn Convention (Bonn), China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA), Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) or Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA) with potential to occur in the HVO North BIAA have also been identified based on the results of the searches and are in **Table 3.2**.

Purely marine and pelagic species have been omitted from **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** due to a lack of suitable habitat.

Species/communities with a reasonable potential to be impacted by the HVO North Action are subject to Assessments of Significance under the EPBC Act (refer to **Section 4.0**).

Figure 3.1 shows the vegetation mapping of the HVO North BIAA. **Figure 3.2** shows the location of EPBC Act listed threatened species and habitat mapped within the HVO North BIAA and the individual records of EPBC Act listed species within and around the HVO North BIAA.

Abbreviations and terms used within **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** include the following:

V	Vulnerable
E	Endangered
EEC	Endangered Ecological Community
CE	Critically Endangered
CEEC	Critically Endangered Ecological Community
VEC	Vulnerable Ecological Community
C	CAMBA
J	JAMBA
K	ROKAMBA
B	Bonn
PMST	Protected Matters Search Tool
Buffer area	10 km buffer around HVO Complex BIAA using PMST and for EPBC Act listed species records from BioNet

Table 3.1 MNES Recorded or with Potential to Occur in the HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
World Heritage/National Heritage Properties					
The Greater Blue Mountains Area	-	Declared Property/ Listed Place	In buffer area only	**Not present** – occurs south of the Golden Highway approximately 6 km to the southwest of the BIAA. Disturbances in the BIAA will not have any impact on the Greater Blue Mountains Area Heritage Property.	No
Wetlands of International Importance					
Hunter Estuary Wetlands	-	Ramsar	Ramsar Wetlands – 70 km downstream from feature area	**Not present** – occurs approximately 70 km to the southeast of the BIAA. Disturbances in the BIAA and along the Hunter River are note expected to have any direct or indirect impact on the Hunter Estuary Wetlands Ramsar Site.	No
Threatened Ecological Communities					
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland	-	CEEC	Likely to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – known to occur within the HVO North BIAA and surrounds.	**Yes**
Coastal Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) Forest of New South Wales and South East Queensland	-	EEC	May occur in the feature area	**Not Present** – occurrences of Swamp Oak Forest in the HVO Complex BIAAs is located above 70 m ASL and therefore a key diagnostic feature for the community is not satisfied. Action is considered unlikely to have any measurable impacts on downstream riparian systems where this community may be present.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Coastal Swamp Sclerophyll Forest of New South Wales and South East Queensland	EEC	EEC	May occur in the feature area	**Not present** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on habitat requirements and known distribution.	No
Hunter Valley Weeping Myall (*Acacia pendula*) Woodland	CEEC	CEEC	Likely to occur in the feature area	**Not present** – *Acacia pendula* individuals were recorded in roadside plantings along Lemington Road and in adjacent paddocks. This area of weeping myall occurs within an area of highly modified derived native grassland, with introduced species dominating the ground layer. This occurrence of the species does not meet the condition thresholds as outlined the Approved Conservation Advice for the CEEC.	No
Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia	-	CEEC	Likely to occur in the feature area	**Not present** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on habitat requirements and known distribution.	No
River-flat eucalypt forest on coastal floodplains of southern New South Wales and eastern Victoria	EEC	CEEC	May occur in the feature area	**Not present** – vegetation with a canopy dominated by rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*) are more consistent with *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*. Vegetation with a canopy dominated by grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) are more consistent with *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Subtropical eucalypt floodplain forest and woodland of the New South Wales North Coast and South East Queensland bioregions	EEC	EEC	Likely to occur in the feature area	**Not present** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on habitat requirements and known distribution.	No
Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley	EEC	CEEC	May occur in the feature area	**Not present –** impacts to this community have been avoided (refer to **Section 5.2.1.1**).	No
White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland	CEEC	CEEC	Likely to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** –recorded within the HVO North BIAA.	**Yes**
Threatened Flora Species					
Allocasuarina glareicola	E	E	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Primarily restricted to the Richmond district (NW Cumberland Plain), no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Androcalva procumbens (syn. Commersonia procumbens)	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Known only from a small number of populations mainly confined to the Dubbo-Mendooran-Gilgandra region, no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Trailing woodruff *Asperula asthenes*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – one specimen was recorded in 2006 approximately 2 km north of Camberwell but has not been recorded within the BIAA despite targeted floristic surveys and is unlikely to occur due to past disturbances.	No
Leafless tongue-orchid *Cryptostylis hunteriana*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite floristic surveys and suitable habitat for this species does not occur within the BIAA. Known populations are scattered along the east coast. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
White-flowered wax plant *Cynanchum elegans*	E	E	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and suitable habitat for this species does not occur within the BIAA. One record of the species occurs in the wider locality (within 10 km), within Wollemi National Park.	No
Bluegrass *Dichanthium setosum*	V	V	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Slaty red gum *Eucalyptus glaucina*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – several individuals have been recorded within 1 km of the HVO North BIAA near Archerfield Road and the proposed Lemington Road realignment. However, this species is highly detectable and was not recorded within the BIAA despite targeted floristic surveys.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Euphrasia arguta	CE	CE	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Known populations are primarily restricted to the Nundle area, with sporadic occurrences recorded near the Hastings River and Barrington Tops. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Hibbertia acaulothrix	-	E	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Homoranthus darwinioides	V	V	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Found primarily west of Muswellbrook between Merriwa and Bylong, no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Spiny peppercress *Lepidium aschersonii*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Known populations are primarily restricted to the Yarrie Lake area, north of Pilliga State Conservation Area, with sporadic occurrences recorded in the Riverina region.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Olearia cordata	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Restricted to the south-western Hunter Plateau, eastern Colo Plateau, and the far north-west of the Hornsby Plateau. All records of the species within the wider locality (within 10 km) are recorded from Wollemi National Park and they represent the northern known limit of the species' range.	No
Ozothamnus tesselatus	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – one specimen was recorded in 2003 in Ravensworth State Forest, approximately 7 km north east of the HVO North BIAA. It has not been recorded within the BIAA despite targeted floristic surveys and is unlikely to occur due to past disturbances.	No
Small-flower Grevillea *Grevillea parviflora subsp. parviflora*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Known populations in the region include around Cessnock and Kurri Kurri and possibly in Wollemi National Park.	No
Hairy geebung, hairy persoonia *Persoonia hirsuta*	E	E	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Hawkweed *Picris evae*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. Primarily restricted to the New England region. However, two specimens were recorded in 1999, approximately 60 km north of Action Area adjacent to Cameron's Gorge Nature Reserve, no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Rufous Pomaderris, Brown Pomaderris *Pomaderris brunnea*	E	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Found in a very limited area around the Colo, Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers, no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Prasophyllum sp. *Wybong* (C.Phelps ORG 5269)	-	CE	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Known only from a small number of populations west of Muswellbrook, and no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Prostanthera cineolifera	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. Occurs on exposed sandstone ridges and restricted to a few localities near Scone, Cessnock and St Albans. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Wollemi mint-bush *Prostanthera cryptandroides subsp. Cryptandroides*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Illawarra greenhood *Pterostylis gibbosa*	E	E	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. Known only from a small number of populations in the Hunter around Milbrodale, the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven regions. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Scrub turpentine *Rhodamania rubescens*	CE	CE	Species or species habitat known to occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs due to extensive survey effort not recording this highly detectable species. A single record occurs 6 km to the north of the HVO North BIAA near Liddell Power Station.	No
Eastern underground orchid *Rhizanthella slateri*	V	E	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs and unlikely to occur based on known distribution in proximity to the coast. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Heath wrinklewort *Rutidosis heterogama*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Magenta lilly pilly *Syzygium paniculatum*	E	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Austral toadflax *Thesium australe*	V	V	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted floristic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. The main species with which it is associated, *Themeda triandra*, was not recorded in the BIAA. No records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Wollemi Pine *Wollemia nobilis*	CE	CE	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs and unlikely to occur based on known distribution. Restricted to remote canyons in the Wollemi National Park, no records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	No
Threatened Fauna Species					
Green and golden bell frog *Litoria aurea*	E	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – previously recorded in proximity to the HVO North BIAA, however the species has not been recorded in the central Hunter Valley since 2009 (at Ravensworth) despite many fauna monitoring programs and ecological surveys in the locality. The species has not been recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted surveys being undertaken and is considered unlikely to occur.	No
Giant burrowing frog *Heleioporus australiacus*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds and unlikely to occur based on known distribution and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Booroolong frog *Litoria booroolongensis*	E	E	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds and unlikely to occur based on known distribution and lack of suitable habitat.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Pink-tailed worm-lizard *Aprasia parapulchella*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs despite targeted surveys. Two records from 2018 occur approximately 7 km northwest of the HVO North BIAA in association with the Maxwell Underground Coal Mine project. The species is known to occur in concentrated populations in the Canberra/Queanbeyan Region, including near Cooma, Yass, Bathurst, Albury and West Wyalong. The species is known to occupy grasslands that contain embedded rocks which does not occur in the BIAA.	No
Hunter Valley Delma *Delma vescolineata*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – targeted surveys within the HVO North BIAA identified the Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) in open/sparse remnant and mine rehabilitation habitats.	**Yes**
Blue-winged parrot *Neophema chrysostoma*	-	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds and unlikely to occur based on known distribution and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Brown treecreeper (south-eastern) *Climacteris picumnus victoriae*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – the species has been recorded in the HVO North BIAA during targeted surveys, it has also been historically recorded at several locations adjacent to the HVO North BIAA and the locality.	**Yes**

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Diamond firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Low** – suitable habitat and known to occur in the Hunter Valley. The species has not been recorded in the HVO Complex BIAAs despite extensive surveys. It is acknowledged a NSW BioNet Atlas record occurs in HVO South, however the description of the record notes the species was recorded in Chain Valley Colliery and Mannering Colliery 100km+ from the site.	No
Gang-gang cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*	V	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Low** – suitable habitat and known to occur in the Hunter Valley. The species has not been recorded in the HVO Complex BIAAs despite extensive surveys.	No
Regent honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia*	CE	CE	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Low** – while the species has not been recorded in the HVO Complex BIAAs during targeted seasonal surveys, historical records (1987, 1991, 1999 and 2002) occur to the south near Warkworth, and to the west in Wollemi National Park (DPHI 2025a). The BIAA contains small areas of potential winter foraging resources for the species and is within the likely distribution of the species.	**Yes**
Australasian bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*	E	E	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive historic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments in the lower Hunter Valley.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*	E	CE	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive historic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Red goshawk *Erythrotriorchis radiatus*	CE	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive historic surveys and unlikely to occur based on a lack of records in NSW since the 1980s.	No
Grey falcon *Falco hypoleucos*	V	V	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive historic surveys and unlikely to occur based on a lack of records in the Hunter Valley since the 1990s.	No
Painted honeyeater *Grantiella picta*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – one record from 2018 occurs approximately 7 km northwest of the HVO North BIAA and several records from the 1970s and 1980s occur near Bulga, approximately 9 km to the south of the HVO South BIAA (DPHI 2025a). No other records occur in the wider locality despite extensive historic surveys, and the species is unlikely to occur based on known distribution mainly on the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range.	No
Pilotbird *Pycnoptilus floccosus*	-	V	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive surveys and unlikely to occur based on a lack of suitable habitat.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
White-throated needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*	-	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – this species has been recorded with low accuracy in the north-eastern section of the HVO North BIAA in 2000, with one record approximately 1.5 km to the east near Glennies Creek Road (2001) and two within 5 km near the Golden Highway (2014) (DPHI 2025a). The species was also recorded by Umwelt in the northwest of the HVO North BIAA. This species is almost exclusively aerial, recorded most often above wooded areas, some areas of which occur in the BIAA.	**Yes**
South-eastern glossy black-cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Low** – suitable habitat and known to occur in the Hunter Valley. The species has not been recorded in the HVO Complex BIAAs despite extensive surveys.	No
South-eastern hooded robin, hooded robin (south-eastern) *Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*	E	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Low** – suitable habitat and known to occur in the Hunter Valley. The species has not been recorded in the HVO Complex BIAAs despite extensive surveys.	No
Southern whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the BIAA or the surrounds despite extensive surveys and unlikely to occur based on a lack of suitable habitat within the HVO North BIAA.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Swift parrot *Lathamus discolor*	E	CE	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – Five individuals recorded adjacent to HVO Site offices. Records of this species occur sporadically within the central Hunter Valley in Ravensworth State Forest to the north-east (2005 and 2014), near Wallaby Scrub Road in the south (2016), near Muswellbrook (2012) to the north and near Singleton to the east (2021) (DPHI 2025a). The HVO North BIAA contains small areas of potential winter foraging resources for the species and is within the known winter foraging distribution of the species.	**Yes**
Eastern curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*	-	CE	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive historic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Australian painted snipe *Rostratula australis*	E	E	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs. The closest verified record occurs near Kurri Kurri approximately 70 km to the southeast. The species is unlikely to occur in the BIAA due to the lack of documented records in the central Hunter Valley and presence of disturbed and marginal dam habitat.	No
common greenshank *Tringa nebularia*	-	E	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** - unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
sharp-tailed sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*	-	V	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – this species was recorded near Lake Liddell in 2019, approximately 4 km north of the HVO North BIAA. It is likely this is a vagrant record as the species is not usually known to occupy the habitats of the Central Hunter.	No
Latham's snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*	-	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – recorded over three nights at one dam in the HVO Complex during targeted threatened species surveys in 2025. Occasionally recorded during annual monitoring surveys of the nearby Mount Owen Complex. Previous records in the locality also occur at Lake Liddell in the north and near Wollombi Brook near Warkworth in the south. The HVO Complex BIAAs contain areas of potential dam habitat for the species and small sections of the Hunter River.	**Yes**
Large-eared pied bat *Chalinolobus dwyeri*	V	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded** – recorded at several locations in the wider locality during targeted surveys, however no confirmed breeding or roosting habitat recorded on site.	Yes
Spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*	V	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Recorded –** recorded at one location in the HVO North BIAA during targeted surveys and multiple records of the species occur in the wider locality (within 10 km).	**Yes**

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Corben's long-eared bat *Nyctophilus corbeni*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – one record of this species from 22 years ago occurs approximately 7 km north-west of the HVO North BIAA near Saddlers Creek. Few other records occur in lower and central Hunter Valley, with most records occurring west of the Great Dividing Range. The species is unlikely to occur in the BIAA.	No
Greater glider *Petauroides volans*	E	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive historic surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution in contiguous eucalypt forests at higher elevations.	No
Yellow-bellied glider (south-eastern) *Petaurus australis australis*	V	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution and suitable habitat.	No
Brush-tailed rock-wallaby *Petrogale penicillata*	E	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – several records of this species occur in nearby Wollemi National Park to the southwest. One historic record from 1996 occurs in the current approved HVO North disturbance footprint, in proximity to the BIAA on land that has since been heavily disturbed by mining operations. The species has not been recorded within the BIAA and is unlikely to occur based on lack of suitable rocky outcrop habitat.	No
Parma wallaby *Notamacropus parma*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – not recorded within the HVO Complex BIAAs or the surrounds despite extensive surveys and unlikely to occur based on known distribution and suitable habitat.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
Koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT)	E	E	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – several records of the koala occur in the wider locality (within 10 km). It has been previously recorded within 5 km of the BIAA on the corner of Hebden Road and New England Highway (2012), near Bowmans Creek to the east (2016), north of the Plashett Reservoir (1954) and south of Carrington Pit (2006) (DPHI 2025a) (refer to **Figure 3.2**). The record at Carrington Pit has an accuracy of 10 km and therefore it is assumed that the record is from elsewhere in the region as the koala has not previously been recorded at HVO. Detailed thermal drone surveys of the site did not detect the species.	No
Long-nosed potoroo *Potorous tridactylus tridactylus*	V	V	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – no records for this species occur in the wider locality, however a recent potential record of the species was recorded in January 2018 on a remote camera approximately 8 km to the northeast of the HVO North BIAA at Hebden. This individual was recorded over two nights in relatively dense spotted gum forest on a hill slope. This species has not been recorded in the HVO Complex BIAAs and the primarily open and sparse habitats are unlikely to support this species. It is therefore unlikely to occur within the BIAA based on known distribution and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Hastings River mouse, Koontoo *Pseudomys oralis*	E	E	Species or species may occur in the buffer area only	**Unlikely** – the species has not been recorded in the BIAA and the HVO North BIAA is outside the known distribution of the species.	No

MNES Name	Status BC Act	Status EPBC Act	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within the Biodiversity Impact Area	Further Assessment Required?
New Holland mouse *Pseudomys novaehollandiae*	-	V	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	**Unlikely** – the species has not been recorded in the BIAA. An historic record from 1981 (over 40 years) occurs approximately 1 km to the south in the United Wambo JV mining area. There are several records in and around Ravensworth State Forest, located approximately 6 km northeast (DPHI 2025a). This species is known to occupy habitats in the early to mid stages of vegetation succession, typically after fire, or mining disturbance. Extensive pitfall trapping failed to identify the species.	No
Grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*	V	V	Foraging, feeding, or related behaviour known to occur in the feature area	**Potential** – the species has not been recorded strictly in the HVO Complex BIAAs, however several records occur in the locality. Potential foraging habitat occurs in eucalypt woodland however breeding habitat (camps) was not recorded in the BIAA.	**Yes**

Table 3.2 Migratory Species Recorded or with Potential to Occur within the HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

Species Name	International Convention	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area	Assessment of Significance
Common sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*	B, C, J, K	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Fork-tailed swift *Apus pacificus*	C, J, K	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	Potential – not recorded within the HVO North BIAA, however two records occur within the wider locality.	No

Species Name	International Convention	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area	Assessment of Significance
Sharp-tailed sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*	B, C, J, K	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	Unlikely – this species was recorded near Lake Liddell in 2019, approximately 4 km north of the HVO North BIAA. It is likely this is a vagrant record as the species is not usually known to occupy the habitats of the central Hunter.	No
Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*	B, C, J, K	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Pectoral sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*	B, C, K	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Red-necked stint *Calidris ruficollis*	B, C, J K	-	Unlikely – this species has been recorded near HVO North Dams 18W and 9W in 2005, adjacent to the HVO North BIAA. It is likely this is a vagrant record as the species is not usually known to occupy the habitats of the central Hunter.	No
Oriental cuckoo *Cuculus optatus*	C, J, K	Species or species habitat may occur in buffer area only	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution from northern border of NSW south to Newcastle mainly in coastal areas.	No
Latham's snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*	B, J, K	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	Recorded – over three nights at one dam in the HVO Complex during targeted threatened species surveys in 2025. Occasionally recorded during annual monitoring surveys of the nearby Mount Owen Complex. Previous records in the locality also occur at Lake Liddell in the north and near Wollombi Brook near Warkworth in the south. The HVO North BIAA contains areas of potential dam habitat for the species and small sections of the Hunter River.	**Yes**

Species Name	International Convention	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area	Assessment of Significance
White-throated needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*	C, J, K	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	Recorded – this species has been recorded with low accuracy in the north-eastern section of the HVO North BIAA in 2000, with one record approximately 1.5 km to the east near Glennies Creek Road (2001) and two within 5 km near the Golden Highway (2014) (DPE 2024a). This species is almost exclusively aerial, recorded most often above wooded areas, some areas of which occur in the HVO North BIAA.	**Yes**
Black-faced monarch *Monarcha melanopsis*	B	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	Unlikely – not recorded in and around the HVO North BIAA despite extensive historic surveys of the wider locality.	No
Yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava*	C, K, J	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	Unlikely – not recorded in and around the HVO North BIAA despite extensive historic surveys of the wider locality.	No
Satin flycatcher *Myiagra cyanoleuca*	B	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	Unlikely – not recorded in and around the HVO North BIAA despite extensive historic surveys of the wider locality.	No
Eastern curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*	B, C, J, K	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*	B	Species or species habitat likely to occur in the feature area	Unlikely – one record of the species occurs at nearby United Mine (2014), however the majority of records occur in coastal habitats. The species has not been recorded in the HVO North BIAA and is unlikely to occur.	No

Species Name	International Convention	PMST Notes	Likelihood to Occur within HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area	Assessment of Significance
Rufous fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*	B	Species or species habitat known to occur in the feature area	Potential – previously recorded in proximity to the HVO North BIAA.	**Yes**
Common greenshank *Tringa nebularia*	B, C, J, K	Species or species habitat may occur in the feature area	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution in mainly coastal wetland environments and lack of suitable habitat.	No
Marsh sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*	B, C, J, K	-	Unlikely – this species was recorded in 2005 in association with Parnells Dam, adjacent to the HVO North BIAA. It is likely this is a vagrant record as the species is not usually known to occupy the habitats of the central Hunter.	No
Spectacled monarch *Symposiachrus trivirgatus*	B	Species or species habitat may occur in the buffer area only	Unlikely – unlikely to occur based on known distribution and lack of suitable dense rainforest or wet forest habitat.	No

3.2 Vegetation and Habitat in the HVO North BIAA

Surveys of the HVO North BIAA identified five PCTs across 19 condition zones as outlined in **Table 3.3**. These communities were aligned with PCTs in accordance with the NSW PCT classification as described in the BioNet Vegetation Classification. The PCTs were then stratified into broad condition states (vegetation zones). Refer to **Figure 3.1** for PCT and vegetation zone mapping across the HVO North BIAA.

Note: **Table 3.3** does not include areas within the Wider Easement Area, which are not proposed for impact.

Detailed descriptions of these vegetation zones are included in **Section 3.2.1.**

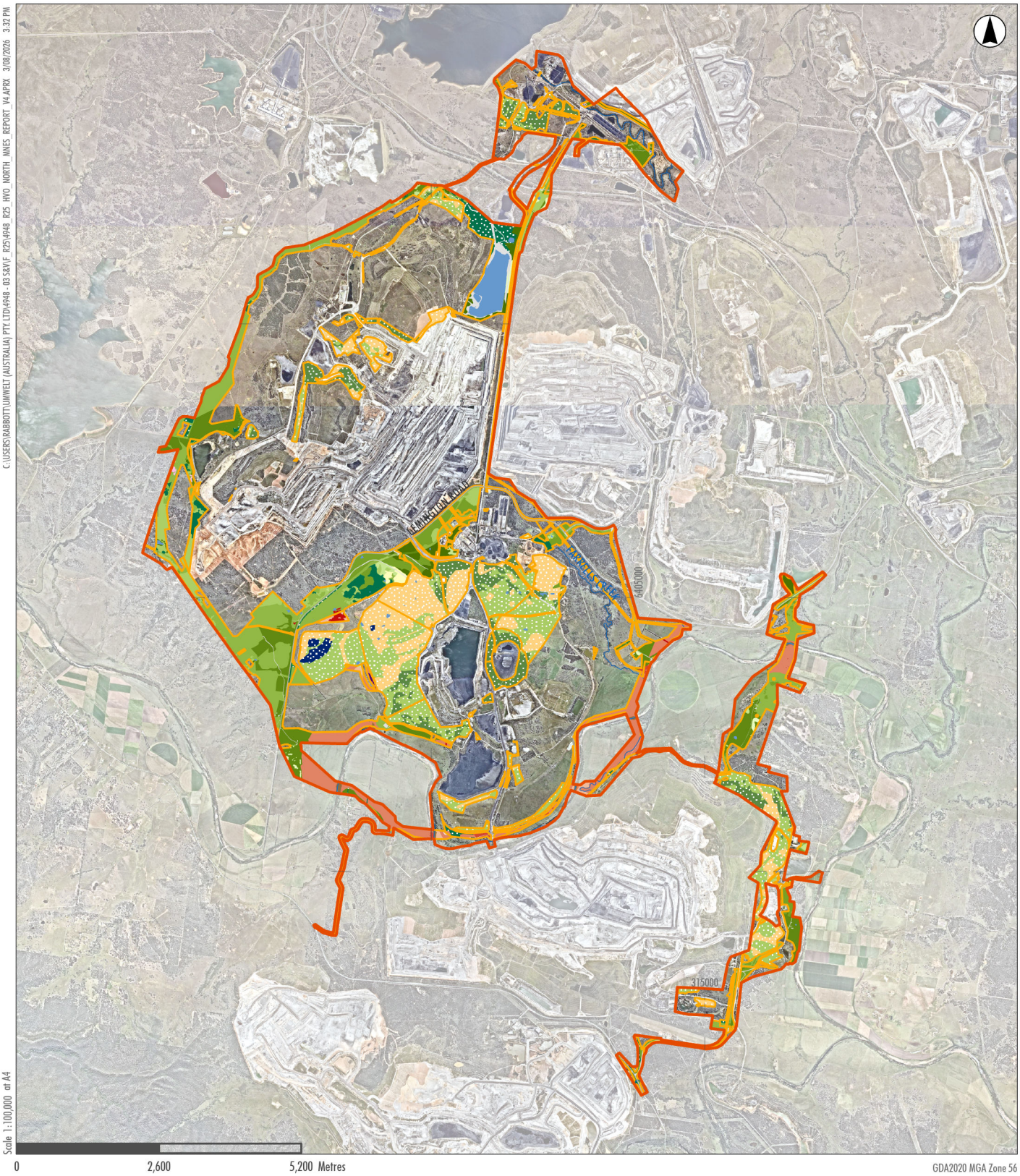
Table 3.3 Plant Community Types and Vegetation Zones within the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)
3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	*Moderate*	100.0
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Plantation	47.4
	Scattered Regeneration	65.0
	Cooba Woodland	62.0
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland	257.1
	Exotic Grassland	158.5
	Mine Rehabilitation (conforming to a PCT)	14.9
	TOTAL for PCT3431	**772.1**
3485 – Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	*Moderate*	7.3
	TOTAL for PCT3485	**7.3**
4015 – Central Hunter Riparian Forest	*Moderate*	3.4
	TOTAL for PCT4015	**3.4**
4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	*Moderate*	1.8
	TOTAL for PCT4081	**1.8**
4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
	Cooba Woodland	0.1
	Derived Native Grassland	5.1
	Exotic Grassland	79.3
	TOTAL for PCT4089	**91.1**
Total Native Vegetation		**875.7**

Table 3.4 outlines the extent of mine rehabilitation vegetation across the HVO North BIAA that do not conform to a PCT under the NSW PCT classification. Note: **Table 3.4** does not include areas within the Wider Easement Area, which are not proposed for impact. Further detail on this is provided in **Section 6.4**.

Table 3.4 Mine Rehabilitation in the HVO North BIAA

Mine Rehabilitation Type	Area (ha)
Mine Rehabilitation – Plantation	351.5
Mine Rehabilitation – Cooba Woodland	211.8
Mine Rehabilitation – Exotic Grassland	430.7
Total	**994.0**



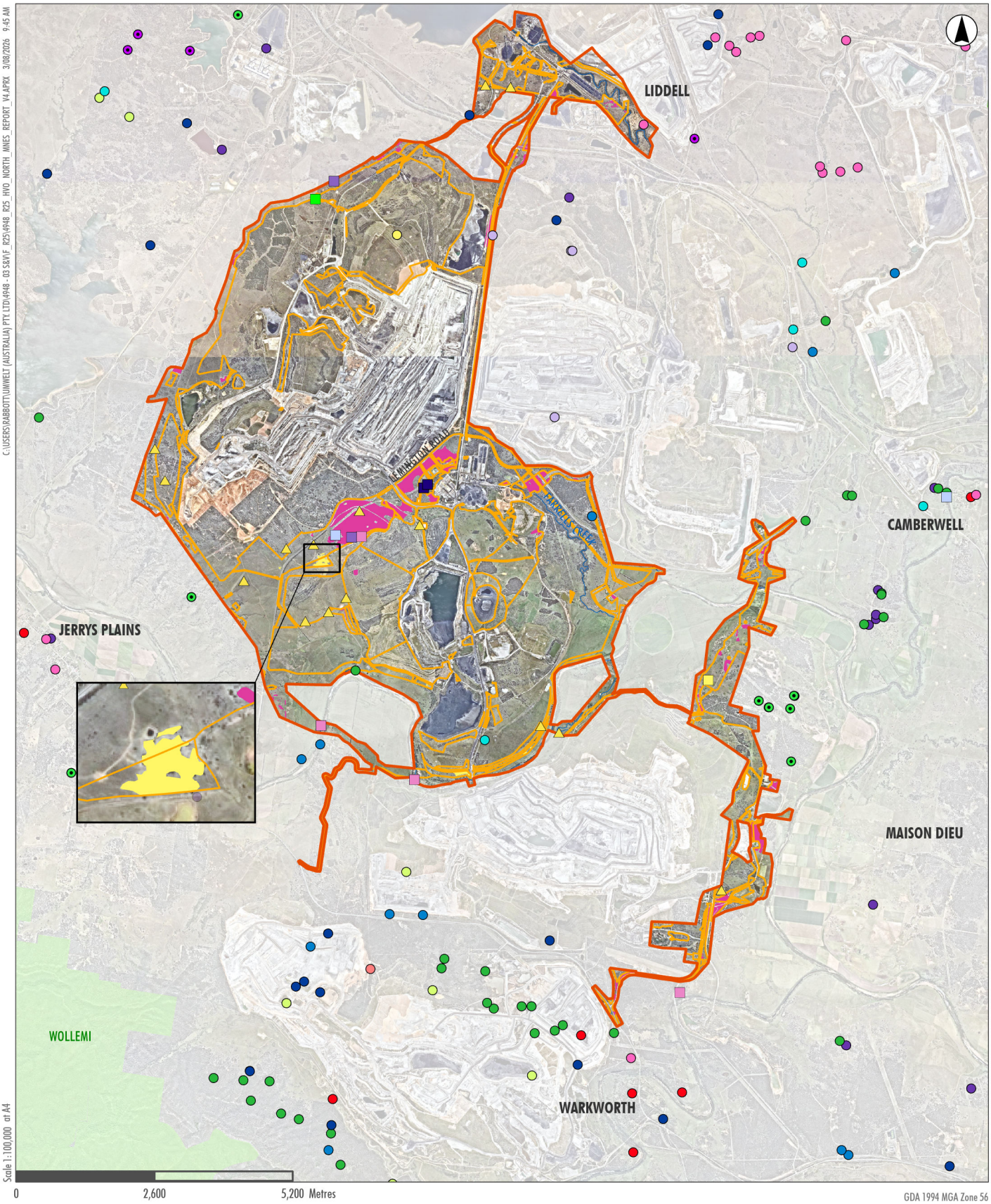
Legend

- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Road
- Drainage Line
- 0 | Cleared
- 0 | Dam/Water
- 0 | Mine Rehabilitation - Cooba Woodland
- 0 | Mine Rehabilitation - Exotic Grassland
- 0 | Mine Rehabilitation - Plantation
- 3431 | Mine Rehabilitation
- 3431 | Plantation
- 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 3431 | Moderate
- 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3431 | White/Grey Box Variant
- 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 3485 | Moderate
- 4015 | Moderate
- 4081 | Moderate
- 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 4089 | Derived Native Grassland
- 4089 | Exotic Grassland
- 4089 | Low to Moderate
- 4089 | Moderate

FIGURE 3.1

Plant Community Types in the HVO North BIAA

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area

EPBC Act TEC

- Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC
- White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

Umwelt Species Records

- Large-eared pied bat
- Spotted-tailed quoll
- Grey-headed Flying Fox
- Lathams Snipe
- White-throated Needletail
- Swift parrot
- Hunter Valley *Delma*

Atlas Species Record

- *Eucalyptus glaucina*
- *Ozothamnus tesselatus*
- Brown Treecreeper (eastern subspecies)
- Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby
- Diamond Firetail
- Gang-gang Cockatoo
- Green and Golden Bell Frog
- Grey-headed Flying-fox
- Koala
- Large-eared Pied Bat
- New Holland Mouse
- Painted Honeyeater
- Regent Honeyeater
- South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo
- South-eastern Hooded Robin
- Spotted-tailed Quoll

FIGURE 3.2

MNES Recorded in and around the HVO North BIAA

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.2.1 Plant Community Types and Vegetation Zones

The following sections described the PCTs recorded in the HVO North BIAA. The extent of each of the PCTs is shown on **Figure 3.1**. Areas of PCTs that conform to the Commonwealth listing criteria for endangered ecological communities are shown on **Figure 3.2.**

Surveys of the HVO North BIAA identified 5 PCTs across 19 condition zones. These communities were aligned with PCTs in accordance with the Revised East Coast PCT classification as described in the BioNet Vegetation Classification. The PCTs were then stratified into broad condition states (vegetation zones).

3.2.1.1 PCT 3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	
Legacy PCTs (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	1691: Grey Box – Narrow-leaved ironbark – Grey Box grassy woodland of the central and upper Hunter PCT 1692: Bull Oak grassy woodland of the central Hunter Valley
Vegetation Formation	Dry Sclerophyll Forests (Shrub/grass sub-formation)
Vegetation Class	Hunter-Macleay Dry Sclerophyll Forests
Per cent Cleared	86.47%

VCD Description for PCT 3431

A tall sclerophyll open forest or woodland with a sparse cover of dry shrubs and a mid-dense grassy ground layer that occurs mainly on the undulating floor of the central Hunter valley with scattered areas on adjoining ranges. The canopy very frequently includes *Eucalyptus crebra* with a high foliage cover, either exclusively or occasionally in association with *Eucalyptus moluccana* (and or its hybrid with *Eucalyptus albens*). *Allocasuarina luehmannii* is common, either in the mid-stratum or as a member of the canopy where eucalypt species are regenerating. The mid-stratum very frequently includes only a sparse cover, with occasional *Notelaea microcarpa* or *Maireana microphylla* and rarely the lower growing chenopod shrub *Enchylaena tomentosa*. Taller species of Acacia, such as *Acacia salicina* and *Acacia falcata*, are rare. The mid-dense ground layer is mainly comprised of a high diversity of grasses and forbs with some graminoids, twiners, hardy ferns, low-growing shrubs and sedges. The layer very frequently includes *Aristida ramosa, Glycine tabacina, Cymbopogon refractus, Cheilanthes sieberi* subsp. *sieberi, Dichondra repens* and the prostrate shrub *Eremophila debilis*. Other common grasses include *Eragrostis leptostachya, Microlaena stipoides, Austrostipa scabra* and *Bothriochloa decipiens* var. *decipiens*. This PCT is most extensively distributed on low-gradient Permian sediments across the central Hunter valley between the Rothbury, Muswellbrook and Wybong districts, where it primarily occurs in small, often disturbed patches in a landscape dominated by agriculture and coal mining. It is also found in small areas on the low hills that rise north-east from Muswellbrook on Carboniferous sediments but only on exposed slopes and crests below around 400 metres asl. Across its range the PCT occupies warm, dry environments with a mean annual rainfall typically below 750 mm. This PCT is related both floristically and spatially to several other grassy forest and woodland PCTs in the central Hunter. PCT 3314 also is widespread on the Permian sediments but is associated with rises and areas of greater relief, is generally shrubbier and only rarely includes *Eucalyptus crebra*. PCT 3485 shares many of the ground cover species in a similar topographic position however differs in that *Eucalyptus dawsonii* is very frequently recorded with a high foliage cover and is almost absent from this PCT. On the Carboniferous sediments it grades into PCT 3525.

PCT Description within the HVO North BIAA	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone is diffused throughout the BIAAs.

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	
Overall Description	There are numerous condition zones of PCT 3431, attributed to the history of disturbance across the HVO North BIAA. The moderate condition zone is characterised by an open canopy up to 22 m in height and dominated by narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), with occurrences of grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) and bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*). A range of other shrub/small tree species may also be present at low density. The mid-dense ground stratum supports a variety of native grasses and forbs. Condition zones have been stratified to reflect the variation across this vegetation type, including exotic understorey, natural regeneration and plantings.
Condition Zones	
Moderate This vegetation zone is in good condition with tree canopy present, mid stratum present but sparse (as is typical for this PCT) and a ground layer dominated by native grasses and a small component of native forbs.	
Thinned Woodland This vegetation zone is similar in floristics and structure to Moderate, however has a more open canopy due to previous clearing and disturbance.	

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

Woodland with Exotic Understorey

This vegetation zone, similar to Thinned Woodland, has a sparse canopy due to previous clearing. This zone differs in that the ground cover is dominated by exotic species such as *Eragrostis curvula*, *Galenia pubescens*, *Sida rhombifolia* and *Senecio madagascariensis*. Occasionally the native *Cynodon dactylon* is in higher abundance. Regenerating Eucalypts may be present.



Plantation

This vegetation zone has an open canopy which reaches up to 18 m in height and is comprised of mixed planted eucalypts, including *Corymbia maculata*, *Eucalyptus blakleyii,* *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *Eucalyptus saligna* and river red gum x flooded gum hybrid (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis -grandis*).

The mid-storey is generally absent, or occasionally sparse.



PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

Scattered Regeneration

This vegetation zone has scattered occurrences of *Acacia salicina* and *Allocasuarina luehmannii* up to 10 m high. The sparse mid-storey reaches up to 4 m in height and is comprised of *Geijera salicifolia*, *Notelaea microcarpa* var. *microcarpa* and regenerating canopy species.

The mid-dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses.



Cooba Woodland

This vegetation zone has a sparse canopy of *Acacia salicina*, generally up to 6 m in height, occasionally taller. Other native shrubs characteristic of PCT 3431 may occasionally present.

The mid-dense to dense ground stratum comprises native grasses and forbs.



Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland

A canopy layer is absent from this vegetation zone, however occasional low trees/shrubs may be present.

The dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses and forbs.



PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

Exotic Grassland

This zone is largely characterised by a dense grassy layer dominated by exotics such as *Eragrostis curvula*), *Cenchrus clandestinus*, *Chloris gayana* and *Galenia pubescens*. Areas of native couch (*Cynodon dactylon*) and *Imperata cylindrica* are occasionally interspersed within this zone.

Occasional scattered and widely spaced mature paddock trees (characteristic of PCT 3431) occur in this zone.



Bulloak Variant

This vegetation zone has a dense canopy dominated by *Allocasuarina luehmannii* with occurrences of *Eucalyptus crebra*.

Occasional native shrubs/low trees may be present.

The sparse ground stratum is dominated by native grasses and herbs.



PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	
White Box/Grey Box Variant This vegetation zone is within a discrete section of the HVO North BIAA containing possible white box-grey box intergrades. The ground cover is dominated by exotics including *Galenia pubescens* and *Eragrostis spp.* with occurrences of native grasses such as *Austrostipa verticillata*.	
Mine Rehabilitation This zone represents discrete areas of mine rehabilitation that contain suitability endemic species that is recognisable as a PCT and conform to a TEC.	

3.2.1.2 PCT 3485 – Grey Box – Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest

PCT 3485: Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	1655: Grey Box – Slaty Box shrub-grass woodland on sandstone slopes of the upper Hunter and Sydney Basin
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Eastern Riverine Forests
Per cent Cleared	89.57%

VCD Description for PCT 3485

A tall to very tall sclerophyll open forest with a sparse shrub layer and a patchy, grassy ground cover occurring on Permian sediments on gentle slopes and rises in a restricted region between Warkworth and Wybong in the central Hunter valley. The canopy very frequently includes a high cover of *Eucalyptus dawsonii*, either exclusively or occasionally in association with *Eucalyptus moluccana*. The sparse mid-stratum very frequently includes scattered chenopods (*Einadia nutans*, *Enchylaena tomentosa* or *Maireana microphylla*) and commonly *Notelaea microcarpa*. One or more Acacia species may also be present, but individual species such as *Acacia salicina* are only occasional to rare.

PCT 3485: Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	
The sparse ground layer is typically comprised of low shrubs, grasses, forbs and a ground fern, and very frequently includes *Eremophila debilis*, *Glycine tabacina*, *Sporobolus creber*, *Aristida ramosa*, *Sida corrugata*, *Austrostipa scabra* and *Dichondra repens*. This PCT occurs in a warm, dry environment with a mean annual rainfall typically below 650 mm. It is related both floristically and spatially to several other grassy forest and woodland PCTs in the central Hunter valley. It shares a strong floristic overlap with both PCT 3314 and PCT 3431 as the ground cover species and shrubs are very similar and both occur on Permian sediments. *Eucalyptus dawsonii* is rarely recorded in these PCTs. However, this eucalypt is a characteristic species of other PCTs in the region (PCT 3497 and PCT 3490) which occur on poorer soils and with a diverse shrub layer with a less diverse assemblage of grasses and forbs.	
PCT Description within the HVO North BIAA	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone occurs in the central part of the BIAA at HVO North, on the slopes to the south of the existing Lemington Road.
Overall Description	This vegetation zone has an open canopy of up to 20 metres in height, dominated by slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) and grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*). The low tree layer, dominated by bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*), is generally sparse and reaches up to 12 m in height. The sparse ground stratum is dominated by native herbs, rushes and grasses.
Upper stratum species	Eucalyptus dawsonii, Brachychiton populneus, Eucalyptus moluccana, Allocasuarina luehmannii
Condition Zone	
Moderate The moderate condition zone is the only zone stratified for this PCT. The vegetation displays the typical structural and floristic characters of this PCT.	

3.2.1.3 PCT 4015 – Central Hunter Riparian Forest

PCT 4015: Central Hunter Riparian Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	1731: Swamp Oak – Weeping Grass grassy riparian forest of the Hunter Valley
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands

PCT 4015: Central Hunter Riparian Forest	
Vegetation Class	Coastal Floodplain Wetlands
Per cent Cleared	87.87%

VCD Description for PCT 4015

A tall Casuarina open forest or occasionally a eucalypt forest or woodland with a mid-stratum with chenopods and acacias and a grassy ground layer that occurs on creek flats in the undulating terrain of the central and upper Hunter valley. The canopy commonly consists of a high cover of *Casuarina glauca* either exclusively or in combination with a sparse cover of eucalypts that commonly include red gums *Eucalyptus blakelyi* or *Eucalyptus tereticornis*. Occasionally *Casuarina glauca* may be absent altogether. The mid-stratum is sparse and almost always includes chenopods such as *Maireana microphylla* and *Enchylaena tomentosa* or occasionally a taller Acacia such as *Acacia salicina*. The mid-dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs with some twiners, hardy ferns and low-growing shrubs, almost always including *Dichondra repens* and *Austrostipa verticillata* with *Glycine tabacina, Microlaena stipoides* and *Cheilanthes sieberi* subsp. *sieberi*. This PCT occurs in a restricted area of the Hunter valley from the Singleton district north to Dartbrook and west toward Sandy Hollow. It occurs in warm, dry environments with a mean annual rainfall typically below 710 mm. The strong association with drainage channels makes this PCT distinguishable from other PCTs. It has only moderate floristic overlap with PCT 3431 which occurs on the gentle hills and rises. *Eucalyptus crebra*, *Eucalyptus moluccana* and a diverse grass and forb ground cover are characteristic of that PCT. However, a related riparian forest occurs immediately to the east in higher rainfall areas of the Hunter valley. Here it grades into PCT 4023 which is also commonly dominated by *Casuarina glauca* however typically lacks the shrubby chenopods that are almost always present in PCT 4015.

PCT Description within the HVO North BIAA	
Landscape position	Small patches of the vegetation community occur in the riparian corridor on the far western and far eastern edges of the BIAA.
Overall Description	This vegetation zone has a moderately dense canopy which reaches up to 15 m in height and is dominated by swamp oak (*Casuarina glauca*). A sparse mid-storey of native shrubs may be present. The mid-dense ground stratum reaches up to 1 m in height and is dominated native grasses, rushes and herbs.

Condition Zone

Moderate

There is only one condition zone for this PCT. This zone represents the PCT in moderate condition with a tree canopy present, mid stratum present but sparse (as is typical for this PCT) and a ground layer dominated by native grasses typical of riparian communities.



3.2.1.4 PCT 4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest

PCT 4081: Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	485: River Oak riparian grassy tall woodland of the western Hunter Valley (Brigalow Belt South Bioregion and Sydney Basin Bioregion)
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Eastern Riverine Forests
Per cent Cleared	89.57%

VCD Description for PCT 4081

A tall to very tall Casuarina and sclerophyll open forest with a mid-stratum that is either absent or comprises sparse, soft-leaved small trees and a mid-dense, grassy ground layer that is widespread on river flats between Gulgong and the Queensland border on the North-west Slopes and the upper Hunter River catchment. The canopy very frequently includes river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) with a high cover of rive oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*), and rarely scattered individuals of rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*). Where present, the mid-stratum comprises scattered individuals of velvet mock olive (*Notelaea microcarpa* var. *microcarpa*) and rive bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*). The mid-dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs, very frequently including common couch (*Cynodon dactylon*), slender bamboo grass (*Austrostipa verticillate*) and swamp dock (*Rumex brownii*), commonly *Commelina cyanea*, and occasionally stinging nettle (*Urtica incisa*), weeping grass (*Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides*) and purple wiregrass (*Aristida ramosa*).

This PCT primarily occurs in narrow bands within an agricultural landscape, at medium elevations between 200 and 700 metres asl in locations that receive between 500 and 750 mm mean annual rainfall. This PCT is weakly related floristically to PCT 4088, a riverine forest on the South-west Slopes which also includes *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. Its distribution overlaps with PCT 4080, a riverine forest with a canopy that includes river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*) however lacks river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

PCT Description within the HVO North BIAA	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone occurs sporadically on the banks of the Hunter River.
General Description	This vegetation zone has a moderately dense canopy dominated by river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*) which reaches up to 22 m in height. The sparse mid-storey reaches up to 12 m in height and is dominated by regenerating river oaks. The very sparse ground stratum is dominated by couch (*Cynodon dactylon*).
Alignment with BC Act TECs	This vegetation zone is not consistent with any TECs listed under the BC Act and EPBC Act.

PCT 4081: Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	
Condition Zone	
Moderate The moderate condition zone is the only zone stratified for this PCT. The vegetation displays the typical structural and floristic characters of this PCT.	

3.2.1.5 PCT4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	42: River Red Gum/ River Oak riparian woodland wetland in the Hunter Valley
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Inland Riverine Forests
Per cent Cleared	94.33%

VCD Description for PCT 4089

PCT 4089 is a very tall sclerophyll and Casuarina forest to open forest or woodland with a mid-stratum that is absent or sparse and a grassy ground layer, found on alluvial floodplains of the upper Hunter and Namoi river catchments. The canopy almost always includes Eucalyptus camaldulensis, rarely with *Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*. There is usually no mid-stratum in this PCT. The dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs, almost always including *Cynodon dactylon* with high cover, and occasionally *Rumex brownii, Alternanthera denticulata, Austrostipa verticillata, Urtica incisa* and *Paspalidium constrictum*. This PCT primarily occurs along the Hunter River and its tributaries between Singleton and Scone, and tributaries of the Namoi River around Gunnedah and Tamworth including the Peel and Mooki rivers.

This PCT occurs in hot, dry climates receiving less than 650 mm mean annual rainfall. The riverine forests in this region have been extensively cleared and this PCT occurs in small patches in an agricultural landscape. Surviving patches are frequently disturbed and subject to ongoing weed invasion and grazing pressure. The median native species richness of the plots comprising this PCT is less than ten species, which is lower than comparable riverine PCTs. In the Hunter catchment, the riverine forest PCT 4073 which includes *Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana* however lacks *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is present in reasonably close proximity to this PCT. In the Namoi catchment, riverine forests that also include *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, however lack *Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana* generally occur downstream of this PCT.

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	
PCT Description within the HVO North BIAA	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone occurs on the banks and floodplain of the Hunter River (and in some cases minor its tributaries), and a small patch along the Wollombi Brook. Disturbed condition zones of this PCT have been allocated where occurring in the same landscape position as the moderate condition zones, and where present evidence of the pre-disturbance vegetation type, such as stags.
General Description	In the moderate condition state, PCT 4089 in the HVO North BIAA has an open canopy up to 25 m in height dominated by yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), with grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) around the upslope edge of the zone. A mid-storey is generally absent from the vegetation zone, however when present it is dominated by cooba (*Acacia salicina*). The dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses and forbs.
Condition Zone	
Moderate This vegetation zone is in good condition with tree canopy present, mid stratum absent (as is typical for this PCT) and a ground layer dominated by native grasses and a small component of native forbs.	
Low to Moderate This zone is similar in floristic composition to Moderate, however is highly modified from weed invasion and native species occur infrequently in the understorey.	

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

Cooba Woodland

This vegetation zone is characterised by a dominance of the tall shrub cooba (*Acacia salicina*), while a tree canopy is absent. This zone features stags considered likely to have been river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) trees based on landscape position and proximity to the Hunter River and remnant river red gums.



Derived Native Grassland

The canopy is absent from this zone, however a sporadic low tree layer of cooba (*Acacia salicina*) is present. The moderately dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses.



Exotic Grassland

This vegetation zone is dominated by introduced species (mostly grasses and annual weeds) and lacks any tree or shrub species. Native species occur in low abundance in this zone.



3.2.2 Mine Rehabilitation Description

A total of 13 BAM VI plots, 53 rapid vegetation assessments and 1,341 vegetation notes were completed in mine rehabilitation in order to ascertain the floristic, structural and functional attributes of the vegetation to determine if it could reasonably be assigned to a PCT or provide habitat for MNES. The location of all surveys is shown on **Figure 2.1**.

3.2.2.1 Exotic Grassland

The vast majority of the mine rehabilitation occurs as exotic grassland. The exotic grassland is dominated by Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*) and Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maxima*) and native species are infrequently recorded. Although the exotic grasslands provide limited threatened species habitat as it lacks structural and floristic diversity and had limited micro-habitats for native species, the Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) was recorded within this zone during targeted surveys in 2026.

In addition to the 430.7 ha of exotic grassland, a number of sediment and erosion control dams are located within the exotic grassland formation. These dams provide some wetland habitat for frogs and reptiles however, with the exception of the green and golden bell frog, are unlikely to provide threatened species habitat (green and golden bell frog has the potential to occur in the PCTs in the HVO North BIAA – however was not recorded following extensive surveys) due to a lack of connectedness to remnant vegetation and floristic and structural simplicity.



Photo 3.1 Rehabilitation – Exotic Grassland

3.2.2.2 Rehabilitation – Cooba Woodland

Cooba (*Acacia salicina*) is planted extensively across the mine rehabilitation and creates areas of low woodland. Generally, the ground layer comprises exotic grassland and low levels of native species were recorded. The cooba provides some limited structural complexity for native fauna species however does not provide habitat for hollow dependent species. The Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) was recorded within this zone during targeted surveys in 2026.



Photo 3.2 Rehabilitation – Cooba Woodland

3.2.2.3 Rehabilitation – Plantation

Areas of plantation comprise open woodlands dominated by sugar gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), a native species endemic to South Australia. Sugar gum was widely planted in rehabilitation in the Hunter Valley during the 1980s and is generally sterile, in that it doesn't produce flowers and fruiting material. As a result, it doesn't provide a nectar resource in the woodland rehabilitation and tree hollows were not identified. The ground layer is generally comprised of exotic grassland, with low levels of native species occurring.



Photo 3.3 Rehabilitation – Woodland

3.2.3 Evidence of MNES in Rehabilitation

3.2.3.1 Fauna and Flora Species

Following targeted habitat assessments undertaken in May 2023, September 2025 and early 2026 assessing the suitability of habitat for MNES, potentially suitable habitat for the following MNES fauna species in the rehabilitation zones was recorded:

- Green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*) – potentially in areas of dams that included fringing vegetation and suitable basking habitat.
- New Holland mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*) – potentially in areas of newly established rehabilitation.
- Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) – potentially in all areas of woodland rehabilitation.
- Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) – recorded in Exotic Grassland and sparse Cooba Woodland rehabilitation.

Targeted nocturnal spotlighting and call playback surveys were undertaken for green and golden bell frog in 2023 in areas of suitable habitat. These targeted surveys included call playback which consisted of a period of quiet listening and broadcasting of calls over a loud hailer. Following call playback, active searches of banks with emergent vegetation and overhanging trees were completed. Each dam or area of deemed suitable habitat was surveyed twice across four nights, with varying weather conditions providing optimum advantage for detection. No green and golden bell frogs were recorded during these surveys.

Pitfall trapping was undertaken in mine rehabilitation area in August 2023 in order to ascertain the occupation of the mine rehabilitation by native fauna species, including New Holland Mouse. The results of the trapping indicate that native fauna occupation of the mine rehabilitation is poor, with no fauna recorded in the pitfall traps despite 36 trap nights in survey effort across nine locations.

Remote camera surveys were also undertaken across the rehabilitation targeting spotted-tailed quoll. The species was not detected during this survey despite cameras being located in 19 locations (totalling 1381 trap nights) across the rehabilitation and HVO Complex BIAA. A range of common species were recorded such as Australian raven (*Corvus coronoides*), eastern grey kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*), brush-tailed possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) and non-native species such as dog (*Canis familiaris*) and cattle (*Bos taurus*).

Targeted tile surveys undertaken in 2026 confirmed the presence of Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) within Exotic Grassland and Cooba Woodland mine rehabilitation areas. All survey effort is shown on **Figure 2.3** and detailed in **Table 2.4**. The species was recorded predominately in Exotic Grassland rehabilitation, dominated by Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*) and Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maxima*), and also recorded in sparse Cooba (*Acacia salicina*) Woodland rehabilitation. While the mine rehabilitation habitat is unlikely to be considered habitat critical to the survival to the species, information on the species is limited and the Conservation Advice for the Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) (DCCEEW 2024) states that *"all sites where the Hunter Valley Delma has been detected are potentially important for species survival"*.

Other than the Hunter Valley Delma – a species known to occupy poor condition habitats, no evidence of other threatened species listed under the EPBC Act was detected despite extensive surveys of the

mine rehabilitation zones. The lack of floristic and structural diversity within the mine rehabilitation reduces the likelihood of most threatened species known to occur in the local area and region occurring. The mine rehabilitation is considered to provide poor quality habitat and the likelihood of occurrence for any threatened flora species and most fauna species is low.

3.2.3.2 Threatened Ecological Communities

Some discrete areas of mine rehabilitation in Domain 2b contain a floristic composition that is considered to conform to a PCT (i.e. PCT 1691) under the NSW Vegetation Classification System. These areas broadly correspond to more recently planted rehabilitation dating from the 2000s. These are discrete areas dominated by spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) with occasional grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*), grey gum (*Eucalyptus punctata*) and sugar gum. Many species are common to the wider geographical area, specifically the Central Western Slopes, but not essentially to PCTs that occur naturally in the vicinity. The ground stratum is similar to the older rehabilitation plantations and dominated by exotics.

As these areas have been conservatively assigned to a PCT, some of these areas are broadly consistent with the *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*, where spotted gum, along with occurrences of grey gum and narrow-leaved ironbark is present as the dominant canopy species. Parts of this vegetation zone were excluded from the CEEC in situations where the canopy was dominated or co-dominated by species which are not known to naturally occur in the community, such as sugar gum. Where the *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* has been determined in mine rehabilitation, this has been included in the credit calculations and BAM assessment for MNES, being vegetation zone PCT 3431 – Mine Rehabilitation.

The vast majority of mine rehabilitation in the HVO North BIAA does not conform to a Commonwealth-listed TEC.

3.3 MNES Subject to Further Assessment

The referral identified MNES recorded in the locality, and/or predicted to occur within the locality based on field surveys, NSW BioNet wildlife atlas searches, outputs of the NSW BAM – Credit Calculator and PMST report as of February 2025. A PMST report is provided in **Appendix A** to inform an assessment of likelihood of occurrence of MNES in the Action Area, as identified in **Section 3.1** above.

In keeping with section 158A of the EPBC Act and the PER Guidelines, this assessment has not considered any new species/communities' listings that have occurred after the controlled action determination. In keeping with the PER Guidelines, species identified in the updated searches, due to changes in distributional knowledge since the EPBC Referral in April 2025, have been included in the likelihood of occurrence assessment and in **Table 3.1.**

MNES known to occur or assessed as having a moderate or higher likelihood of occurring in the Action Area in **Table 3.1** are provided in the following sections. All impact numbers reflected in the sections below do not include areas associated with the wider easement area, which is not proposed for impact.

The location of the Commonwealth Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC and all threatened species recorded by Umwelt together with BioNet records are shown in **Figure 3.2.**

Critically Endangered or Endangered Ecological Communities

- Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC
- White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC.

Critically Endangered and Endangered Species

- Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- Regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)
- Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) (SE mainland population)
- Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)
- Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*).

Vulnerable Species

- Grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- Brown treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
- Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*).

Migratory Species Listed under International Conventions

- Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)
- white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- rufous fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*).

3.3.1 Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland – Critically Endangered

3.3.1.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland (CHVEFW) CEEC occurs in the Hunter Valley region on soils derived from Permian sedimentary bedrock (TSSC 2015). Typically, it is characterised as a eucalypt woodland and open forest, with a shrub layer of variable density and/or a grassy ground layer. Across its range, one or more of a complex of four eucalypt tree species, namely spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*), narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) or grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) dominate the canopy (TSSC 2015).

Available data indicates the CEEC has undergone a decline of at least 65%; and, if the condition of the ecological community is taken into account, the decline in extent is higher (i.e. greater than 70%) (TSSC 2015). The community is limited to the Permian sediments in the Central Hunter Valley.

It is well documented that the establishment of exotic species contributes to a reduction in ecological function of the CHVEFW CEEC. Weeds compete with locally indigenous flora for available resources and often limit the diversity and regenerative capacity of a native ecosystem. Although a number of

weeds pose a serious threat to the ecological community, amongst the most serious threats are African olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*), fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) and bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) (TSSC 2015).

Targeted surveys to map CHVEFW CEEC were undertaken in May, June, August and September 2020, in accordance with the sampling protocols and with consideration to the key diagnostic characteristics and condition thresholds provided in the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015). Additional flora transects and rapid assessments in October 2021 sought to identify the community in additional areas proposed for disturbance, following boundary amendments. These 'key diagnostic characteristics' and 'condition thresholds' provided by the Approved Conservation Advice formed the basis for delineating and identifying patches of native vegetation as being the CEEC and distinguishing between patches of different quality. Additional survey of mine rehabilitation in Domain 2b was also undertaken in September 2025 to determine whether mine rehabilitation meetings the diagnostic criteria for the CEEC.

3.3.1.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this CEEC include:

- Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) (2016). Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC Policy Statement.
- Threatened Species Scientific Committee (TSSC) (2015). Approved Conservation Advice (including listing advice) for the Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland ecological community.

Adopted/made threat abatement plans:

- A National Recovery Plan has not been prepared for the CHVEFW CEEC.

3.3.1.3 Habitat Assessment

Patches that were determined to meet the key diagnostic characteristics were assessed against the condition thresholds from the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015). The majority of the patches meet the high-quality condition despite most of the patches being highly fragmented and disturbed due to past land uses that include agriculture and mining.

Two PCTs were found to conform (or partially conform) to the CHVEFW CEEC. The vegetation communities and condition zones that conform to the CEEC and the approximate area of each is outlined in **Table 3.5** and the extent of the CEEC in the HVO North BIAA is shown in **Figure 3.3.**

Table 3.6 provides a summary of the CEEC occurring across the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.5 Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC occurring in PCTs in the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Condition	Area (ha)
3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	*Moderate*	100.0
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Plantation	1.3
	Bulloak Variant	21.4
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Scattered Regeneration	1.9
	*Cooba Woodland^*	1.0
	*Poor Condition DNG^*	5.6
	*Mine Rehabilitation**	14.9
3485 – Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	Moderate	7.3
Total		**166.3**

^Derived components of the CHVEFW CEEC.

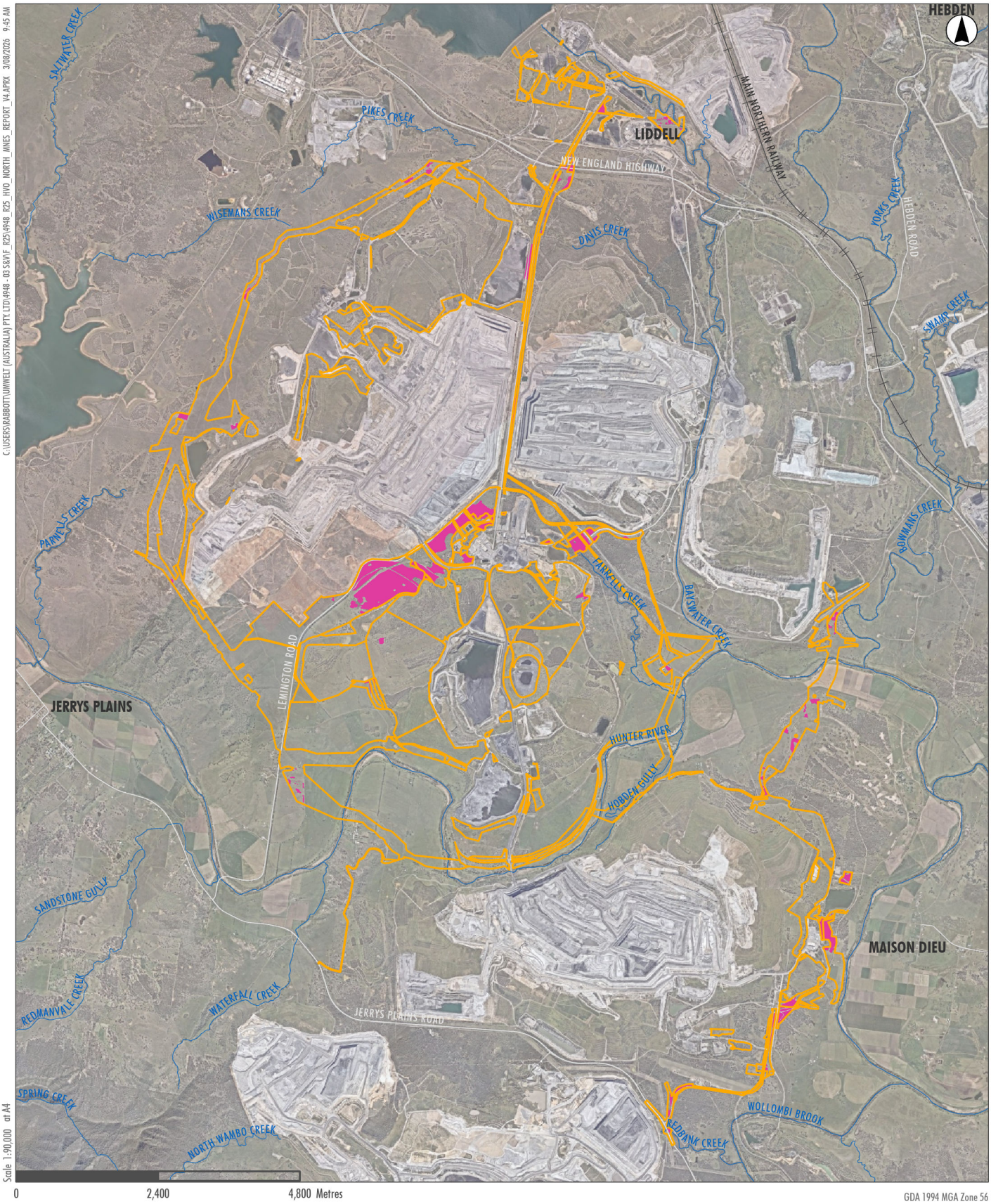
*Mine rehabilitation within Domain 2b.

Table 3.6 Summary of Area of Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC in HVO North BIAA

Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC Component	Area (ha)
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	142.9
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC – derived components^	8.5
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC – mine rehabilitation	14.9
Total	**166.3**

^ Note that derived native grasslands and shrublands are only included where the grassland connects discrete patches as per the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015).

An assessment of significance for Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC is provided in **Appendix B.**



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Scale 1:90,000 at A4

Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

EPBC Act TEC

- Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC

FIGURE 3.3

Extent of Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.2 White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

3.3.2.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC (Box-Gum Woodland CEEC) includes woodlands dominated by white box (*Eucalyptus albens*), yellow box (*E. melliodo*ra) or Blakely's red gum (*E. blakelyi*) and grasslands previously containing an overstorey dominated by these species (TSSC 2006). The species-rich understorey typically contains native tussock grasses, herbs and scattered shrubs. The ecological community is known to occur along the western slopes and tablelands of the Great Dividing Range from central Victoria, through NSW, to southern Queensland (TSSC 2006).

Available data indicates less than 5% the CEEC remains in good condition and much of this occurs in small, isolated patches (DEH 2006a). The remaining patches are still being lost due to clearing, weed invasion and overgrazing (DEH 2006a).

Targeted surveys to map Box-Gum Woodland CEEC were undertaken in May, June, August and September 2020, and in May 2023 in accordance with the sampling protocols and with consideration to the key diagnostic characteristics and condition thresholds provided in the EPBC Act Policy Statement (DEH 2006a). The flow chart for determining the presence of the ecological community in the EPBC Act Policy Statement formed the basis for delineating and identifying patches of native vegetation as being the CEEC.

3.3.2.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements for this CEEC include:

- Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) (2006). White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands Policy Statement
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (2023). Conservation Advice for the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland
- Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (2010). National Recovery Plan for White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland.
- Threatened Species Scientific Committee (2006). Commonwealth Listing Advice on White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland.

3.3.2.3 Habitat Assessment

Patches that were determined to meet the key diagnostic characteristics were assessed against the condition thresholds from the Approved Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2023). All patches of the CEEC in the HVO North BIAA meet the moderate-quality condition due to high fragmentation and disturbance from past land uses that include agriculture and mining.

One PCT was found to conform (or partially conform) to the Box-Gum Woodland CEEC. The results of the assessment for vegetation patches within the HVO North BIAA against the key diagnostic characteristics according to the Approved Conservation Advice are detailed in **Table 3.7** below.

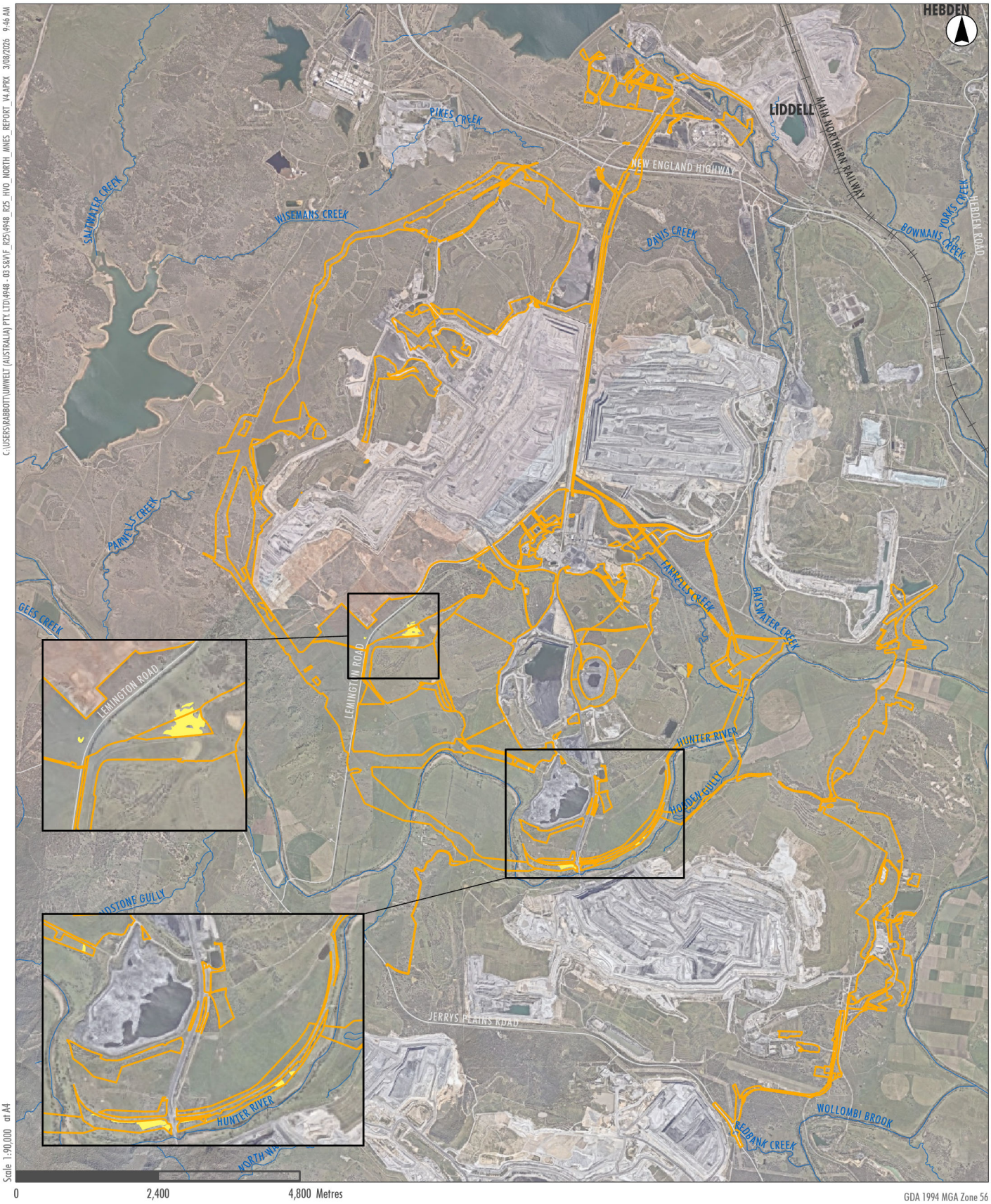
The vegetation communities and condition zones that conform to the CEEC and the approximate area of each is outlined in **Table 3.8** and the extent of the CEEC in the HVO North BIAA is shown in **Figure 3.4.**

Table 3.7 Assessment of Vegetation Patches within the HVO North BIAA against the Key Diagnostic Features according to the EPBC Act Policy Statement (DEH 2006a)

Key Diagnostic Characteristic as per EPBC Act Policy Statement (DEH 2006)	Vegetation patches within HVO North BIAA
Is, or was previously, at least one of the most common overstorey species White Box, Yellow Box or Blakely's Red Gum?	**Yes** – patches of remnant woodland located in the HVO North BIAA is dominated by yellow box.
Does the patch have a predominantly native understorey?	**Yes** – the understorey of the patch is predominantly native.
Is the patch 0.1 ha or greater in size?	**Yes** – the entire patch is greater than 3 ha in size.
There are 12 or more native understorey species present (excluding grasses). There must be at least one important species	No – two floristic plots sampled in the community, within the HVO North BIAA, recorded 7 and 10 native understorey species (excluding grasses), including three 'important species' in each plot.
If d) is not met, is the patch 2 ha or greater in size?	**Yes** – the patch is greater than 2 ha.
If the answer at e) is "yes", does the patch have an average of 20 or more trees per hectare, or is there natural regeneration of the dominant overstorey eucalypts?	**Yes** – there is an average of greater than 20 trees per hectare. **Outcome: the patch is the listed ecological community.**

Table 3.8 White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC occurring in PCTs in the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Condition	Area (ha)
PCT 4089 – Namoi Upper Hunter River Red Forest	*Moderate*	4.8
Total		**4.8**



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Scale 1:90,000 at A4

Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

EPBC Act TEC

- White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

FIGURE 3.4

Extent of White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.3 Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)

3.3.3.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The swift parrot is a critically endangered migrant of south-eastern Australia which occurs in temperate woodlands and forests. The swift parrot breeds in Tasmania and moves to mainland Australia for the non-breeding season (usually arriving between February and March) (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). Most of the population winters in Victoria and NSW where it disperses across broad landscapes foraging on nectar and lerps in eucalypts. The occurrence of swift parrots at foraging sites is primarily associated with abundance of winter flowering nectar and lerps and non-aggressive competitors. In the western slopes region of NSW this is largely box-ironbark forest and grassy woodlands.

In NSW, swift parrots forage mostly throughout the coastal region and western slopes region along the inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). Forests on the coastal plains from southern to northern NSW are also important and tend to support large numbers of birds particularly when inland habitats area subject to drought (CoA 2019). They feed preferentially on foliage and lerps in large mature trees (CoA 2019). In inland NSW the key foraging species include mugga ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*), grey box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*), white box (*Eucalyptus albens*) and yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). In coastal NSW the key foraging resources are swamp mahogany (Eucalyptus robusta), forest red gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) and spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). During the non-breeding season, the home-range varies tremendously between individuals and between years. The movements of this species on the mainland are poorly understood, but it is considered to be nomadic and irruptive, moving in response to food supply. Upon reaching their core non-breeding range there is no known geographical pattern of movement. The swift parrots return to Tasmania in spring (September–October).

The swift parrot has undergone a severe decline in recent decades due to broadscale breeding and foraging habitat loss and predation by introduced sugar gliders in their Tasmanian breeding range (Stojanovic et al. 2014, Heinsohn et al. 2015 cited in National Environmental Science Program Threatened Species Research Hub (2019b)). Total population is estimated to be below 2,000 individuals (Garnett, et al 2011) and as low as 500 (Olah et al. 2020).

3.3.3.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Conservation advice *Lathamus discolor* swift parrot (TSSC 2016a).
- National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor* (Saunders and Tzaros 2011).
- Draft National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) (CoA 2019).
- Adopted/made threat abatement plans: Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats (CoA 2015a).
- Other policy statements and guidelines:
    - Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened birds. Guidelines for detecting birds listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (DEWHA 2010).

3.3.3.3 Habitat Assessment

The swift parrot is listed under the BC Act and the EPBC Act and has specific assessment requirements under the BAM (DPIE 2020a) as a dual credit species. Important habitat is mapped by DPHI to identify important foraging habitat for the swift parrot.

The DPHI have not mapped any Important Habitat Areas for this species in the HVO North BIAA. Foraging habitat (beyond the important habitat areas) for the swift parrot is identified by the BAM – Credit Calculator and TBDC, that is targeted surveys are not required as the species habitat is predicted to occur based on association with PCTs in the HVO North BIAA. Targeted winter bird surveys were however conducted due to the identification of potential habitat in 2019 and 2025.

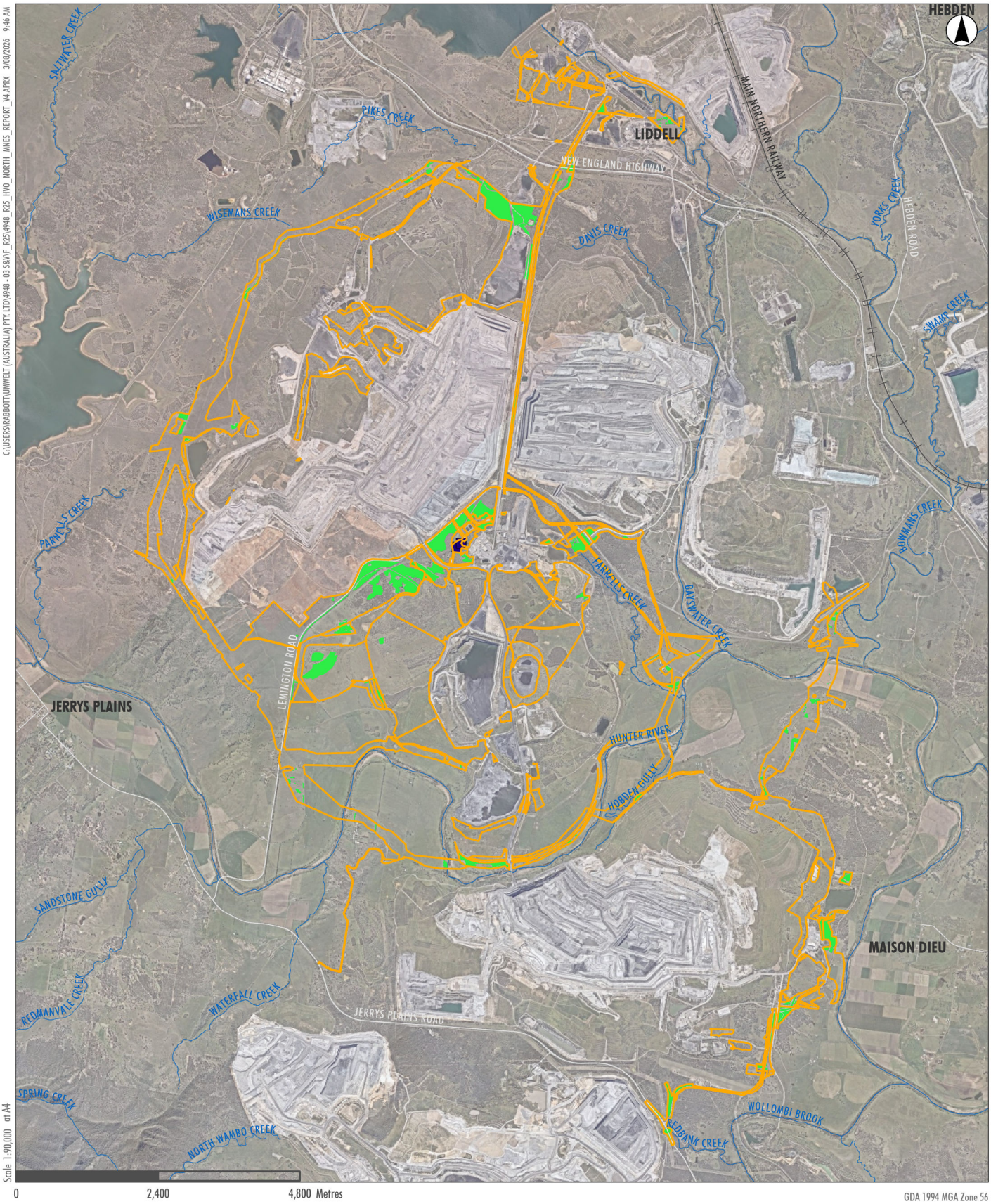
The spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) occurring in the HVO North BIAA is associated primarily with mine rehabilitation and has been planted. It is reasonably young, and less likely to produce mass flowering foraging resources than the mature habitats in nearby Wollemi NP or Ravensworth State Forest.

The Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC Policy Statement (DoEE 2016) states that this CEEC can be valuable as a "source of winter-flowering eucalypts for transient threatened species such as regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*) and swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)". While this community occurs in the BIAA, without the suitable winter foraging species, this habitat would be considered marginal and temporary habitat between higher quality foraging areas.

Table 3.9 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. Where these condition zones contain foraging resources as per the Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot (DCCEEW 2024b), these are noted. **Figure 3.5** shows the extent of suitable swift parrot habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.9 Swift Parrot Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Foraging Resources as per Recovery Plan	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	-	100.0
	Plantation	*Corymbia maculata*	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	-	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	-	16.3
	Mine Rehabilitation	*Corymbia maculata*	14.9
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	*Eucalyptus albens x moluccana*	1.6
3485	*Moderate*	-	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	*Eucalyptus melliodora*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	-	1.5
Total habitat with foraging resources (as per recovery plan)			**69.0**
Other associated PCTs/condition zones			**136.4**
Area within Important Habitat Mapping			**0**
TOTAL			**205.4**



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Scale 1:90,000 at A4

Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Extent of Swift Parrot Habitat

Umwelt Species Record

- Swift parrot
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 3.5

Extent of Swift Parrot Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.4 Regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phyrgia*)

3.3.4.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The regent honeyeater is a critically endangered, partially nomadic species occurring in temperate woodlands and forests within a patchy distribution between central VIC and south-east QLD which has undergone a severe decline in recent decades (Garnett et al. 2011). The listing advice in 2015 estimated that the extent of occurrence was 600,000 km^2 and the area of occupancy 300 km^2 (DoE 2016) and decreasing.

The regent honeyeater mostly inhabits inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range, in areas of low to moderate relief with moist, fertile soils; most commonly associated with box-ironbark eucalypt woodland and dry sclerophyll forest, but may also occur in riparian vegetation, spotted gum-ironbark associations and coastal forest dominated by swamp mahogany (*Eucalyptus robusta*). The regent honeyeater forages on nectar (eucalypts and mistletoes) and invertebrates and their exudates (DoE 2015a). Movement is thought to be governed by flowering of select eucalypt species. The regent honeyeater roosts communally in small groups, in trees with dense foliage (DoE 2015a).

In 2010 the number of mature individuals was estimated at 350–400 (Garnett et al. 2011), and there is an inferred continuing decline although there is no estimate as to the ongoing rate of decline (DoE 2016). More than 95 per cent of mature individuals occur in a single subpopulation (Garnett et al. 2011). The estimated total number of mature individuals of this species is low, and the geographic distribution is precarious for the survival of the species because more than 95 per cent of mature individuals occur in a single subpopulation. More recently, total population estimated at 100 breeding pairs (Crates et al 2018).

Habitat critical to the survival of the regent honeyeater include key breeding and foraging areas at:

- Bundarra-Barraba and subsidiary area of Pilliga Woodlands, Warrumbungles, Inverell-Ashford-Emmaville.
- Capertee Valley and subsidiary area of Mudgee-Munghorn Gap-Wollar and Burragorang River Valleys.
- Hunter Valley/Central Coast areas in NSW extending from central coast, the lower Hunter Valley to Upper Hunter Valley and Goulburn River (DoE 2016).

The regent honeyeater is not known to breed in the Central Hunter Valley, however it has been recorded foraging in habitats to the south of the HVO North BIAA.

3.3.4.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Approved Conservation Advice *Anthocheara phyrgia* regent honeyeater (DoE 2015a).
- There is no listing advice for this species, listing assessment information may be available in the Approved Conservation Advice.
- Adopted or made Recovery Plan: National Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phyrgia*) (DoE 2016).
- Adopted/made threat abatement plans: Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats (CoA 2015a).

- Other policy statements and guidelines:
    - Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened birds. Guidelines for detecting birds listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (DEWHA 2010).

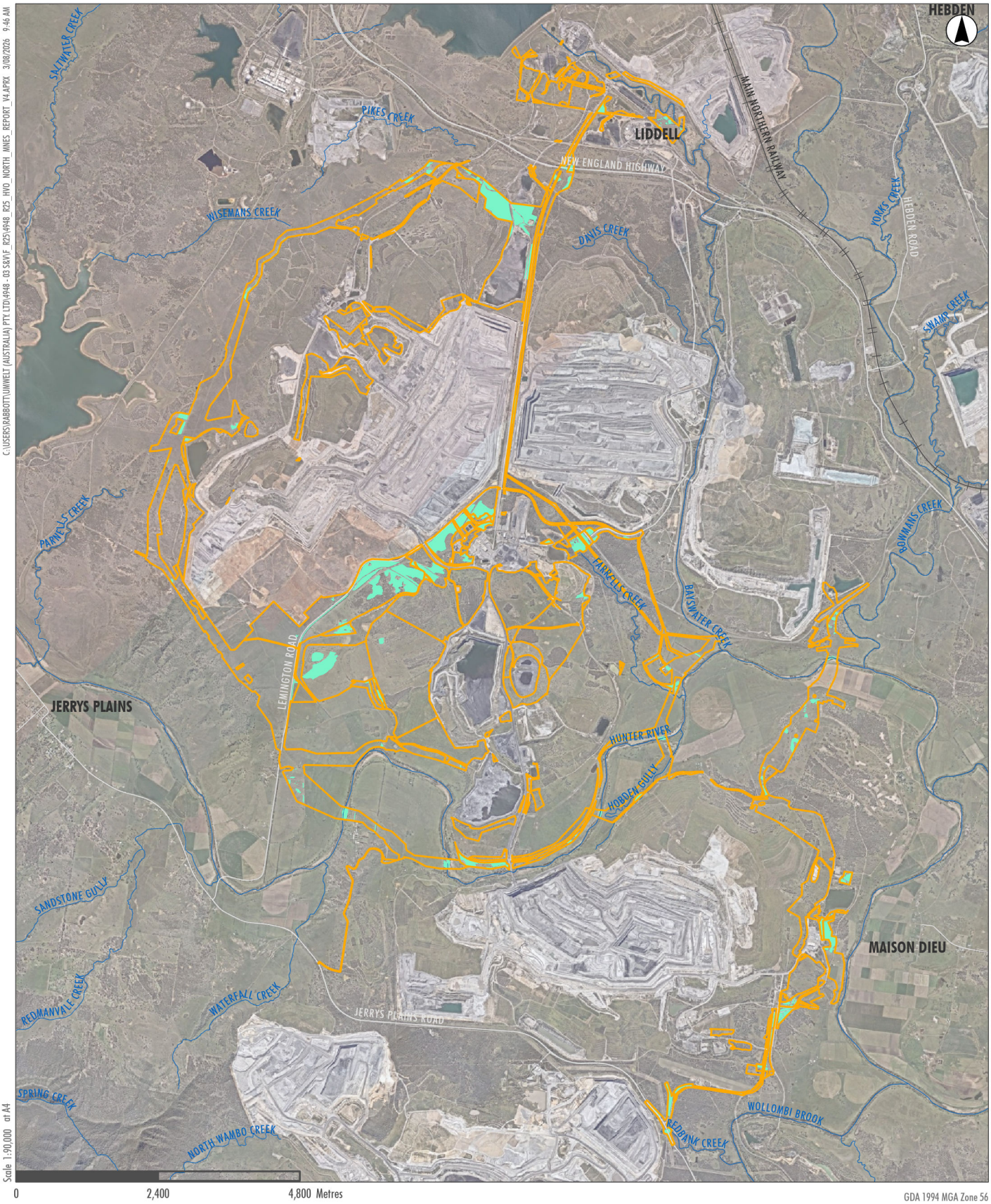
3.3.4.3 Habitat Assessment

Table 3.10 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. Where these condition zones contain foraging resources as per the Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater (DoE 2016), these are noted. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas mapped as 'Important Habitat' under the BAM.

Figure 3.6 shows the extent of potential regent honeyeater habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.10 Regent Honeyeater Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone	Foraging Resources as per Recovery Plan	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	-	100.0
	Plantation	*Corymbia maculata*	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	*Amyema miquelii*	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	-	16.3
	Mine Rehabilitation	*Corymbia maculata* *Eucalyptus albens*	14.9
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	*Eucalyptus albens x moluccana*	1.6
3485	*Moderate*	-	7.3
4081	*Moderate*	-	1.8
4089	*Moderate*	*Eucalyptus melliodora*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	-	1.5
Total habitat with foraging resources (as per recovery plan)			**80.3**
Other associated PCTs/condition zones			**126.9**
Area within Important Habitat Mapping			**0**
TOTAL			**207.2**



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Scale 1:90,000 at A4

FIGURE 3.6

Extent of Regent Honeyeater Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.5 Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*)

3.3.5.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The spotted-tailed quoll (southeastern mainland population)) occurs in eastern Australia from south-eastern Queensland to western Victoria. In NSW the spotted-tailed quoll occurs along both sides of the Great Dividing Range. Populations are now fragmented and isolated and estimates of the decline in range is from 50–90 per cent for the mainland and 25–50 per cent in New South Wales since European settlement (TSSC 2020).

The spotted-tail quoll (SE mainland population) is listed as endangered under the EPBC Act. There is no precise estimate of population size or number of mature individuals. The population in NSW has remained abundant in some areas at least up until the 2019/2020 bushfires (TSSC 2020). It is predicted that the population may have declined since these fires as 29 per cent of the distribution range was fire affected (TSSC 2020). At the time of the recovery plan in 2016, stronghold populations in NSW important for the long-term survival and recovery of the species, with high abundance included:

- Northern tablelands area – particularly the Guy Fawkes River National Park, New England National Park and Oxley Wild Rivers National Park and the Barrington area.
- The Greater Blue Mountains area – Wolgan, Goulburn River and the Jenolan-Kanangra area.
- South coast/tablelands – Barren Grounds Nature Reserve and Budderoo National Park and the Tallaganda/Badja area (east of Braidwood).
- Kosciuszko National Park/Snowy Mountains (DELWP 2016, TSSC 2020).

The spotted-tailed quoll is a mainly forest dependent species but occurs in a variety of habitats including closed forests (including temperate and sub-tropical rainforest), tall eucalypt forests, open woodlands, open forests, drier rainshadow woodlands and coastal heathlands. The highest densities of the species have been recorded from both wet and dry forest habitats (TSSC 2020).

The spotted-tailed quolls are solitary highly cryptic animals and occur at low densities with males having large overlapping home ranges (from 359 to 5512 hectares) while females have smaller ranges of several hundred hectares (88 to 1,515 hectares) (DELWP 2016). They will have multiple dens across their range using rock crevices, hollow legs, tree hollows, burrows of other animals and under buildings (DELWP 2016). While habitat critical to the survival of the spotted-tailed quoll has not been defined or mapped it would include large patches of forest with adequate denning resources and relatively high densities of medium-sized mammalian prey (DELWP 2016).

3.3.5.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Conservation Advice *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus* (southeastern mainland population) Spotted-tailed Quoll, southeastern mainland (TSSC 2020c).
- There is no listing advice for this species, listing assessment information may be available in the Approved Conservation Advice.
- National Recovery Plan for the Spotted-tailed Quoll *Dasyurus maculatus*.

- Adopted/made threat abatement plans: Threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats (CoA 2015), Threat abatement plan for predation by European red fox (DEWHA 2008c).
- Other policy statements and guidelines:
    - Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammal. Guidelines for detecting mammals listed as threatened under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (DSEWPaC 2011).
    - Administrative Guidelines on Significance: Supplement for the tiger quoll (southeastern mainland population) and the use of 1080 (DEH 2004).
    - Draft EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.4 – Significant Impact Guidelines for the endangered spot-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus* (southeastern mainland population) and the use of 1080 (DEWHA 2009).

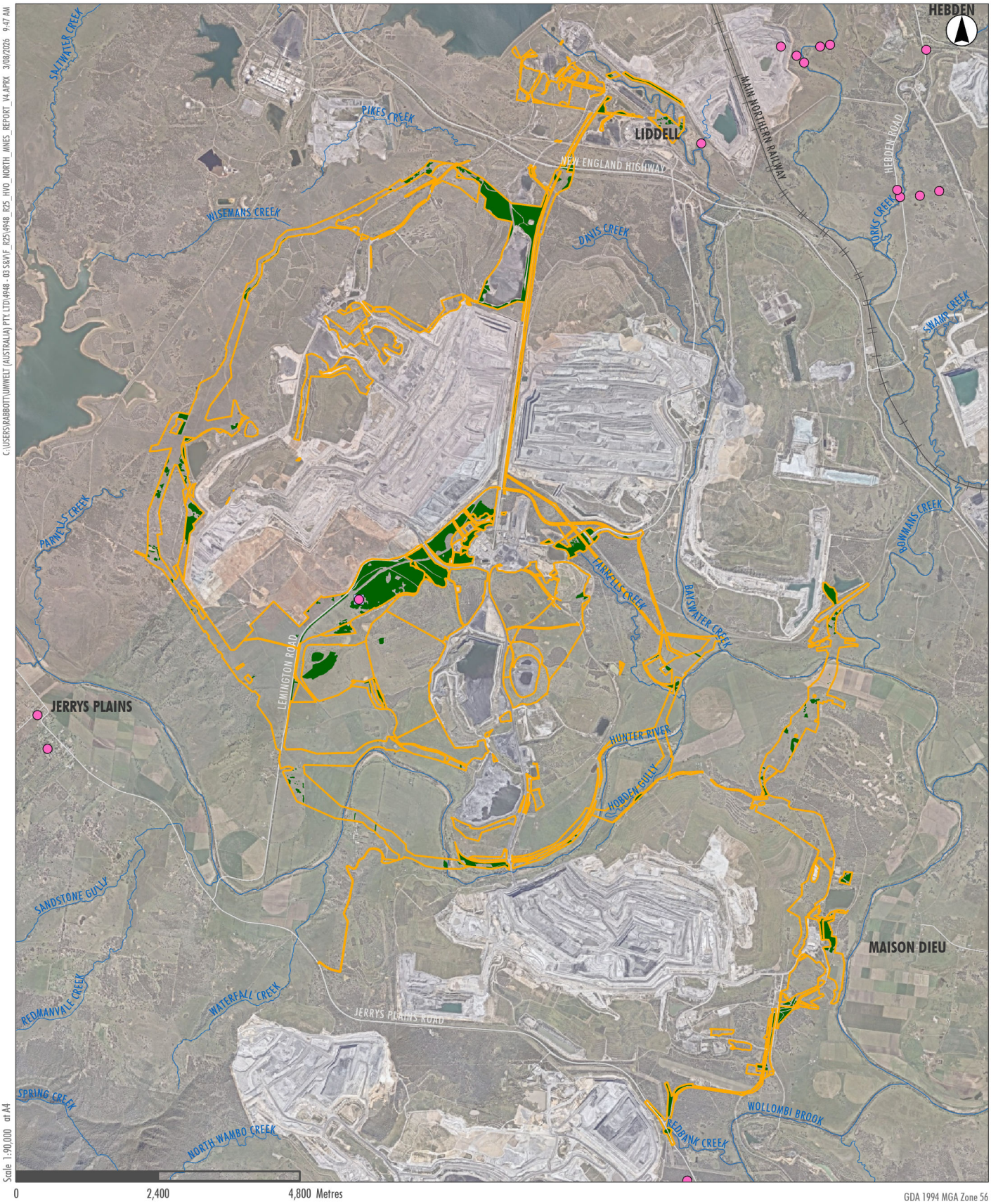
3.3.5.3 Habitat Assessment

Table 3.11 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat, being predominantly woodland and forest habitat and riparian movement habitat. Under the BAM, the spotted-tailed quoll is an ecosystem credit species, and all offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Figure 3.7 shows the extent of suitable spotted-tailed quoll habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.11 Spotted-tailed Quoll Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Cooba Woodland	62.0
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4015	*Moderate*	3.4
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
	Cooba Woodland	0.1
Total Woodland and Forest Habitat		**298.8**
Total Riparian Movement Habitat		**10.1**
Total Denning Habitat		**0.0**



Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Extent of Spotted-tailed Quoll Habitat

Umwelt Species Record

- Spotted-tailed quoll

Atlas Species Record

- Spotted-tailed Quoll

- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 3.7

Extent of Spotted-tailed Quoll Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.6 Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)

3.3.6.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The large-eared pied bat is patchily distributed in central-eastern New South Wales (NSW) and south-eastern and central Queensland, from the area bounded by Shoalwater Bay, north of Rockhampton (QLD), south to Bungonia in the NSW Southern Highlands and Ulladulla on the coast, NSW (DCCEEW 2023b).

The large-eared pied bat is listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act. The conservation advice for the large-eared pied bat identifies that the species' total population size likely ranges between 10,000 individuals and 20,000 individuals, although the number of mature individuals is lower (DCCEEW 2023b). It is estimated that 27 per cent of the species' habitat occurs within areas affected by the 2019 / 2020 wildfires, with 10 per cent of the range intersecting with severe fire (DCCEEW 2023b). Much of the known distribution of the large-eared pied bat occurs in NSW (DCCEEW 2023b). In NSW, the species occurs in the Sydney sandstone region, Pilliga region and in the north-east at Coolah Tops and Mt Kaputar.

The population structure and number of locations are poorly known however main strongholds are present in the Sydney sandstone region, Pilliga region and Central Queensland Sandstone Belt (DCCEEW 2023b). In NSW, north-east of Coolah Tops, Mt Kaputar National Park and Warrumbungle National Park, the species is present in areas of volcanic strata (DCCEEW 2023b). In NSW, maternity roosts occur in Ukerbarley State Conservation Area near Coonabarabran, Woodsreef asbestos mine near Barraba, Pilliga National Park and Nature Reserve, Ophir reserve near Orange, and potentially near Ulan (DCCEEW 2023b). Based on this advice it is likely that the majority of the population occurs in NSW.

The national population extent of occurrence is estimated to be 570 000 km^2 based on the distribution range in Hoye and Dwyer (1995) (DCCEEW 2023b). The area of occupancy is defined by the area supporting maternity roost sites. The area of occupancy is approximately 9,120 km^2 (DCCEEW 2023b).

The majority of records of the species occur within several kilometres of cliff lines or caves, in which it is known to roost. The large-eared pied bat is dependent on the presence of diurnal roosts for shelter. The species is known to roost in sandstone caves, overhangs, disused mine shafts, and abandoned Petrochelidon ariel (Fairy Martin) nests (DCCEEW 2023b). The structure of maternity roosts appears to be very specific with caves high and deep enough to allow juveniles to learn to fly inside with indentations to allow for clustering (DCCEEW 2023b).

The large-eared pied bat has been recorded foraging in fertile (relative to surrounding landscape) valleys and plains, as well as areas with moderately tall to taller trees in woodland along water courses and upper slopes and crests of ranges (DCCEEW 2023). The majority of records are from canopied habitat, suggesting a sensitivity to clearing, although narrow connecting riparian strips in otherwise cleared habitat are sometimes quite heavily used. This may be because such riparian zones are highly productive (DCCEEW 2023b).

3.3.6.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Conservation Advice for *Chalinolobus dwyeri* (large-eared pied bat) (DCCEEW 2023b).

- There is no listing advice for this species, listing assessment information may be available in the Approved Conservation Advice.
- National recovery plan for the large-eared pied bat *Chalinolobus dwyeri* (DERM 2011).
- There is no adopted/made threat abatement plans, identified as being relevant for this species.
- Other policy statements and guidelines:
    - Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened bats. Guidelines for detecting bats listed as threatened under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (DEWHA 2010b).

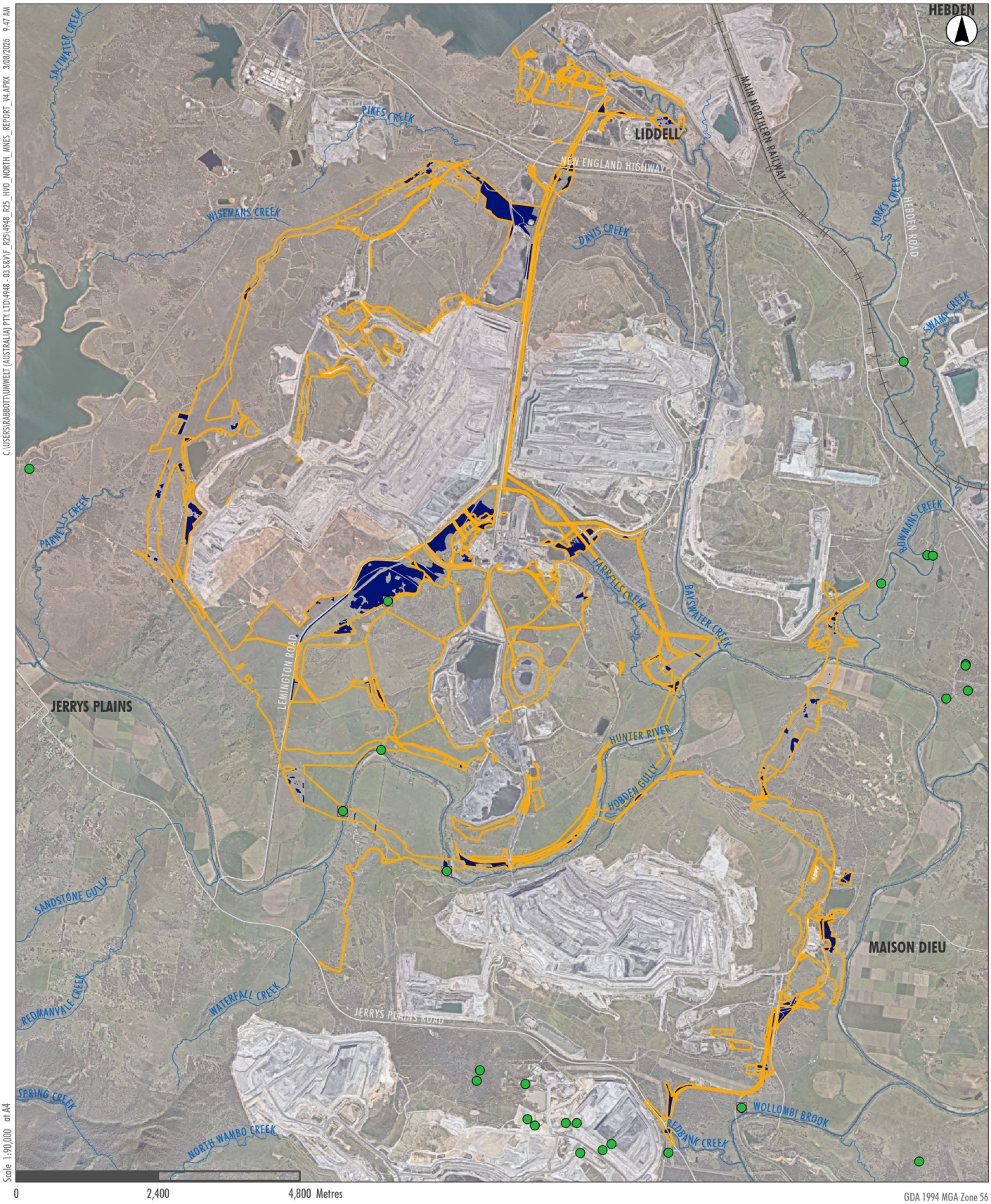
3.3.6.3 Habitat Assessment

Table 3.12 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential foraging habitat only. According to the Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2023e) the species "has been recorded foraging in fertile (relative to surrounding landscape) valleys and plains, as well as areas with moderately tall to taller trees in woodland along water courses and upper slopes and crests of ranges. The majority of records are from canopied habitat, suggesting a sensitivity to clearing, although narrow connecting riparian strips in otherwise cleared habitat are sometimes quite heavily used (DERM 2011)".

Under the BAM, the large-eared pied bat requires species credits for roosting/breeding habitat only and foraging habitat within 2 km of these features. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas of confirmed roosting or breeding habitat. **Figure 3.8** shows the extent of large-eared pied bat foraging habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.12 Large-eared Pied Bat Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Potential Woodland and Forest Foraging Habitat		**228.5**
Confirmed Roosting/Breeding Habitat		**0.0**



Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Large-eared Pied Bat Foraging Habitat

Umwelt Species Record

- Large-eared pied bat

Atlas Species Record

- Large-eared Pied Bat

- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 3.8

Large-eared Pied Bat Foraging Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.7 Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)

3.3.7.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) has only recently been described as a separate species, as it was previously thought to be a subpopulation of the striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*). There is limited information available regarding the ecology of the Hunter Valley delma specifically, with most of the species' ecological characteristics being assumed to be similar to the closely related striped legless lizard (DCCEEW 2024c).

The Hunter Valley delma occurs in secondary native grassland which remains after the removal of woody canopy vegetation. Native grassland with a diverse ground cover layer is likely to be important for the species as such habitat would provide shelter from predators and habitat for foraging and breeding. However, it has also been found in disturbed environments, including heavily disturbed grazing land with no natural surface refugia (DCCEEW 2024c).

The sites where the species has been detected include rehabilitated mine sites and pastoral land used for cattle grazing. It has not been identified to occur in any protected areas (DCCEEW 2024c).

The Hunter Valley delma is known almost entirely from a 25 km wide (60 km^2 area) corridor in the Hunter Valley NSW, between Maitland and Muswellbrook. Limited information is available regarding the species' dispersal capabilities. It has been observed crossing roads during the day and sheltering under cow pats in otherwise featureless agricultural land, which suggests it has capacity to disperse across disturbed environments. As such, it is considered likely that the occurrence of the species in the Hunter Valley is likely to comprise a single connected subpopulation (DCCEEW 2024c).

A further specimen has been identified from the Liverpool plains, approximately 80 km north-west of Muswellbrook. It is not clear whether the records within the Hunter Valley and the Liverpool Plains are connected, or whether they are from separate subpopulations (DCCEEW 2024c).

All populations of the Hunter Valley delma are important for conservation across its range (DCCEEW 2024c).

The BIAA provides habitat in the form of native grassland, and sparse canopy grassy woodlands aligning broadly with the habitat vegetative preference of Hunter Valley delma. **Table 3.13** below outlines the associated PCTs for the Hunter Valley delma as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential foraging habitat. It also identifies whether Hunter Valley delma was identified during targeted surveys in each zone.

In consultation with Commonwealth DCCEEW, the Commonwealth DCCEEW indicated that adequate evidence needs to be provided to confirm if the Hunter Valley delma occurs in areas of mine rehabilitation in Domain 2b. Following targeted surveys in early 2026, Hunter Valley delma was recorded in rehabilitation areas, within Exotic Grassland and Cooba Woodland rehabilitation zones.

3.3.7.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

- Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:
- Conservation Advice for *Delma vescolineta* (Hunter Valley delma) (DCCEEW 2024).
- There is no listing advice for this species, listing assessment information may be available in the Approved Conservation Advice.

- National recovery plan for the Hunter Valley Delma is not required, as the threats facing the entity, and the recovery actions needed, are well-understood and can most effectively be guided via an approved Conservation Advice.
- There are no adopted/made threat abatement plans, identified as being relevant for this species.

3.3.7.3 Habitat Assessment

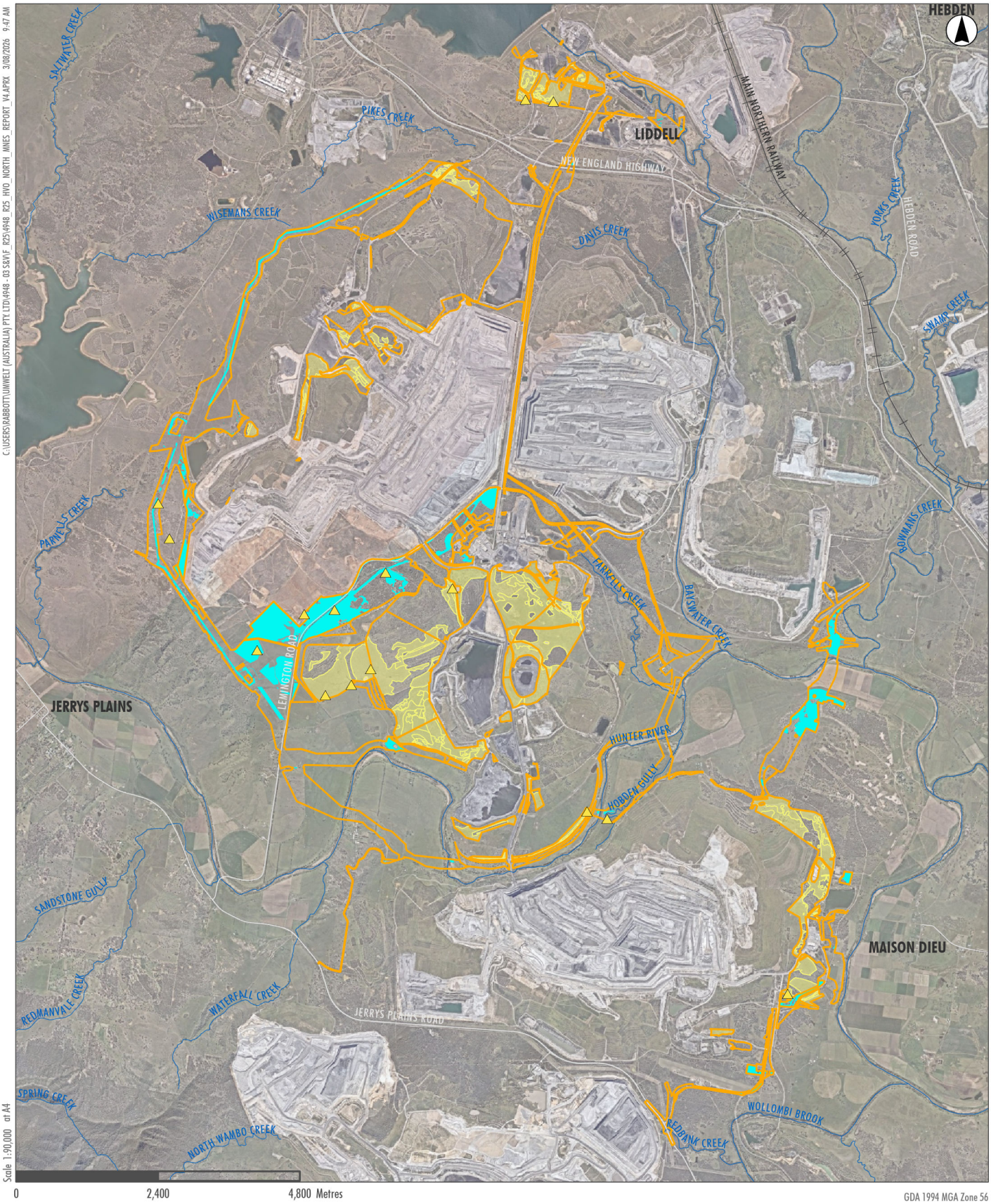
The HVO North BIAA provides habitat in the form of native grassland, and sparse canopy grassy woodlands aligning broadly with the habitat vegetative preference of *Delma vescolineata*. The species was also confirmed to occur in degraded habitats across mine rehabilitation areas.

Table 3.13 below outlines the associated PCTs for *Delma vescolineata* as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential foraging habitat. It also identifies whether *D. vescolineata* was identified during targeted surveys in each zone.

Figure 3.9 shows the extent of Hunter Valley Delma habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.13 Hunter Valley Delma Associated PCTs and Suitable Habitat Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Recorded in Habitat?	Area (ha)
3431	*Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	Yes	230.5
	Scattered Regeneration	Yes	59.9
	Thinned Woodland	Yes	10.7
4089	*Derived Native Grassland*	Yes	4.4
Total Remnant Habitat			**305.5**
Mine rehabilitation	*Exotic Grassland*	Yes	430.7
	Cooba Woodland	Yes	211.8
Total Mine Rehabilitation Habitat			**642.5**
		Overall total	**948.0**



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GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Hunter Valley *Delma* Remnant Habitat
- Hunter Valley *Delma* Rehabilitation Habitat
- Hunter Valley *Delma*
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 3.9

Extent of Hunter Valley delma Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.8 Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)

3.3.8.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The grey-headed flying-fox is listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act. Its range extends from Bundaberg in Queensland to Melbourne in Victoria, from the coast and inland to the western slopes of New South Wales. There have also been recent reports of the species within South Australia (DAWE 2021).

Grey-headed flying-fox feeds primarily on blossoms and fruit in canopy vegetation. Major food plants include fruit and blossom of rainforest species (especially figs) and blossom of *Eucalyptus*, *Corymbia*, *Angophora*, *Melaleuca*, *Banksia* and *Syzygium* species. They forage over large areas flying up to 40 km from their roosts or camps.

Habitat critical to the survival of the species including vegetation communities that:

- Support winter and spring flowering resources (*Eucalyptus tereticornis, Eucalyptus albens, Eucalyptus crebra, Eucalyptus fibrosa, Eucalyptus melliodora, Eucalyptus paniculata, Eucalyptus pilularis, Eucalyptus robusta, Eucalyptus seeana, Eucalyptus sideroxylon, Eucalyptus siderophloia, Banksia integrifolia, Castanospermum austral, Corymbia citriodora, Corymbia eximia, Corymbiamaculata, Grevillea robusta, Melaleuca quinquenervia, Syncarpia glomulifera*).
- Native species flowering during the final weeks of gestation, birth, lactation and conception (August to May).
- Native species for foraging within 20 km of a nationally important camp as identified on the flying-fox viewer.
- Native and/or exotic species used for roosting at the site of a nationally important camp as identified on the flying-fox viewer (DAWE 2021).

The grey-headed flying-fox is considered to be a single mobile population. Grey- headed flying-foxes are highly mobile and appear to be a highly adaptable species in response to changes in their habitat and surrounding environment. The grey-headed flying-fox occupancy and relative abundance varies widely seasonally and temporally in response to flowering and fruiting. There are a small number of local areas that support a continuous presence while others are associated with regular, annual patterns of use (DAWE 2021). A number of ‘’urban’’ roost sites that are occupied year-round (Sydney suburbs, Botanic Gardens in Sydney and Melbourne) have become established due to consistently available food resources and suitable roosting habitat. At other ‘’non-permanent’’ roost sites, Grey-headed flying-foxes have shown themselves to be able to respond rapidly to the presence/absence of food availability (TSSC 2001).

During spring, the grey-headed flying-fox is uncommon south of Nowra but widespread in other areas of their range. In summer they are widespread throughout their range and in autumn they occupy coastal lowlands and are uncommon inland. In winter they congregate in coastal lowlands north of the Hunter Valley and are occasionally found where flowering spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and north-west slopes with flowering white box (Eucalyptus albens) or mugga ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) (DAWE 2021).

3.3.8.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- There is no approved conservation advice for this species.
- Commonwealth Listing Advice on *Pteropus poliocephalus* (Grey-headed Flying-fox) (TSSC 2001).
- National recovery plan for the grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus* (DAWE 2021).
- There are no adopted/made threat abatement plans, identified as being relevant for this species.
- Other policy statements and guidelines:
    - Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened bats. Guidelines for detecting bats listed as threatened under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (DEWHA 2010b).
    - Referral guideline for management actions in Grey-headed and Spectacled flying-fox camps. EPBC Act Policy Statement (CoA 2015b).

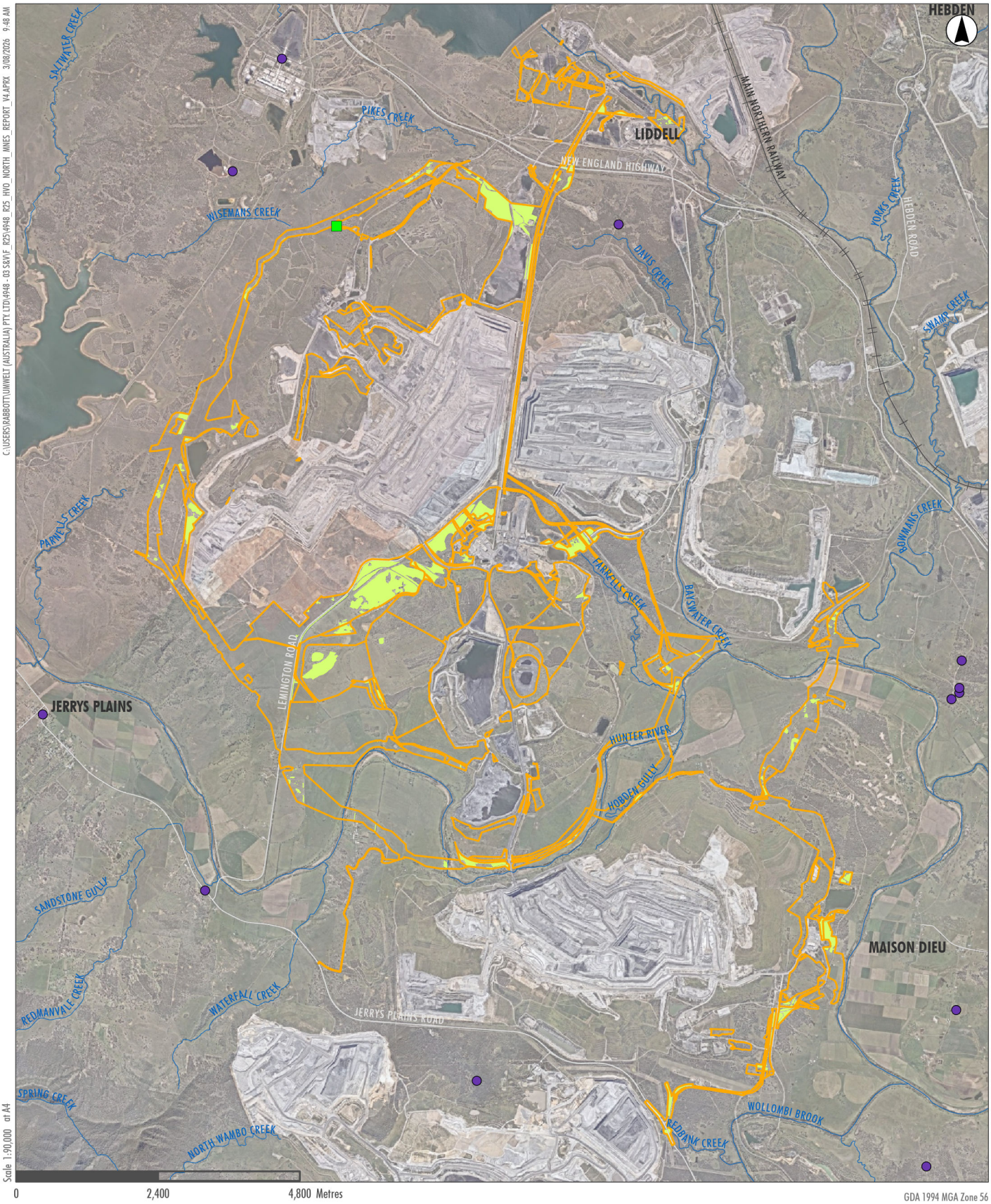
3.3.8.3 Habitat Assessment

Table 3.14 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential foraging habitat only. Under the BAM, the grey-headed flying-fox requires species credits for breeding camps only. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas of known or historic flying-fox camps for this species.

Figure 3.10 shows the extent of grey-headed flying-fox foraging habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.14 Grey-headed Flying-fox Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Foraging Habitat		**243.4**
Total Breeding Camps		**0.0**



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Scale 1:90,000 at A4

Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Grey-headed Flying Fox Foraging Habitat

Umwelt Species Record

- Grey-headed Flying Fox

Atlas Species Record

- Grey-headed Flying-fox

- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 3.10

Grey-headed Flying Fox Foraging Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.9 White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

3.3.9.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus* subsp *caudacutus* or *H. caudacutus*) is listed as vulnerable and migratory under the EPBC Act. As a migratory species it is listed under the international agreements being the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA), Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) or Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA).

The white-throated needletail is a migratory swift which breeds in north-east Asia and spends the non-breeding season in eastern and south-eastern Australia. It occurs in coastal regions of Queensland and NSW extending inland to the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range arriving in Australia for summer as early as September but usually from late October/early November to mid-March/April with numbers typically peaking during February and March (TSSC 2019). They travel south through Queensland and NSW, either side of the Great Dividing Range, in October and November arriving in Victoria and Tasmania in November to December. The northward migration begins in mid-March and April. A few birds occasionally remain in Australia during the breeding season (TSSC 2019).

While the population size in Australia has not been quantified, the number of white-throated needletail observed in Australia has declined in Australia by an estimated 74 per cent since the 1950s primarily due to large-scale deforestation of its breeding habitat (Tarburton 2014). The species is listed as vulnerable as the TSSC identified that the species has undergone a substantial reduction in population size (at least 30 to 50 per cent) over three generation lengths (25.5 years) and the reduction has not ceased (TSSC 2019).

In Australia, the white-throated needletail is mostly aerial from heights of less than one metre up to more than 1,000 m above the ground, mostly above wooded areas (TSSC 2019) including open forest and rainforest though less likely over woodland. The white-throated needletail roosts in trees amongst dense foliage in the canopy or in hollows but does not breed in Australia (TSSC 2019).

3.3.9.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Conservation Advice *Hirundapus caudacutus* white-throated needletail (TSSC 2019).
- There is no listing advice for this species, listing assessment information may be available in the Approved Conservation Advice.
- There is no adopted or made Recovery Plan for this species. The Conservation Advice provides sufficient guidance on recovery of the species.
- There is no adopted/made threat abatement plan, identified as being relevant for this species.
- Policy statements and guidelines:
    - Draft referral guideline for 14 birds listed as migratory species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015), administration guideline.

3.3.9.3 Habitat Assessment

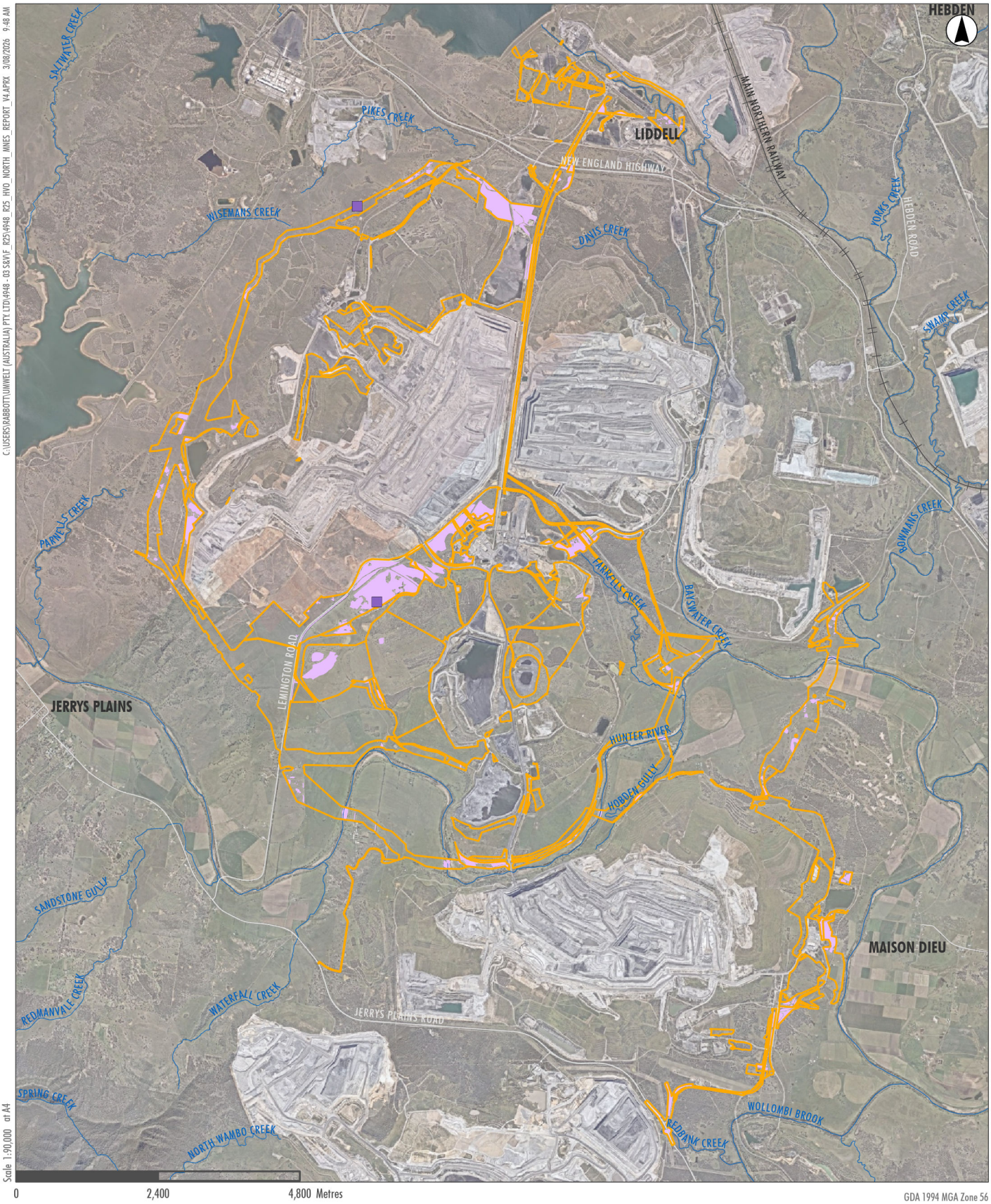
The white-throated needletail has been recorded with low accuracy in the north-eastern section of the HVO North BIAA in 2000, with one record approximately 1.5 km to the east near Glennies Creek Road (2001) and two within 5 km near the Golden Highway (2014) (DPHI 2025a). The species was not recorded during the surveys undertaken for this assessment.

Table 3.15 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. White-throated needletail is an ecosystem credit species under the BAM and any offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Figure 3.11 shows the extent of white-throated needletail foraging habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.15 White-throated Needletail Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4015	*Moderate*	3.4
4081	*Moderate*	1.8
4089	*Moderate*	5.0
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Woodland and Forest Habitat		**248.5**
Total Breeding Habitat		**0.0**



Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Extent of White-throated Needletail Habitat

Umwelt Species Record

- White-throated Needletail

- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

FIGURE 3.11

White-throated Needletail Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.10 Brown treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)

3.3.10.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is widespread through south-eastern Australia, with its range extending from the Grampians in Victoria to the Bunya Mountains in Queensland, and extending west as far as Corowa, Wagga Wagga, Temora, Dubbo, Forbes and Inverell. Intergrades of the arid zone subspecies are likely to occur west of the dividing range.

The brown treecreeper (south-eastern) occupies dry open eucalyptus forests and woodland, predominantly in areas dominated by stringybarks or other rough barked eucalypts with an open native grassy understory. They are also known to occur in floodplain woodlands such as river red gum (Eucalyptus camaldulensis) assemblages, although this occurs predominantly in the upper Murray River. The subspecies is not usually found in dense or degraded woodlands or steep rocky hills.

Brown treecreepers (south-eastern) forage arboreally and on the ground, feeding on a variety of invertebrates, as well as on mugga ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) and paperbark nectar.

Brown treecreepers (south-eastern) require large hollow bearing living or dead trees to breed, and have higher reproductive success in habitat with low shrub density, medium ground cover and higher levels of foraging substrate and fallen timber.

Fragmentation is a critical threatening factor in the decline of the brown treecreeper (south-eastern), as their ability to cross habitat gaps is limited, and they are considered a largely sedentary species. Significant population density decline has been observed in remnant vegetation fragments smaller than 300 ha.

There are no recorded occurrences of the brown tree creeper (south-eastern) within the BIAA. There are five records of the subspecies within 700 m of the HVO North BIAA boundary; two on the banks of the Hunter River recorded in 2018, two adjacent to the Golden Highway recorded in 2004 and one to the east recorded in 2014. Due to the absence of records of the species within the BIAA, the BIAA is not considered to contain an important population of this species.

3.3.10.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Conservation Advice for *Climacteris picumnus victoriae* (brown treecreeper (south-eastern)) (DCCEEW 2023).
- There is no listing advice for this species, listing assessment information may be available in the Approved Conservation Advice.
- There is no adopted/made Recovery Plan for this species.
- There are no adopted/made threat abatement plans, identified as being relevant for this species.

3.3.10.3 Habitat Assessment

There are no recorded occurrences of the brown tree creeper (south-eastern) within the HVO North BIAA. There are five records of the subspecies within 700 m of the HVO North BIAA boundary; two on the banks of the Hunter River recorded in 2018, two adjacent to the Golden Highway recorded in 2004

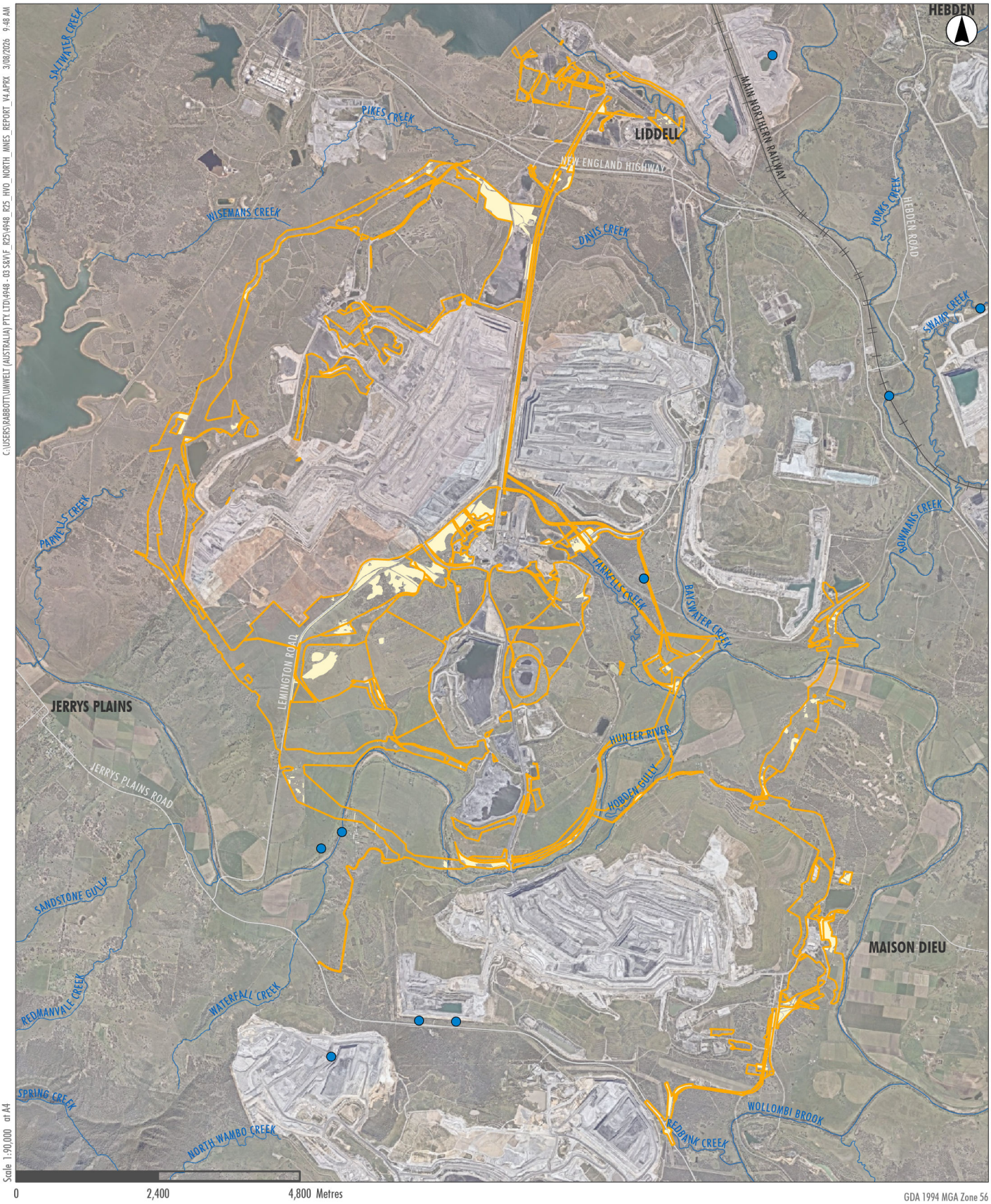
and one to the east recorded in 2014. Due to the absence of records of the species within the HVO North BIAA, the BIAA is not considered to contain an important population of this species.

Table 3.16 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM (DPIE 2020) and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. Brown treecreeper is an ecosystem credit species under the BAM and any offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Figure 3.12 shows the extent of brown treecreeper habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.16 Brown Treecreeper Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	1.6
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Woodland and Forest Habitat		**205.4**



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Scale 1:90,000 at A4

FIGURE 3.12

Brown Treecreeper Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.11 Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)

3.3.11.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

Latham's snipe is a migratory species which breeds in Japan and eastern Russia, and visits Australia during its non-breeding season. It typically arrives in northern Australia in late July to early August, then moves southwards along the coastline to south-eastern Australia between August and November. Few (if any) individuals of the species remain in northern Australia during summer. The species then departs from south-eastern Australia by late February to early March, travelling along the coast to northern Queensland, from where it departs by mid-April to its breeding grounds (DCCEEW 2024e).

While in Australia, the species is generally widely dispersed in low numbers. Latham's snipe inhabits a range of environments, most commonly being open freshwater wetlands with low dense vegetation, but also including habitat with saline or brackish water, modified or artificial wetlands, and areas close to human activity. Smaller numbers occur in drier habitat including open woodlands and high altitude grasslands or herblands, usually in proximity to surface water. The species may be found in a variety of vegetation types within these environments (DCCEEW 2024e).

Latham's snipe is omnivorous and feeds in soft mudflats or shallow water on plant matter and invertebrates during the early morning, evening and at night. It shelters during the day amongst dense inundated vegetation such as sedges, grasses, lignum, reeds and rushes (DCCEEW 2024e).

The species is known to occur in the locality. It has occasionally recorded during annual monitoring surveys of the nearby Mount Owen Complex. Previous records in the locality also occur at Lake Liddell in the north and near Wollombi Brook near Warkworth in the south. The BIAA contains areas of potential dam habitat for the species and small sections of the Hunter River.

Latham's snipe occurs as a single migratory population (DCCEEW 2024e). This population is therefore an important population of the species by default. However, the presence of individuals of Latham's snipe does not necessarily mean that a site supports important habitat for the species. Important habitat is a key concept for the assessment of migratory species. For Latham's snipe, a site constitutes important habitat if it supports at least 18 individuals of the species (DCCEEW 2024e).

3.3.11.2 Guidelines and Policy Statements

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for this species include:

- Policy statements and guidelines: Draft referral guideline for 14 birds listed as migratory species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015), administration guideline.

3.3.11.3 Habitat Assessment

The species is known to occur in the locality. It has occasionally recorded during annual monitoring surveys of the nearby Mount Owen Complex. Previous records in the locality also occur at Lake Liddell in the north and near Wollombi Brook near Warkworth in the south. The HVO North BIAA contains areas of potential dam habitat for the species and small sections of the Hunter River.

It is recognised that available habitat within the HVO North BIAA is of marginal quality for the species, consisting of dam habitat and sections of the Hunter River. It lacks habitat features favoured by the species, including low dense vegetation for roosting and shallow water for foraging. The HVO North BIAA does not contain habitat critical to the survival of the species.

Further, habitat critical to the survival of the species is not present in the wider locality adjacent to the HVO North BIAA. While Latham's snipe has been recorded in the locality, records of the species are for less than 18 individuals.

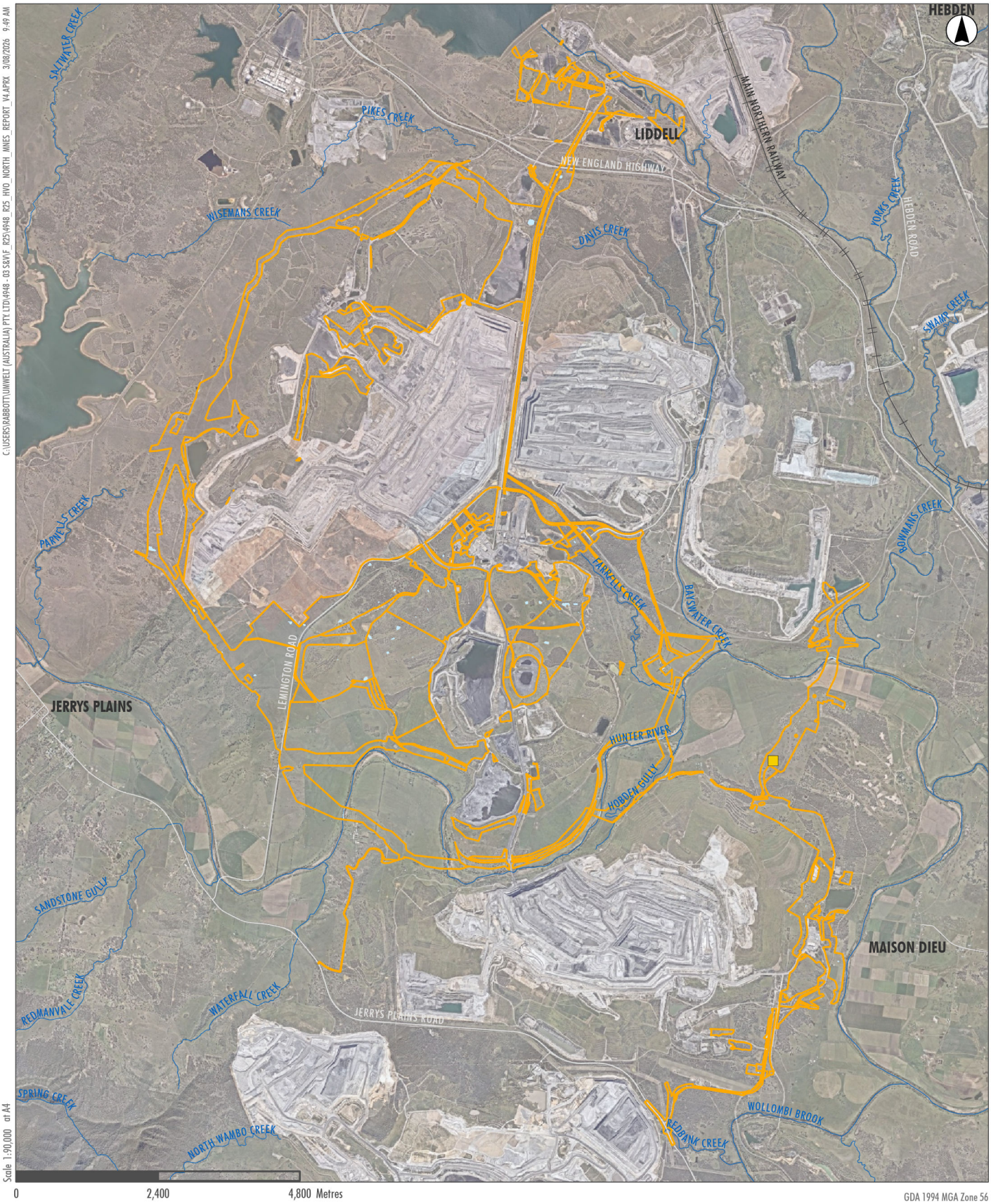
Overall, the HVO North BIAA does not provide important habitat, nor does it support and ecologically significant proportion of the population, of any of the migratory species predicted to occur by the protected matters database. The HVO North Action is unlikely to result in a significant impact on the Latham's snipe due to lack of species records within and near the HVO North BIAA and due to absence of favoured habitat.

Table 3.17 below outlines aquatic habitat for the species. Latham's snipe is an ecosystem credit species under the BAM and any offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Figure 3.13 shows the extent of Latham's snipe habitat occurring within the HVO North BIAA.

Table 3.17 Latham's Snipe Aquatic Habitat in the HVO North BIAA

Habitat Type	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
Waterbodies	*Dams*	7.9
Total Aquatic Habitat		**7.9**



Legend

- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Extent of Latham's Snipe Habitat
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

Umwelt Species Record

- Lathams Snipe

FIGURE 3.13

Latham's Snipe Habitat

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

3.3.12 Migratory Species

3.3.12.1 Information on the Abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences

The following migratory species have been considered as part of the MNES assessment:

- Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- Rufous fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*).

Information on the abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences of Latham's snipe and White-Throated Needletail are provided above in **Section 3.3.11** and **Section 3.3.9** respectively.

The Rufous Fantail occurs across Eastern coastal Australia, as well as New Guinea, the Solomon Island and Guam. This migratory species moves north during the winter and is essentially absent from Victoria and New South Wales during this time.

The species occurs within moist, dense habitats that include mangroves, rainforest, riparian forests and thickets and wet eucalypt forests with a dense understorey. Throughout the migration period, the Rufous fantail is occasionally observed in more open or urban areas.

The Rufous fantail's diet consists of insects and is considered an active feeder with near constant movement of the tail, wings and body during foraging, which is done in the air. The Rufous fantail constructs a small compact cup-shaped nest, that is compose of fine grasses suspected from tree forks. Nest construction, incubation and feeding is shared by both sexes, where one to two broods are raised in a season (Birdlife Australia 2025).

Guidelines and Policy Statements

Information on the relevant guidelines and policy statements for Latham's snipe and White-Throated Needletail are provided above in sections **Section 3.3.11** and **Section 3.3.9** respectively.

Relevant guidelines and policy statements available for Rufous fantail include:

- Policy statements and guidelines: Draft referral guideline for 14 birds listed as migratory species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015), administration guideline.

3.3.12.2 Habitat Assessment

The Draft Referral Guideline for 14 Birds Listed as Migratory Species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015b) defines important habitat for the white-throated needletail and rufous fantail (Table B.14). These guidelines also provide guidance regarding the size of an ecologically significant proportion of each of these species. **Table 3.18** outlines important Habitat for Migratory Species (DoE 2015b).

Table 3.18 Important Habitat for Migratory Species (DoE 2015b)

Species	Important Habitat	Ecologically Significant Proportion of a Population (individuals)*
white-throated needletail	Non-breeding habitat only: Found across a range of habitats, more often over wooded areas, where it is almost exclusively aerial. Large tracts of native vegetation, particularly forest, may be a key habitat requirement for species. Found to roost in tree hollows in tall trees on ridge-tops, on bark or rock faces. Appears to have traditional roost sites.	1% – 100 0.1% – 10
rufous fantail	Moist, dense habitats, including mangroves, rainforest, riparian forests and thickets, and wet eucalypt forests with a dense understorey. When on passage a wider range of habitats are used including dry eucalypt forests and woodlands and Brigalow shrublands	1% – 48,000 0.1% – 4,800

**1% of the species is considered internationally important, and 0.1% is considered nationally important.*

EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 (DoEE 2017) provides guidance regarding the definition of important habitat for Latham's snipe. Under this policy, wetland habitat is considered important if it has previously been identified as internationally important for the species, or if it supports at least 18 individuals of the species.

The HVO North BIAA contains small areas of potential dam habitat and sections of the Hunter River which may be utilised by Latham's snipe. The white-throated needletail is almost exclusively aerial species often recorded above wooded areas, some of which occur in the HVO North BIAA. While the rufous fantail is known to occur in moist, dense habitats including rainforest and mangroves, woodland habitat within the HVO North BIAA may provide movement corridors for this species. However, while marginal habitat for the three migratory species is available, habitats within the HVO North BIAA for migratory species listed under international conventions is not considered to meet the criteria listed above, and important habitat is not likely to occur.

Further, while each of the three species has been recorded in the wider locality surrounding the HVO Complex BIAAs, the BIAAs and adjacent areas have not been recorded to support an ecologically significant proportion of any of the three migratory species.

Overall, the HVO North BIAA is not considered to comprise important habitat for any of the identified migratory species listed above, and therefore the HVO North Action is not likely to substantially modify or destroy important migratory species habitat. Similarly, the HVO North BIAA will not seriously disrupt the lifecycle of an ecologically significant proportion of the population of a migratory species; or result in an invasive species that is harmful to migratory species becoming established within the HVO North BIAA.

4.0 MNES Assessment Summary

Assessments of significance were prepared for those species recorded or considered to have potential to occur within the HVO North BIAA and therefore have potential to be impacted. These assessments of significance are provided in **Appendix B** and have been updated since the preparation of the EPBC Referral to account for habitat suitability in accordance with the BAM. **Section 3.0** lists a range of MNES entities that were initially determined to have potential to occur in the HVO North BIAA. The specific habitat requirements and distribution of each species were considered against those within the HVO North BIAA to determine the species requiring further assessment with a formal MNES Assessment of Significance. Those species that were recorded or considered to have a reasonable likelihood of being present or to be impacted by the HVO North Action, were shortlisted for preparation of Assessments of Significance.

The following **Table 4.1** provides a summary of the nature and quantum of impacts on the MNES considered in the Assessments of Significance and as required in the PER Guideline.

Table 4.1 Summary of Impact Assessment for MNES for HVO North BIAA

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	Vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	During construction and operational phases.	Direct Impact: **166.3 ha** Indirect Impact: likely minimal – managed through the biodiversity management plan (BMP).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is likely significant at the local and regional scale.	In accordance with the BAM, offsetting would require **4824 ecosystem credits** (associated with PCTs consistent with the CEEC), following like-for-like offsetting rules.

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland Derived Native Grassland CEEC	Vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	During construction and operational phases	Direct Impact: **4.8 ha** Indirect Impact: likely minimal – managed through BMP.	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is unlikely significant at the state or national scale. Some minor local impacts to the CEEC may result.	In accordance with the BAM, offsetting would require **202 ecosystem credits** (associated with PCTs consistent with the CEEC), following like-for-like offsetting rules.

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)	Vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	Reduction in potential foraging habitat would occur during construction and operational phases.	Direct Impact key feed trees and foraging habitat (PCT 3431 and 4089): **69 ha** Direct Impacts on other associated PCT habitat: **136.4 ha** Direct Impacts on Important Habitat mapped by DPHI: **0 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland foraging habitat (likely to be negligible).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is significant at local scale, but not considered to be significant at a state or national scale. While the HVO North Action will remove an area of suitable foraging habitat for the species, the wider Hunter Valley and east coast of NSW provides extensive winter foraging habitat for the species and no breeding habitat will be impacted as part of the Action.	Under the BAM, no offsetting would be required as the Important Areas map for the swift parrot does not intersect with the HVO North BIAA. However **5801 ecosystem credits** relating to associated PCT foraging habitat for the species will be offset as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)	Vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	Reduction in potential foraging habitat would occur during construction and operational phases.	Direct Impact native woodland foraging resources: **80.0 ha** Direct Impacts on other associated PCT habitat: **126.9 ha** Direct Impacts on Important Habitat mapped by DPHI: **0 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland foraging habitat (likely to be negligible).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is unlikely significant at local, state or national scale.	Under the BAM, no offsetting is required as the Important Areas map for the regent honeyeater does not intersect with the HVO North BIAA. However, **5840 ecosystem credits** relating to associated PCT foraging habitat for the species will be required as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.
Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*)	Vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to	Reduction in potential foraging habitat would occur during construction and	Direct Impact native woodland and riparian habitat: **308.9 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland and forest foraging habitat (likely to be negligible.	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar	Impact is unlikely significant for the Barington Tops (southern and western footslopes) population or Wollemi National	**8176 ecosystem credits** relating to associated PCT habitat for the species will be required as part of the HVO North Action offset

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
	edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	operational phases.		operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Park population at the local, state or national scale.	obligation under the BAM.
Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)	Clearing of foraging habitat within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats. Indirect impacts (subsidence) unlikely to	Reduction in potential foraging habitat would occur during construction and operational phases	Direct Impact potential woodland and forest foraging habitat: **228.5 ha** Direct impact to any cliffline or escarpment habitat that could be used as roosting or breeding habitat: **0 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland and forest foraging habitat (likely to be negligible).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure	The HVO North Action is unlikely to result in a significant impact on the large-eared pied bat due at a local or regional scale due to the lack of suitable roosting and cliffline habitat in the HVO North BIAA.	In accordance with the BAM, there is no requirement for offset species credits for the large-eared pied-bat as there are no areas of breeding/roosting confirmed in the HVO North BIAA. **6120 ecosystem credits** relating to associated foraging habitat for the species will be

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
	cause any observable change in potential foraging habitats.			successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.		required as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.
Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	Reduction in habitat due to vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on foraging habitat due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	Reduction in habitat would occur during construction and operational phases	Direct Impacts on confirmed *Delma vescolineata* habitat: **948.0 ha**. Includes **305.5 ha** of remnant habitat (associated PCT habitat) and **642.5 ha** of mine rehabilitation. Indirect Impact on foraging habitat likely to be negligible.	HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	The HVO North Action is likely to result in a significant impact on *Delma vescolineata*.	**4223 species credits** relating to associated habitat for the species will be required as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.
Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)	Local reduction in foraging habitat due to vegetation clearing within HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments.	Reduction in potential foraging habitat would occur during construction and	Direct Impacts on potential foraging habitat: **243.4 ha** Indirect Impact on foraging habitat (likely to be negligible.	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar	The impact is unlikely significant at a local, state and national scale due to the lack of records of species, lack of breeding camps,	In accordance with the BAM there is no requirement for offsetting species credits for the grey-headed flying-fox as there are no areas of

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
	Potential Indirect Impact on vegetation due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	operational phases.		operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	wider habitat extent and disturbed nature of the potential foraging habitat within the HVO North BIAA.	breeding/roosting confirmed in the HVO North BIAA. However, **6588 ecosystem credits** relating to associated PCT foraging habitat for the species will be required as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.
White throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)	Potential local reduction in foraging and nesting habitat due to vegetation clearing within the HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on foraging and nesting habitat due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise	Reduction in potential foraging and nesting habitat would occur during construction and operational phases	Direct Impact to foraging habitat: **248.5 ha** Indirect Impact to foraging habitat (likely to be negligible.	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management	Impact is unlikely significant at the local and regional scale due to the lack of records of the species within the HVO North BIAA and wider region.	In accordance with the BAM, offsetting would require **6734 ecosystem credits** (associated PCTs), following like-for-like offsetting rules.

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
	and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.			measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.		
Brown Treecreeper (South-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)	Potential local reduction in foraging and nesting habitat due to vegetation clearing within the HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on foraging and nesting habitat due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	Reduction in potential foraging and breeding habitat would occur during construction and operational phases	Direct Impact native woodland and forest habitat **205.4 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland and forest habitat (likely to be negligible).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is unlikely significant at the local, state or national scale due to the lack of records of the species within the HVO North BIAA and wider region.	**5801 ecosystem credits** relating to associated PCT habitat for the species will be required as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
Latham snipe (***Gallinago hardwickii***)	Potential local reduction in aquatic habitat due to clearing within the HVO North BIAA for mining, surface infrastructure, road and transmission line alignments. Potential Indirect Impact on aquatic habitat due to edge effects, cumulative impacts and minor impacts from fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.	Reduction in habitat would occur during construction and operational phases.	Direct Impact native woodland and forest habitat: **7.9 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland and forest habitat (likely to be negligible).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is unlikely significant at the local, state or national scale.	No species or ecosystem credits are applicable to this species. Refer to **Section 6.5** for an assessment of impacts on aquatic habitat.

EPBC Act Entity	Nature & Consequence of impact (direct and indirect)	Duration of impact (e.g. construction operation, life of project)	Quantum of impact	Unknown, Unpredictable or Irreversible Impacts	Consequence of impact at local, state and national scale	Level of impact (is an offset required?)
Migratory species listed under international conventions including: • Latham's snipe (Gallinago hardwickii) • White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) • Rufous fantail *(Rhipidura rufifrons)*	The HVO North BIAA is not considered to comprise important habitat for any of the identified migratory species and therefore the HVO North Action is not likely to directly or indirectly: • substantially modify or destroy important migratory species habitat. • disrupt the lifecycle of an ecologically significant proportion of the population of a migratory species or; • result in an invasive species that is harmful to migratory species becoming established within the HVO North BIAA	Reduction in potential foraging and breeding habitat would occur during construction and operational phases.	Direct Impact native woodland and forest habitat: **248.5 ha** Indirect Impact on woodland and forest habitat (likely to be negligible).	There are no uncertain or unpredictable impacts likely to occur. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley. HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions if new information is available or changed circumstances arise.	Impact is unlikely significant at the local, state or national scale for any migratory species listed under the EPBC Act or international conventions.	**6734 ecosystem credits** relating to associated PCT habitat for these species will be required as part of the HVO North Action offset obligation under the BAM.

5.0 Avoidance and Minimisation Measures

HVO has sought to avoid and minimise potential impacts on biodiversity values through Project design. This included targeted avoidance and minimisation of disturbance of key high conservation value vegetation communities and fauna habitats through designing the Project to maximise use of existing mining facilities and existing and approved disturbance areas, reducing the mining footprint and relocating infrastructure, where possible and implementing a range of biodiversity mitigation measures.

HVO undertook a detailed biodiversity constraints study as part of the Project's pre-feasibility assessment to guide the development and detailed design of the Project. Through this process alternative mining options were considered, and HVO has sought to minimise the biodiversity impacts associated with the Project whilst maximising the economic resource recovery.

5.1 Project Location and Site Selection

5.1.1 Impacts Targeted to Previously Impacted Areas

The continuation of mining across the HVO Complex is proposed to be predominantly undertaken through previously mined and disturbed areas, and areas previously approved to be disturbed. While this approach provides significant resource recovery largely through the extraction of coal from deeper seams and mining efficiency advantages it also provides improved final landform outcomes and minimises impacts on remnant vegetation and higher quality habitat in the locality.

The majority of the HVO North Action Area is within areas previously cleared and disturbed by mining operations, agricultural practices and rural development, or subject to an existing project approval. Only 14% of HVO North Action Area contains native vegetation cover in the form of remnant forest/woodland and derived native grasslands.

5.1.2 Alternative Options Considered

To meet Project objectives, detailed concept and pre-feasibility studies considering mining options and infrastructure arrangements were carried out as outlined in the Mine Plan Options Report (HVO 2022a) and the Infrastructure Options and Avoidance Report (HVO 2022b). These studies evaluated potential environmental and social impacts to inform the Project design. The preferred Project mine and infrastructure design was chosen as they provide the best balance between optimal resource recovery and financial return, and reducing environmental and social impacts, through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. The preferred Project mine design has been continually optimised as further information has been made available via exploration drilling and the completion of environmental and infrastructure studies.

These options are further detailed in Section 3.5 of the PER and summarised in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1 Summary of Alternative Options

Alternative Options	Justification
Alternative Mine Options	
Alternative option 2 – No Project – mining ends at the HVO Complex as per the HVO North consent.	This option would forego the approved ROM coal remaining to be extracted at HVO South, as well as the additional approximately 400 Mt of ROM coal to be extracted by the Project and would mean cessation of employment and the associated flow-on benefits to the approximate 1,500 full time equivalent (FTE) HVO workforce.
Alternative option 3 – Maximise resource recovery – mining in several additional locations around and in addition to the preferred mine design localities	A total of six alternative mining locations were considered and are documented in the Mine Plan Options Report (refer to Appendix D in EIS). These options were considered not reasonable and feasible due to their proximity to community receptors, geotechnical constraints, heritage features, natural features and/or existing infrastructure.
Alternative option 4 – No final void remaining at the end of the preferred mine design	This option includes the mining voids being progressively backfilled and rehabilitated as soon as practicable as mining progresses. This option was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives due to the ongoing noise and dust generation, potential significant removal of established rehabilitation, delays in establishing final landform and associated land use, and associated costs that significantly affects the Project's viability.
Alternative option 5 – Impacting the CM-CD1 Aboriginal cultural heritage site	Mining through the identified CM-CD1 Aboriginal cultural heritage site was considered as a mine plan alternative due to the coal resources present and was included within the initial mine plan presented in the Scoping Report for the Project. Mining in this area was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives due to the disturbance of the CM-CD1 site, once the high significance of the site was understood, and as part of the Project HVO has committed to not disturbing this site.
Alternative option 6 – Excluding Lemington Road from the mining footprint	No disturbance of the existing Lemington Road alignment was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives. Furthermore, the proposed Lemington Road realignment benefits to the community from the upgrade of the road, such as improved flood immunity, as per the preferred Project option, would not be realised.
Alternative option 7 – Underground extraction of target seams	As an alternative to the open cut mining methodology, the extraction of resources in the Project area using underground mining methods was considered. The benefit of this option is that it would reduce the impact on the surface; however, underground mining is not considered economically viable for resource extraction in this area.
Alternative Infrastructure Options	
Realignment path of Lemington Road	Alternative routes considered for the Lemington Road realignment included: • Lemington Road realignment south of HVO North – option to realign Lemington Road south of HVO North but north of the Hunter River. This would not require the construction of new intersections with the New England Highway or Golden Highway nor a bridge over the Hunter River; however, safe separation between the public traffic, mining operations and the Hunter River would be difficult. Mining would be highly visible from the relocated section of Lemington Road.

Alternative Options	Justification
	• This alignment would also be partly located over an area of rehabilitated mine overburden, which could present challenging geotechnical conditions and associated potential construction difficulties. • Pikes Gully Road Extension – option to upgrade and extend of the existing Pikes Gully Road along the western side of the HVO Complex and construction of a new Hunter River crossing and Golden Highway intersection in the vicinity of Jerrys Plains. This option would rely upon the purchase of private land, and the location of an intersection with the Golden Highway would increase traffic movements in the vicinity of Jerrys Plains Village and the surrounding equine industry. • Close Lemington Road – Approximately 8% of road users rely on Lemington Road to travel between the New England and Golden Highways as a through road, providing a thoroughfare for the community of Jerry Plains to access the north of Singleton. This option was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives. Lemington Road is subject to significant closure periods due to the flooding of Moses Crossing, which will be negated by the proposed Lemington Road alignment and new Hunter River bridge. • Following exhibition of the EIS in January 2023, HVO revised a portion of the proposed location of the Lemington Road realignment further to the west of the originally proposed location to further avoid impacts to Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC. This is further discussed in Section **5.2.1**.
Realignment path of transmission and telecommunication lines	The Project involves the realignment of transmission and telecommunication lines. The most significant of the realignments is the Ausgrid 132 kV transmission line, for which several alternatives were considered. Given the nature of transmission and telecommunication infrastructure in which connection points are fixed locations, direct alternatives are often not achievable. As such the following design practice was implemented to minimise potential indirect and direct Project impacts. The design process of the realignment routes for power transmission and telecommunication linear assets, both 3rd party and HVO owned, has been the same regardless of the asset. The process relied upon to ensure reasonable and feasible mitigation measures have been adopted whilst ensuring Project outcomes is defined below. • Identify the Project interaction point with transmission or telecommunication line item. • Identify the nearest reasonable connection points each side of the interaction. • Identify areas or points of avoidance such as sensitive biodiversity matters, heritage items and or landownership constraints. • Understand potential amenity impacts. • Plan a minimum length alignment between available connection points whilst recognising outcomes of Steps 3 and 4. • Consult with the asset owner on the appropriateness of the alignment. • Adjust if necessary.

Alternative Options	Justification
	Through this process implementing reasonable and feasible impact avoidance and mitigation whilst achieving Project outcomes, the potential impacts of the Project as it relates to transmission and telecommunication line infrastructure is kept to a minimum.
Product stockpile and train loading facility upgrades	Rather than progressing the design of new coal handling and processing facilities for the Project, the primary objective of the CPP design process was to utilise existing facilities where possible, and to re-evaluate the implementation of facilities already approved but not yet constructed. This approach to maximise the efficiency of the existing facilities was driven by the objectives of achieving maximum operational efficiencies and reduced capital and operating costs. As such, existing stockpile areas are proposed to be upgraded to increase capacity, reduce costs and impacts to new areas.
Improvements to HVO North MIA	The Project proposes to upgrade the HVO North MIA to include a new workshop suitable for ultra-class haul trucks and incorporate modern maintenance facilities. This option was chosen over new facilities as the existing MIA is already the principal HVO facility and works are achievable without additional disturbance, the MIA and HVCPP combined are centrally located without near neighbours and close to mining operations, minimising potential impact to sensitive receivers; and as mining progress further south upgrading and or refurbishment of the Howick MIA represents an impractical long term solution.

5.2 Project Design

5.2.1 Lemington Road Realignment

Lemington Road currently travels between the West/Mitchell Pits and the Carrington area. As this area is proposed to be mined, the Project seeks to realign part of Lemington Road.

The Lemington Road realignment presents an opportunity to improve the accessibility and reliability of the road as the primary access point between the Golden Highway and New England Highway. It includes the construction of a new bridge over the Hunter River which will meet the requirements of a 1 in 10 average recurrence interval (ARI) flood protection design. This will improve accessibility and safety of the crossing compared to the existing Moses Crossing low level bridge, which often results in closure of the road during times of heavy or prolonged rainfall.

The proposed alignment of Lemington Road was carefully considered to avoid or minimise impacts to areas of environmental sensitivity, in particular *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley* CEEC and NSW-listed *Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland EEC*[1]. Following public exhibition of the EIS in January and February 2023 and submission of the initial Project EPBC Referral, HVO revised the portion of the proposed Lemington Road realignment that traversed areas of 'known' *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley* CEEC further to the west, where the depth of potential aeolian sandy substrate varies and floristic characteristics appear to favour box-ironbark woodland associations (refer to **Figure 5.1**).

[1] The NSW-listed *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* within the vicinity of the *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* discussed above is not commensurate with the Commonwealth-listed *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*.

The additional design review sought an alignment that considered:

- Adopting an alignment further away (west) on land that transitions away from known/accepted *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*.
- Adopting an alignment further away from existing biodiversity offset areas where *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* is present.
- Further minimising the Project disturbance footprint of the proposed road corridor through remnant vegetation utilising areas of existing disturbance or rehabilitation areas at HVO.
- Maintaining the already established principle design requirements.

Table 5.2 outlines the key biodiversity features avoided by the proposed alignment. Overall avoidance features are shown on **Figure 5.2**.

Table 5.2 Impacts Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment Design Refinement

Biodiversity Feature	Area (ha) Avoided^
Native vegetation (woody)	25.4
Native vegetation (non-woody)	19.2
EPBC Act-Listed Features	
Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC	9.8
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	5.7

^ Areas not cumulative.

5.2.1.1 Refinement of *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* Mapping and Targeted Avoidance Outcomes

The field inspection carried out on 5 September 2023 by Umwelt and Minesoils focused on areas within the new alignment and adjacent areas previously and conservatively assigned as possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*. The information collected during this inspection was combined with rapid floristic data and vegetation integrity plot data previous collected in the Archerfield Road locality. The analysis of this information indicated there were areas previously identified as possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* that had a greater similarity to the NSW-listed *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*. Floristic composition of these areas often shared some key characteristic species from both TECs, with the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* having a higher species richness in comparison to the *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*. Key characteristic canopy species for both TECs are shared with a persistent cover of *Eucalyptus crebra* (narrow-leaved ironbark) across many of the re-assessed areas with localised patches of *Angophora floribunda* (rough-barked apple). The canopy in some areas also consists of *Eucalyptus tereticornis/blakelyi* (red gum hybrids) which is a characteristic species of *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* but can occur extensively within *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*.

The dominance of *E. crebra* (single species canopy) in most areas with some lower stratum characteristic species supported the assignment to *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*, even in areas that had some sandy influence within the substrate, as the floristic composition pointed strongly to these areas no longer supporting *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* despite the persistence of a shallow sandy veneer.

Where there was a higher portion of *E. tereticornis*/*blakelyi* with *A. floribunda* further consideration was given to soil profile. Soil test pits from earlier assessments by Minesoils (as described in Minesoils 2023) were reviewed where data was available, and these areas had been determined to be a Shallow Duplex soils (Chromosol, Sodosol or Kurosol). This soil type has been mapped by Minesoils (2023) throughout vegetation immediately north of Archerfield Road and vegetation adjacent to the spoilic arthoposols south of Archerfield Road. These soils have been described to have very minimal to no sand present in the upper layers. The area appeared to have been subject to extensive sheet erosion, as the drainage lines were infilled with coarse sand, presumed to be washed off the surrounding land. This sand was coarse and gritty in texture and did not appear to be of aeolian origin (Minesoils 2023).

These areas have since been assigned to PCT 3431 based on the recent floristics and soil analysis, therefore are consistent with the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*. All areas that have been re-assigned to the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* not only considered the canopy but also the lower stratum species to support the assignment of the TEC. In general, the plot data and rapid data points indicated a higher presence of characteristic species from *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* with between 6 and 14 species (listed in the final determination) at each location. Up to 40% of the characteristic species in some plots were shared with *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*, with a smaller number (4–8) of characteristic species specific to this TEC only.

As a result of the further detailed investigations, the revised Lemington Road realignment has subsequently avoided all direct impacts to confirmed *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* in the HVO North BIAA (see **Figure 5.2**) and located impact further away from existing offset sites (Yancoal's Northern Biodiversity Area offset).



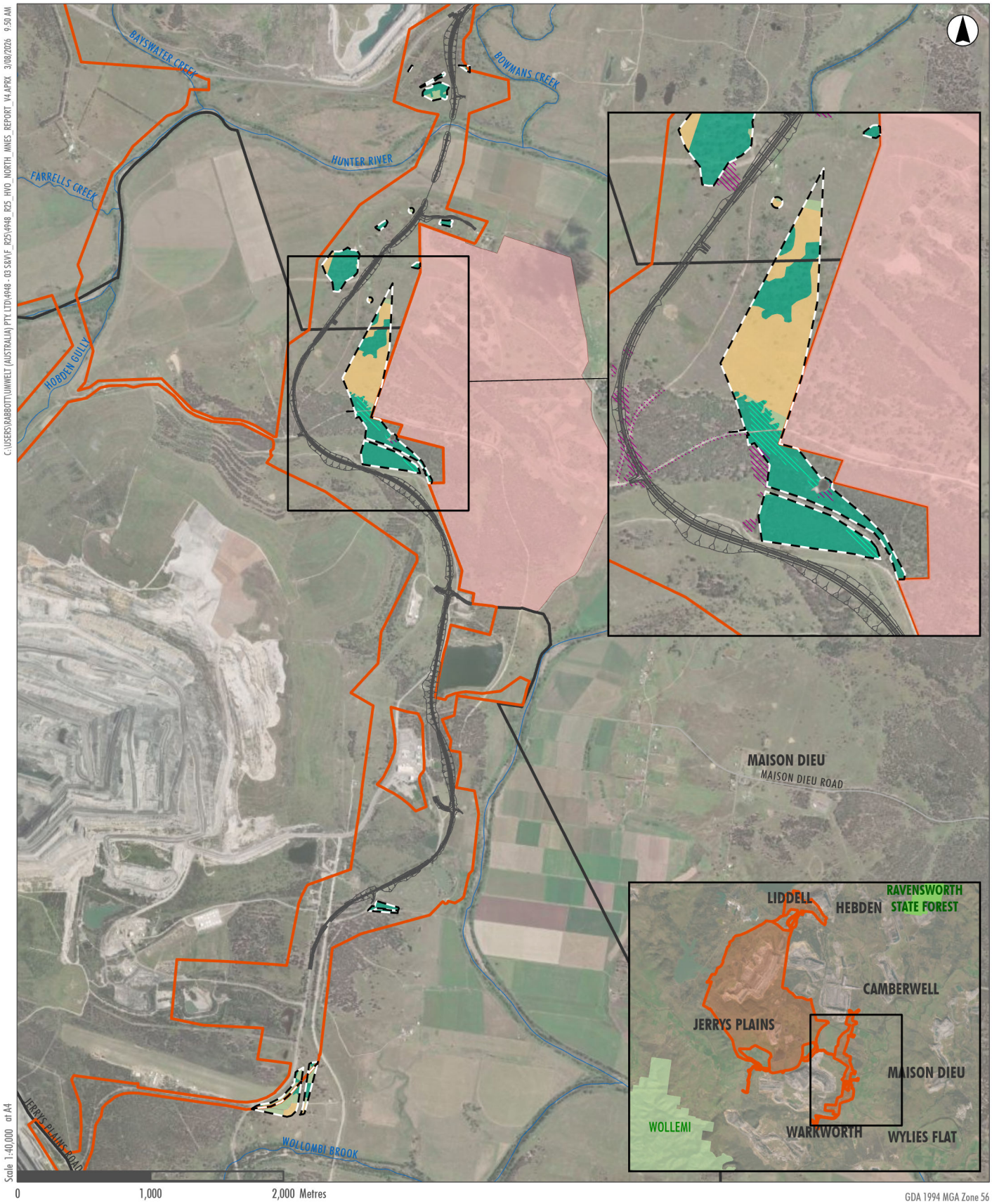
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Scale 1:15,000 at A4

FIGURE 5.1

Targeted Avoidance of Warkworth Sands Woodland and Realignment of Lemington Road

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Referral Area
- HVO South Referral Area
- Yancoal Northern Biodiversity Area Offset
- Proposed Lemington Road Alignment
- Areas Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment Design Refinement
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Exotic Vegetation
- Native Vegetation (Non-Woody)
- Native Vegetation (Woody)

EPBC Act TEC

- Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC
- Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC

FIGURE 5.2

Areas Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

5.2.2 Electricity and Telecommunications Realignment Paths

The Project requires the realignment of several transmission lines, as well as some telecommunication lines. New access points to realigned electricity and communication infrastructure will also be established to avoid interaction with mining activities. As part of the Project design phase, the preferred realignment path of this infrastructure was carefully considered to avoid areas of higher quality vegetation and habitats, and to provide for maximum vegetation and habitat retention, wherever possible.

While this report calculates the impacts of the preferred alignment path and proposed locations of maintenance tracks, pole pads and transmission line paths, these are currently the indicative design. While the final footprint of the easement is unlikely to change, some flexibility within the wider additional disturbance boundary may be required. For the purposes of this assessment, impacts are calculated on the indicative footprints, with the intention of updating these impact calculations following the final design.

Table 5.3 and **Figure 5.3** outlines the impacts and avoided areas within the proposed easement corridors.

An estimate of around 22 ha of native forest and woodland habitat and around 163 ha of exotic and native grassland habitat is not expected to be impacted by the establishment of the new electricity transmission lines (i.e. in the wider easement area) across the HVO North Action. Approximately 45 ha of native vegetation will be maintained as grassland during the operation of the easement, likely providing suitable habitat for grassland species.

Mitigation and management strategies identified for the transmission line realignment design are considered to be well known and routinely implemented, minimising the risk of failure.

Table 5.3 Impacts and Avoided Impacts in Transmission Line Realignment Design – HVO North and South

Impact	Description of Impacts and Vegetation Management	Vegetation/Habitat Impacts Avoided
Maintenance tracks and pole pads	• Complete disturbance assumed for transmission line poles (10 m buffer around each pole). • Complete disturbance assumed for 6 m wide access tracks for construction and operational maintenance.	N/A
Easement vegetation maintenance	• No impact to grassland vegetation within easements unless impacted by access tracks/pole pads as above. • Any woody vegetation zones will be retained as grassland in accordance with *ISSC 20 Guideline for the Management of Activities within Electricity Easements and Close to Electricity Infrastructure* (Industry Safety Steering Committee, ISSC 2012).	• Approximately 45 ha of existing native vegetation (grassland, woodland and shrubland) to be maintained as grassland during operational phase. • Targeted avoidance of river red gum stands through careful placement of pole locations where possible along the Hunter River.

Impact	Description of Impacts and Vegetation Management	Vegetation/Habitat Impacts Avoided
Wider easement area	• No impact currently proposed, however changes to the final easement alignment may result in minor changes and impacts. Current areas avoided.	• Avoidance of approximately 22 ha of native forest and woodland habitat. • Avoidance of approximately 163 ha of exotic and native grassland habitat.



Legend

- HVO North Action Area
- HVO South Action Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)
- ETL Power Pole
- Access Track
- Road
- Drainage Line

EPBC Act TEC

- Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC
- White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

Management Zones

- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact

FIGURE 5.3

Minimisation of Impacts in Electricity and Telecommunication Easements

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

5.3 Summary of Avoidance

Table 5.4 below provides a summary of the avoidance measures for key biodiversity features undertaken for the Project.

Table 5.4 Key Biodiversity Features Avoided Through Project Design and Refinement

Biodiversity Feature	Project Component Area Avoided (ha)		Total (ha)
	Lemington Road Realignment	Transmission Line Alignment	
Native forest and woodland habitat	25.4	22	47.4
Native and exotic grasslands	19.2	163	182.2
EPBC Act-listed Features			
Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC	9.8[#]	0.0	9.8
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	5.7	4.8	10.5
Hunter Valley Delma habitat	18.8	179.0	197.8

Not inclusive of approximately 2.3 ha of possible Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC included in original impact calculations.

5.4 Construction and Operation Phase Impact Mitigation Strategies

HVO has committed to the design and implementation of a comprehensive biodiversity mitigation strategy to mitigate the unavoidable impacts of the Project. The following specific control measures, as detailed in the existing approved HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan and Biodiversity Offset Strategy, are considered to be integral to the mitigation of impacts on the biodiversity features by the Project:

- salvage of biodiversity features, including habitat resources (e.g. hollow logs, tree hollows, fallen timber and rocks/boulders) and material for mine rehabilitation (e.g. seed collection and topsoil collection)
- a pre-clearing procedure to minimise the potential for impacts on native fauna species (focusing on threatened species) as a result of the clearing of hollow bearing trees
- weed management
- pest animal control
- pathogen management
- fencing and access control
- bushfire management
- erosion and sedimentation control
- providing appropriate environmental management measures as part of the mining operations to minimise the potential for indirect impacts.

Each of these control measures will contribute to the maintenance of habitat quality in proximity to the HVO Complex BIAA. It is considered that these measures are suitable to minimise impacts on direct, indirect and prescribed impacts. The measures described below are considered to represent a suitable suite of management strategies that are well known and routinely implemented in biodiversity management plans for mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and therefore are considered to represent a low risk of failure.

Should the Project be approved, HVO will review and revise the existing approved HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan in accordance with any additional development consent requirements. The revised plan will guide the implementation of the mitigation steps and will be reviewed and adapted in response to new information.

5.4.1 Salvage of Biodiversity Features

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Salvage of suitable biodiversity features – timber, rocks, topsoil, mulch	Minimise impacts to fauna species. Minimise the clearance of fauna habitat.	During clearance works	HVO
Installation of salvaged features in rehabilitation zones	Increase habitat complexity for fauna and flora species in rehabilitation zones.	Operation	
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to target best practice. Early identification and rectification of any issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Salvage of suitable habitat resources such as tree hollows, fallen timber and rocks/boulders provide foraging and refuge habitat for a number of key threatened species, particularly insectivorous woodland birds and terrestrial mammal species. The microclimates provided around fallen timber and rocks/boulders can assist in the establishment of flora species and the decomposing woody material from fallen timber can assist in soil conditioning.

The relocation of salvaged habitat resources is proposed for rehabilitation areas according to the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (EMM 2018). The use of these materials is dependent upon availability and opportunities for safe and practical collection and reuse. Where salvaged materials are to be used they would be implemented in a way that is consistent with rehabilitation completion criteria. This will increase habitat complexity for fauna species sooner than when they would naturally develop.

5.4.2 Pre-Clearance and Tree-Felling

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Pre-clearance surveys	Identification of potential translocation opportunities.	Construction and operation	HVO
Tree felling process and supervision	Minimisation of potential harm, injury and death of fauna occupying habitat. Identification and salvage of habitat features.	During clearance works	
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to target best practice. Early identification and rectification of any issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Pre-clearance surveys and tree-felling supervision recommendations will be implemented to minimise the potential for impacts on native fauna species (including threatened species) as a result of the clearing of hollow-bearing trees.

5.4.2.1 Pre-Clearance Surveys

Pre-clearance surveys are to be undertaken prior to tree felling works, be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced person and include:

- The demarcation of areas approved for clearing to reduce risk of accidental clearing.
- Habitat resources and habitat trees should be identified and marked.
- The potential presence of threatened flora and fauna species, endangered populations and TECs should be identified.
- The identification of threatened species or habitat features that are suitable for translocation or salvage. This includes native plant species containing seed for collection and propagation purposes and habitat features to be used in habitat augmentation.
- Disturbance activities should be targeted to specific times of the year to minimise impacts to threatened species usage of habitat features for breeding and roosting, where practicable.

5.4.2.2 Tree-Felling

Tree felling will be completed as close to the completion of pre-clearance surveys as practicable. Tree felling supervision will be undertaken after pre-clearance surveys have identified potential habitat features.

The tree-felling process will include the following:

Prior to Felling Habitat Trees

- Removal of non-habitat trees/vegetation as close to the habitat tree felling date as possible in order to create disturbance to discourage fauna usage of the habitat trees.
- Shaking of habitat trees (with heavy machinery) as appropriate to encourage fauna to abandon trees.

On the Day of Felling Habitat Trees

- All habitat trees will be subject to a visual ground inspection to survey for threatened species.
- Trees previously identified as containing fauna will be shaken and then felled, providing no threatened species are identified.
- The lowering of hollow-bearing trees will be done as gently as possible with heavy machinery.
- If a threatened species is identified in a habitat tree on the day of felling, the supervising person is to advise the most appropriate method to minimise potential harm. This may include leaving the tree overnight, further shaking to encourage the animal to vacate the tree, gradual removal of branches to discourage ongoing use, soft-felling of the tree with the animal in the tree, or measures to capture and relocate the animal to secure habitats.
- Uninjured animals should be released on the day of capture into nearby suitable secure habitat and should not be held for extended periods of time.
- Injured animals will be taken to the nearest veterinary clinic or wildlife carer as soon as possible for assessment and treatment.
- Felled trees are to be rolled where appropriate so that the number of hollows blocked against the ground is minimised.
- All felled habitat trees should remain in place for a least one night to allow any remaining fauna to escape.
- Habitat features identified for translocation or salvage operations should be extracted and stored appropriately.

5.4.3 Weed Management

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Weed management actions	Minimisation of Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), priority weeds under NSW *Biosecurity Act 2015* and/or environmental weeds in the final BIAA. Minimisation of weed spread from and into the wider locality.	Construction Operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Identification of emerging weed infestations. Identification of successful or otherwise weed management techniques. Adaptive management recommendations to target best practice and improvements.	Post completion of management actions	

The presence of weed species has the potential to be an impediment to revegetation and regeneration activities and native vegetation regeneration. In addition, the presence of weed species has the potential to decrease the value of vegetation for native species, particularly threatened species.

Existing weed management controls as specified in the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan will be applied to the Project.

5.4.4 Pest Animal Control

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Pest animal control actions	Management and reduction of pest animal species.	Construction Operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Identification of emerging pest invasion. Identification of successful or otherwise pest animal management techniques. Adaptive management recommendations to target best practice and improvements.	Post completion of management actions	

Introduced fauna species such as deer, foxes, rabbits, pigs, wild dogs and feral cats could change in distribution and abundance as future areas are cleared, mined and then rehabilitated. Clearing, thinning of vegetation and the creation of tracks through existing dense vegetation could assist the penetration of introduced fauna species such as pigs, cats and foxes, and allow them to establish in new areas.

Pest and feral animal control will be undertaken in accordance with current mine practices and as outlined in the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan.

5.4.5 Pathogen Management

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Pathogen management actions – checking, cleaning and drying equipment, vehicles, footwear and tools, following frog handling procedures as per HVO Vegetation Clearance Plan (EMM 2016).	Management and reduction of pathogens impacting biodiversity.	Operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Identification of emerging pathogen issues. Identification of successful or otherwise pathogen management techniques. Adaptive management recommendations to target best practice and improvements.	Post completion of management actions	

It is important to reduce the risks of introducing pathogens (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*, myrtle rust and chytrid fungus) into new areas in NSW, especially those with susceptible threatened species and threatened ecological communities. Basic hygiene procedures (in accordance with the *Hygiene guidelines – Protocols to protect priority biodiversity areas in NSW from Phytophthora cinnamomi, myrtle rust, amphibian chytrid fungus and invasive plants* (DPIE 2020b)) can include checking, cleaning and drying equipment, vehicles, footwear and tools of soil materials prior to entering and leaving the site.

5.4.6 Fencing and Access Control

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Demarcation of impact footprints	Ensuring the extent of clearance is understood and visible. Minimisation of unnecessary and accidental impacts to surrounding vegetation and habitats. Ensuring impact thresholds identified for the Project are not compromised.	Construction and operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to target best practice. Early identification and rectification of any issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Access control is an important feature in protecting and demarcating areas outside the Project disturbance area from vehicle access, human access and accidental disturbance. Measures include:

- appropriate fencing and signposting of areas to prevent the uncontrolled entry of people, accidental disturbance and to minimise vehicular and human traffic
- clear and visible signage is to be appropriately located to inform the workforce and others of the restricted access or otherwise of areas outside the Project disturbance area
- locking of gates to prevent unwanted vehicle, person access and disturbance.

5.4.7 Bushfire Management

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Bushfire management actions – maintain equipment, management of fuel loads, maintenance of fire breaks and access roads	Protect life and property, while supporting appropriate conditions for the existing ecological features.	Construction and operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to target best practice. Early identification and rectification of any fire, fuel load issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

The vegetation that will be retained within areas adjoining the HVO Complex BIAA will require appropriate bushfire management to protect life and property, while supporting appropriate conditions for the significant ecological features identified. This will be achieved through the implementation of a range of measures, including:

- maintaining a suitably equipped response to any fires on site and assisting the Rural Fire Service and emergency services on site in the event of a fire within the HVO North or HVO South Action Areas
- where permitted, appropriate grazing management regimes to reduce ground fuel loads and fuel hazard reduction burns
- maintaining strategically positioned fire breaks and access roads.

Bushfire management measures are detailed in the HVO Bushfire Management Plan.

5.4.8 Erosion and Sediment Control

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Erosion and sedimentation control measures	Minimise sediment pollution. Minimise erosion of soils. Minimise impacts to waterways and habitats.	Construction and operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to target best practice. Early identification and rectification of any erosion issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Erosion and sediment control is critical to the long-term stability of the land surface and downstream water quality, with the main objective being to protect soil resources and maintain local water course quality. The HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan outlines the requirements for erosion and sediment control that will be implemented for the Project, including:

- Where possible, clean water diversion structures are employed to divert clean water away from the active pits.
- A Ground Disturbance Permit (GDP) is required for disturbance activities.
- Prior to disturbance, appropriate erosion and sediment controls will be established.
- Where ground conditions allow, erosion and sediment controls will be designed generally in accordance with the 'Blue Book': Managing Urban Stormwater: soils and construction (Volume 1 and 2E – Mines and Quarries).
- Areas will be rehabilitated and stabilised as soon as possible following disturbance.

5.4.9 Other Environmental Management Measures

Appropriate environmental management measures will be used as part of the mining operations to minimise the potential for indirect impacts through currently approved management plans, including:

- Appropriate lighting controls to minimise impacts will continue to be implemented as part of the Project as necessary (providing that these actions do not compromise site safety issues). This is proposed to include the use of unidirectional light techniques, the use of shielding fittings to limit the spill of light and directing lights downwards (as outlined in the Visual Impact Assessment in Appendix S of the EIS). There is not expected to be any substantial change to lighting impacts on adjacent habitats given that the Project is part of an existing operation with existing impacts.
- Blasting and noise control systems to minimise noise impacts will continue to be implemented as part of the Project. There is not expected to be any substantial change to noise impacts on adjacent habitats given that the Project is part of an existing operation with existing impacts.
- Dust suppression measures to minimise impacts to the surrounding landscape will continue to be implemented at HVO. In regard to potential impacts on biodiversity, there will be no substantial change to dust impacts given that the Project is part of an already existing operation with existing impacts. Similar levels of impact would be expected for the Project, particularly given the increased focus by regulators on reducing dust impacts associated with mining and other operations, and given that the Project is not proposing an increase in the approved annual ROM coal production rate.

5.5 Minimisation of Indirect and Prescribed Impacts

It is considered that the measures outlined in **Section 5.3** will mitigate the impacts on indirect and prescribed impacts. Additional measures are outlined below using particular consideration for impacts on connectivity and vehicle strike.

5.5.1 Long-Term Rehabilitation Strategy for Connectivity

Areas of native ecosystem will be established to provide woodland habitat and to provide wildlife corridor linkages to other areas of habitat rehabilitation in adjoining mines, or areas of remnant habitat in adjoining non mined land. Approximately 37% of land is proposed to be rehabilitated to native vegetation at HVO North. Native woodland habitat rehabilitation (Domain A) will focus on the establishment of the structurally dominant species representative of PCT 3431 Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland.

Existing HVO North commitments to rehabilitate specific areas representative of Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest community and Central Hunter Box - Ironbark Woodland, as identified in **Figure 5.4**, are proposed to be continued under the Project.

Approximately 112 ha of final highwalls at HVO North will be revegetated to achieve partial revegetation on highwall benches with appropriate habitat species. This revegetation will provide some habitat values and will assist to soften the geometric visual form of the highwalls.

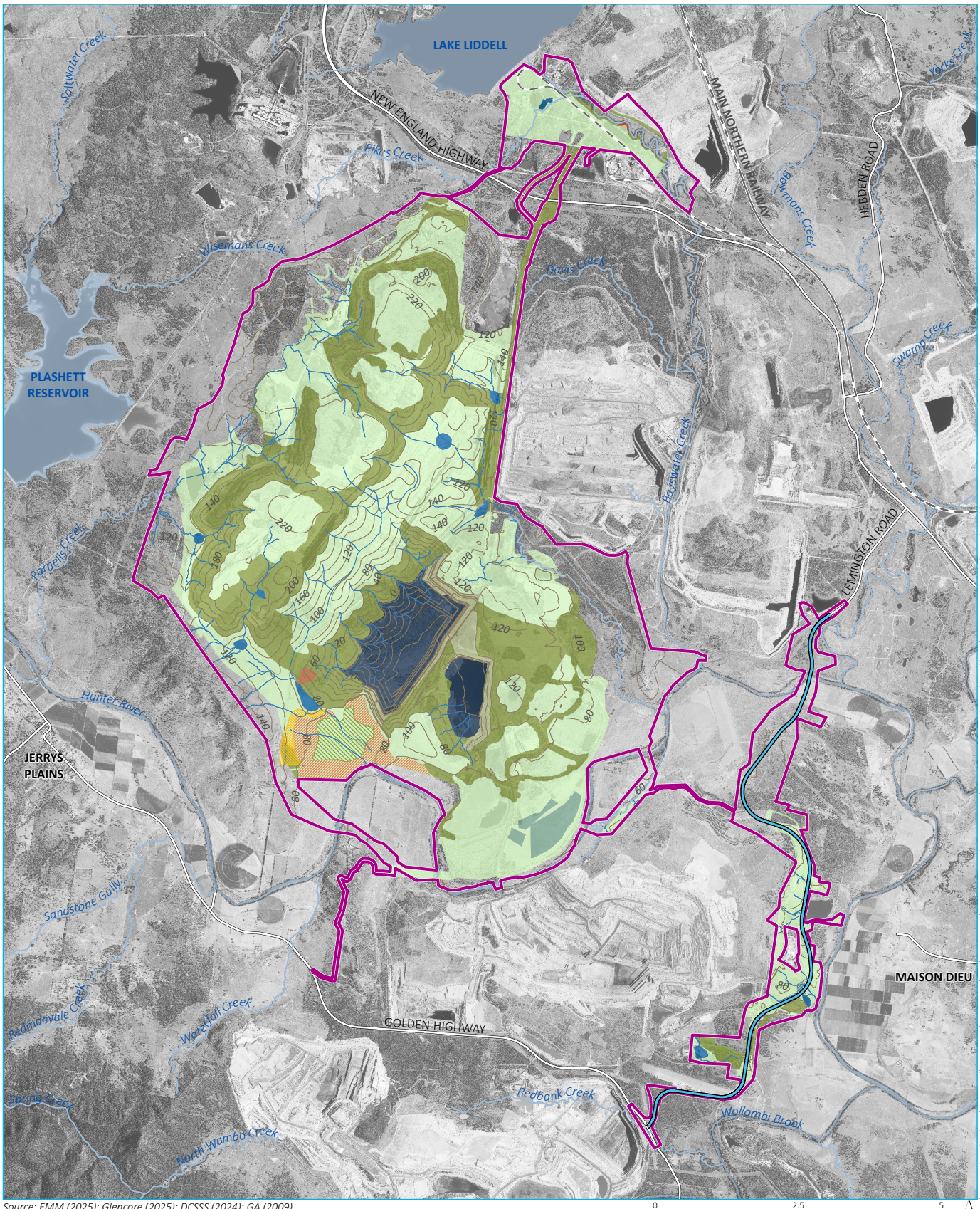
Rehabilitation at HVO is undertaken progressively over the life of the mine, with overburden emplacements shaped and rehabilitated once dumping is complete. The proposed rehabilitation strategy has been designed to facilitate long-term connectivity across the landscape with Domain A (native ecosystem) to be established connecting habitats in a broad north/south and east-west direction (refer to **Figure 5.4**).

5.5.2 Measures to Reduce Vehicle Strike on Local Fauna

To reduce potential impacts as a result of changed traffic conditions along the Lemington Road realignment, the following measure is proposed:

- Wildlife warning signs and 'Injured Native Wildlife' signs will be installed in likely high impact locations as a reminder to take care when driving.

Other measures relevant for the maintenance of roadsides that may mitigate fauna strikes, such as clearance of roadsides to improve visibility for adjacent fauna is the responsibility of local councils (Singleton and Muswellbrook councils).



Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 2.5 5 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

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KEY

- HVO North Action Area
- Predicted drainage
- Predicted 20 m contour
- Lemington Road realignment

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody

Final landform land use domain

- Domain A | Native ecosystem
- Domain A- Sub domain Ka | Other- Native ecosystem- partial vegetation on highwall benches
- Domain B | Agriculture- grazing
- Domain B- Sub domain Kb | Other- Agriculture- alluvial land
- Domain G | Water storage
- Domain J | Pit Lake

Existing commitments maintained by the Project (indicative location)

Rural land capability

- Class 2- DA 450-10-2003 MOD3
- Class 3- DA 450-10-2003 MOD3
- Class 4- DA 450-10-2003 MOD3

Native ecosystem

- Central Hunter Box-Ironbark Woodland - DA 450-10-2003 MOD3
- Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest - DA 450-10-2003 MOD5

Final land use domains

HVO Continuation Project
HVO North MNES Report
Figure 5.4

EMM
creating opportunities

6.0 Assessment of Impacts

6.1 Direct Impacts

Following the application of avoidance and minimisation measures, the Project will result in residual direct impacts on biodiversity values within the HVO North BIAA. Direct impacts include the loss of native vegetation and fauna habitats as a result of clearance works and subsequent mining activity. **Table 6.1** outlines the proposed direct impacts on MNES in the HVO North BIAA.

Table 6.1 Summary of Direct Impacts on MNES at HVO North

MNES	Habitat Type	Impact Area (ha)
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	Woodland	142.9
	Derived Components	8.5
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC	Woodland	0.0
White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC	Woodland	4.8
swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)	Foraging resources	69.0
	Other associated PCTs/condition zones	136.4
	Important habitat mapping	0.0
regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)	Foraging resources	80.3
	Other associated PCTs/condition zones	126.9
	Important habitat mapping	0.0
spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*)	Woodland, forest and riparian habitat	308.9
large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)	Woodland and forest foraging habitat	228.5
	Confirmed breeding/roosting habitat	0.0
Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	Confirmed grassland and sparse woodland habitat	305.5
	Confirmed mine rehabilitation habitat	642.5
grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)	Associated PCTs in foraging habitat	243.4
	Breeding/roosting camps	0.0
white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)	Associated PCTs in foraging habitat	248.5
brown treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)	Associated PCTs in foraging habitat	205.4
Latham's snipe	Aquatic habitat	7.9
Migratory Species listed under International Conventions white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) rufous fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*)	Potential woodland and forest foraging habitat Aquatic habitat	245.8 7.9

6.2 Indirect Impacts

Indirect impacts are those that occur when the Project affects native vegetation and threatened species habitat beyond the HVO North BIAA in an indirect manner. The potential indirect impacts are considered to be well known, due to a long history of mining in the Hunter Valley and the extensive biodiversity monitoring that has been undertaken across the Hunter Valley over the last 20 years. As a result, the assessment of indirect impacts has not been hampered by limitations, assumptions or predictions that are not supportable by evidence or extensive knowledge.

Some indirect impacts associated with the HVO North Action that have the potential to impact on biodiversity features in the locality include:

- Drawdown impacts on surrounding groundwater dependant ecosystems (GDEs).
- Rubbish dumping along the re-aligned Lemington Road.
- Edge effects (weeds and other disturbances) reducing the viability of surrounding habitats.
- Cumulative impacts of the Project for biodiversity in the wider locality.
- Fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.

Table 6.2 outlines the potential for indirect impacts on biodiversity as a result of the HVO North Action. **Section 5.5** discusses the mitigation measures proposed to limit the impacts of indirect impacts.

Table 6.2 Assessment of Indirect Impacts

Potential Indirect Impact	Potentially Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
Drawdown impacts on surrounding groundwater dependant ecosystems	All native vegetation communities and habitat. *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*	**Nature:** Groundwater modelling (EMM 2026) predicts potential incremental drawdown (i.e. drawdown related to the Project) in only small parts of the Hunter River alluvial aquifer. Potential for drawdown in the alluvium along the main channel of the Hunter River is largely buffered from drawdown by low permeability barrier walls installed along sections of the aquifer (at the HVO North pit boundaries) and because infiltration from the Hunter River is a dominant recharge source to the aquifer and flows are regulated by releases from Glenbawn Dam. As a result, impacts to this aquifer ecosystem and the river red gum populations due to the Project are predicted to be minor or negligible. Approved Conservation Advice states that the soil that supports *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* is "rapidly drained and has a low available water-holding capacity" and that the EEC "probably extracts groundwater from the underlying shallow aquifer and hence is at risk from activities that impact the sand sheet". Groundwater monitoring and associated studies indicate these vegetation communities may access groundwater associated with an ephemeral perched watertable that is replenished during high rainfall periods. **Extent**: As outlined in the Water Resources Impact Assessment Report (EMM 2026, no significant impact from groundwater drawdown impacts is predicted to occur. **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration**: Long-term.	Potential decline in health of other GDEs in the locality. However, a significant impact is not considered likely (EMM 2026, Eco Logical 2025). Drawdown impacts are not predicted for areas of *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC*.

Potential Indirect Impact	Potentially Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
Rubbish dumping along the re-aligned Lemington Road	All threatened fauna species in the locality. *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*	**Nature**: The realignment of Lemington Road will be located to along the eastern side of the HVO Complex, linking back to the Golden Highway near Warkworth. The establishment of the new Lemington Road corridor will introduce road traffic and human access to an area not previously subject to regular vehicle movements. It is likely that this will introduce road side rubbish and litter to surrounding habitats. **Extent**: The Lemington Road realignment will introduce 12.1 km of new road. This will traverse adjacent to *Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley CEEC* and through areas identified as *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*. The extent of litter damage to surrounding lands is variable across the country depending on the location, use of the road and proximate amenities. National litter monitoring usually extends 10 m from the roads' edge, however rubbish dumping along the existing Lemington Road is considered to be minimal and not known to be a significant problem. The risk is expected to be low for the realigned road. **Timing**: Operation. **Duration**: Long-term.	Injury or death of threatened species through entanglement or ingestion of litter. Reduction in threatened species and TEC resilience in the locality due to damage to vegetation and habitat condition.
Edge effects (weeds and other disturbances) reducing the viability of surrounding habitats	All adjacent plant communities and locally-occurring threatened species.	**Nature**: Edge effects occur in lands adjoining direct disturbances and can involve weed invasion, feral animal encroachment, restrictions in animal movements and can ultimately alter the species assemblage of a community. Clearing, thinning of vegetation and the creation of tracks have the ability to assist the establishment and spread of feral fauna species, as well as invasive weed species. **Extent**: The majority of edge effects is likely to be captured in the proposed HVO North BIAA, as the footprint allows for buffers around the actual area subject to direct impacts.	Reduction in threatened species and TEC resilience in the locality due to damage to vegetation and habitat condition. Further fragmentation of already small patches of intact vegetation and habitats.

Potential Indirect Impact	Potentially Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
		Further mitigation measures are proposed in **Section 5.4** to acknowledge potential edge effects into surrounding sensitive receptors. **Timing**: Construction and operation. **Duration**: During vegetation clearing and creation of new tracks.	
Cumulative impacts of the Project for biodiversity in the wider locality	All locally-occurring plant communities and threatened species.	**Nature:** The HVO North BIAA is situated in a landscape that is characterised by agricultural land and mining land. The history of land clearing, agriculture and mining development has resulted in an incremental loss of vegetation and fauna habitat surrounding the HVO North BIAA, and within the Hunter Valley more generally. The Project will remove vegetation and further increase fragmentation and isolation of habitats in the vicinity of the Project, and thus contribute to cumulative habitat loss and vegetation clearance in the locality. **Extent:** The Project will result in a loss of approximately 375.6 ha of native woodland and forest vegetation in a highly fragmented and disturbed landscape. Since mining commenced, the HVO Complex is expected to have cleared over 7,100 ha of land and other recently approved projects in the locality contribute to the removal of native habitats such as United Wambo Open Cut (approx. 530 ha), Mt Pleasant Optimisation Project (approx. 475 ha) and Warkworth Continued Operations Project (approx. 700 ha). **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Medium-term (proposed rehabilitation strategy will restore habitats and connectivity in the locality in the long-term).	Reduction in threatened species and plant community resilience in the locality due to fragmentation and isolation of patches of intact vegetation and habitats. Loss of fauna refuges in an already highly cleared landscape.
Fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats	All locally-occurring plant communities and threatened species.	**Nature:** Fugitive light emissions resulting from the construction and operation of the Project may result in adverse impacts on adjacent habitats and fauna species, such as reduction in the navigational signal ability for some nocturnal animals and delaying bats from emerging from roost access points and	Reduction in threatened species and plant community resilience in the locality. Disruption of faunal behaviours and health.

Potential Indirect Impact	Potentially Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
		shortening the amount of time available to them for foraging. Construction and operational noise impacts have the potential to adversely impact native species such as noise disturbing the roosting and foraging behaviour of fauna species and noise reducing the occupancy of areas of suitable habitat. Construction and operational dust impacts have the potential to adversely impact native species during ground disturbing works, including blasting. Potential impacts include dust covering vegetation thereby potentially reducing vegetation health and growth. **Extent:** The Noise Impact Assessment (EMM 2025) shows the indicative maximum envelope 40db $L_{Aeq, 15\ min}$ noise contours for the Project which represents the maximum envelope predicted for all stages, and all time periods. The Air Quality Impact Assessment (Airen 2025) shows days above 25 µg/m3 $PM_{2.5}$ (increment) contour in relation to particle/dust impacts relating solely to the HVO Project. This is shown in Figure 6.3 of the BDAR **(Appendix D**). It should be noted that the Noise Impact Assessment (EMM 2025) and Air Quality Impact Assessment Airen 2025) prepared to support the amendments to the Project were undertaken focusing on human-related, not biodiversity-related, receptors. The HVO North Action is located in a highly fragmented and disturbed landscape subject to current extensive mining areas, indirect impacts such as fugitive light emissions, air quality and noise/vibration associated with mining will not be substantially altered in the locality as a result of the Project (EMM 2025 and Airen 2025). The Project is a continuation of mining operations at the HVO Complex, and predominantly includes mining of area subject to previous mining. This has occurred, and will continue to occur in not near intact vegetation and habitats. **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Long-term.	

6.3 Prescribed Impacts

Prescribed impacts under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (BC Regulation) have been considered for the HVO North Action. Relevant prescribed impacts include and are further detailed in **Table 6.3**:

- Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with:
  - non-native vegetation – mine rehabilitation
  - the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range.
- Impacts of development on water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities.
- Impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species or on animals that are part of a TEC.

Table 6.3 Prescribed Impacts Assessment

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range	All threatened fauna species, but particularly ground-dwelling or arboreal species known to occur such as spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale. Threatened ecological communities including: *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* *White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grassland CEEC*	**Nature:** The removal of native vegetation from within the HVO North BIAA could affect the ability of some local fauna species and TECs to move and extend throughout the landscape by removing patches of native vegetation that provide a fragmented 'stepping-stone' corridor in an already highly disturbed landscape. The loss of 'stepping stone' habitat areas for some species could result in an increased level of isolation of populations where species are unable or unwilling to travel across the increased distance between habitat areas. **Extent:** A potential fauna movement corridor occurs in highly fragmented remnant woodland and rehabilitation between the Mitchell Pit and Carrington Pit, as well as the riparian corridor of the Hunter River to the south. While the HVO North Action will remove approximately 701 ha of native vegetation, the majority of the woodland is already highly fragmented and disturbed. Intact (moderate condition) woodland vegetation represents approximately 6.8% of the HVO North BIAA, with the remainder of the area being derived native grassland, exotic grassland, previously cleared Category 1 – Exempt Land or mine rehabilitation. This represents lower value habitat when compared with native vegetation in a remnant state, of which very little is present within the HVO North BIAA due to historical and ongoing clearing for mining and agriculture in the area.	The loss of connectivity and movement corridors in mostly highly fragmented and disturbed woodland for native flora and fauna.

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
		HVO is centrally located in the Hunter Valley. The central Hunter Valley has been widely cleared of remnant vegetation primarily for agriculture and since the 1980s for mining. Review of historic aerial photographs demonstrates the lack of remnant vegetation and corridors. The Hunter River forms the most significant east-west trending corridor and the vegetation associated with Ravensworth State Forest to the north of HVO provides a moderate sized remnant through which a highly fragmented, 'stepping stone' corridor occurs trending generally north-south. Due to the location of HVO in the landscape and the nature of its highly fragmented and disturbed woodland, the HVO North Action is not expected to 'sever or interfere with corridors connecting different areas of habitat and migratory flight paths, to important habitat or local movement pathways.' It is acknowledged that habitat corridors may include networks of habitat patches or scattered paddock trees. The retention of habitat connectivity may help to reduce some of the adverse effects of habitat fragmentation by facilitating dispersal of individuals between patches of remaining habitat. Broadly, the habitats of the locality are already fragmented in a largely agricultural and mining landscape. A potential larger regional corridor in the locality, connecting Mt Royal/Barrington Tops World Heritage Area with the Wollemi World Heritage Area via Lake Liddell will not be severed as a result of the HVO North Action. **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Ongoing during the life of the HVO North Action.	

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
Impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species or on animals that are part of a TEC.	All threatened fauna species, but particularly ground-dwelling species known to occur such as spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale.	**Nature**: The HVO North Action includes the realignment of Lemington Road from its existing location between Mitchell Pit/West Pit and Carrington Pit to along the eastern side of the HVO Complex, linking back to the Golden Highway near Warkworth. Approximately 16 km of the existing Lemington Road will be decommissioned as a result of the extension of the HVO North mining area. The establishment of the new Lemington Road will introduce road traffic to an existing disturbed landscape (primarily due to agricultural clearing and mining operations). Millions of native animals are injured and killed each year in Australia when they are struck by vehicles while trying to cross the road. Hotspots are likely to occur where a road cuts through habitat that serves as a corridor for movement of wildlife (DPIE 2020d). BioNet Atlas data for the Hunter IBRA Subregion indicates that road kill records span across almost all fauna categories (mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds). Within the locality of HVO, the spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale have both been recorded as road kill (DPE 2022a). **Extent**: The Lemington Road realignment will introduce 12.1 km of new road (refer to Figure 6.4 of the BDAR – refer to **Appendix D**), which is a reduction from the about 16 km of road that will be decommissioned. **Frequency**: Traffic movements associated with Lemington Road are not expected to increase as part of the Project, however the location of the road will introduce a higher frequency of vehicles in an area not previously subject to regular vehicle movements (as detailed in the Traffic Impact Assessment in Appendix S of the EIS). The proposed speed limit along the re-aligned Lemington Road is 100 km/hr, consistent with the existing alignment. **Duration**: Ongoing following the completion of construction of the realignment.	Injury and death of threatened species in the locality resulting in reduced populations and resilience.

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with: non-native vegetation associated with Category 1 – Exempt Land in mine rehabilitation	Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	**Nature:** As per the requirements of Section 6.12 of the BC Act, the BAM assessment has excluded impacts relating to native vegetation and habitat loss on Category 1 – Exempt Land. This primarily includes land that was cleared prior to 1990 or lawfully cleared after 1990, such as mine rehabilitation areas. In the Hunter Valley this most often relates to clearance from agricultural practices or historic mining consents. The BIAAs include land that has been subject to mine disturbance with subsequent rehabilitation (Domain 2b). Mine rehabilitation includes areas of exotic grassland, shrublands dominated by cooba and plantations in varying levels of maturity. The Hunter Valley delma has been recorded within mine rehabilitation, including Exotic Grassland and Cooba Woodland rehabilitation areas. **Extent:** Approximately 994 ha of mine rehabilitation is expected to be cleared for the purposes of the Project, which includes areas previously disturbed or cleared for agriculture, mining or other purposes. 648.7 ha of mine rehabilitation has been identified as providing suitable habitat for the Hunter Valley delma. Approximately 130 ha will be retained as grasslands during the operation of the newly proposed electricity easements across the HVO North and HVO South BIAAs. **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Ongoing during the life of the Project.	The loss of additional areas of suitable habitat for the Hunter Valley delma. Due to the nature of the disturbance, the mine rehabilitation is characterised by exotic grasslands and planted woodlands which represents less suitable habitat for the species. Nonetheless the species is known to disperse across disturbed environments to facilitate movement between areas of higher quality native grassland. Although the impact to Hunter Valley Delma in mine rehabilitation is considered a prescribed impact under the BAM (2020), following consultation with the Commonwealth DCCEEW, it was determined that assigning the best-fit PCT and applying the BAM-C was the most appropriate method of determining an offset liability for this impact.

6.4 Impacts Relating to Mine Rehabilitation

Mining operations and related activities have been undertaken at the HVO Complex since the 1950s. Active mining continues at HVO North in accordance with existing development consent, which also include areas of previous disturbance that is currently in various stages of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation at HVO is undertaken progressively over the life of the mine, with overburden emplacements and backfilled pits shaped and rehabilitated once dumping is complete.

All rehabilitation at HVO North has been undertaken within areas of historical development consents that are subject to the conditions under the HVO North Consent. None of these rehabilitation areas have been relinquished or as yet meet the completion criteria as outlined in the Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) and further disturbance of these areas may still be required for ongoing operations or maintenance to reach completion criteria.

Approximately 957 ha of varying stages of rehabilitation will be re-disturbed by the HVO North Action. The oldest area of formally recorded woodland rehabilitation at HVO is approximately 23 years old (established in 1999), however it is likely that vegetation around the West Pit northern and southern emplacement areas and Wilton Pit emplacement area (all at HVO North) may have been planted in the 1980s and 1990s. While the HVO North Consent includes a specific commitment to rehabilitate 4 ha to Central Hunter Grey Box Ironbark Woodland in relation to the Carrington West Wing Extension (approved under Mod 3), mining in this area as approved has not yet commenced. Furthermore, while the requirement to revegetate an area of at least 0.14 ha using trees representative of the Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest community has been completed as per Schedule 3 Condition 31A of the HVO North Consent, this area will not be re-disturbed by the HVO North Action.

Domain 2b contains varying conditions of mine rehabilitation, the majority of which consists of exotic grassland and cooba (*Acacia salicina*) dominated vegetation. Mature plantation rehabilitation is expected to date from the 1970's through to 1990's and has the functional attribute of a developed tree canopy. The canopy can be described as an even aged cohort of sapling to pole growth-stage of a single age cohort. The canopy floristics are characterised by the dominance of sugar gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) (endemic to South Australia). The mid stratum consists of sparse *Acacia* species, most frequently black wattle (*Acacia decurrens*) which are not considered to be endemic to the locality. Other species include cooba and occasionally orange wattle (*Acacia saligna*), endemic to Western Australia. The ground stratum is dominated by the exotic grasses Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*) and Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maxima*).

Areas of exotic grassland and sparse cooba woodland in the mine rehabilitation has been found to be habitat for Hunter Valley Delma, which was recorded in these habitats in multiple locations within Domain 2b in the HVO North BIAA in 2026.

The floristics of these areas do not closely resemble any naturally occurring PCT, nor replicate the ecological functionality of a natural vegetation community that may have occurred in Hunter IBRA sub-region. The topsoil is depleted after being stripped and stockpiled then respread at a thinner rate due to the increased volume of mining overburden which forms the substrate rather than a natural soil profile.

6.5 Impacts Relating to Aquatic Habitats

The HVO North BIAA contains aquatic habitat in the form of semi-permanent dams and soaks, river and tributaries. While no clearance of aquatic habitat is proposed for key aquatic habitats of the Hunter River and its tributaries, a number of farm dams and sediment dams are proposed to be impacted.

The majority of the aquatic habitat proposed to be removed will be cleared for the purposes of establishing the open cut pit, road re-alignments and ancillary mining infrastructure. Where clearance is not entirely required (i.e. within the management areas of transmission lines), complete clearance will not occur. The HVO North BIAA occurs in an area characterised by existing mining infrastructure and agricultural landscapes and further impacts of this nature will not introduce new operational disturbances to surrounding aquatic habitats.

While it is noted that the Latham's snipe is unlikely to be significantly impacted due to the low numbers of individuals recorded in this habitat and the mobile nature of the species, other less-mobile riparian fauna may be subject to more substantive impacts. Other than the Latham's snipe, no EPBC Act-listed threatened aquatic fauna species have been recorded in the Project Area utilising these riparian habitats. Extensive surveys for threatened amphibians (i.e. the green and golden bell frog) have been undertaken over many years, most recently in 2025. While common frog species were recorded, many farm dams contained the invasive mosquito fish (*Gambusia holbrooki*) limiting the ability of native species to thrive in these habitats.

The aquatic ecosystems surveyed for the Aquatic Ecology and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem Assessment (ELA 2025) all appear to be in poor ecological condition based on the macroinvertebrate community and water quality. Hunter River fish communities are mapped as being in good condition by DPI Fisheries, which suggests the community is dominated by native species and that recruitment is at a sustainable level. While the site is mapped as having potential habitat for the threatened purple-spotted gudgeon (*Mogurnda adspersa*), no records of the species is known from the Hunter River and it is not likely to occur in the Project area. The assessment concluded that there would be no additional impact to aquatic ecology for the Hunter River.

Riparian flora species are likely to be directly impacted where clearance is required, however this would be limited to riparian woodlands associated with creeks and rivers in the Project Area. The areas to be impacted are not extensive across and the Project is unlikely to have significant impacts for floristic riparian communities in the locality. Most farm dams impacted by the proposed clearance are devoid of wooded or riparian vegetation and characterised by surrounding native and exotic grasslands. Consideration for the river red gum (Eucalyptus camaldulensis) communities along the Hunter River is established through HVO's River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy (HVO 2025) with monitoring of the condition of these stands occurring since 2007 and actions taken to restore and rehabilitate the community in the locality. Monitoring will be ongoing for this community in accordance with the Strategy.

A range of mitigation measures have been proposed for the Project to minimise the impacts of clearance on both terrestrial and aquatic fauna. These include (but are not limited to):

- Pre-clearance surveys and clearing supervision including:
    - The demarcation of areas approved for clearing to reduce risk of accidental clearing.
    - Habitat resources (such as quality riparian habitat) will be identified.

- The potential presence of threatened flora and fauna species, endangered populations and TECs should be identified.
- The clearance of key habitat will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Disturbance activities should be targeted to specific times of the year to minimise impacts to threatened species usage of habitat features for breeding and sheltering, where practicable.

- Delineation of clearance areas including:
  - Appropriate fencing and signposting of areas to prevent the uncontrolled entry of people, accidental disturbance and to minimise vehicular and human traffic
  - Clear and visible signage is to be appropriately located to inform the workforce and others of the restricted access or otherwise of areas outside the Project disturbance area
- Sediment and erosion control is critical to the long-term stability of the land surface and downstream water quality. The HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan outlines the requirements for erosion and sediment control that will be implemented for the Project, including:
  - Where possible, clean water diversion structures are employed to divert clean water away from the active pits.
  - A Ground Disturbance Permit (GDP) is required for all disturbance activities.
  - Prior to disturbance, appropriate erosion and sediment controls will be established.
  - Where ground conditions allow, erosion and sediment controls will be designed generally in accordance with the 'Blue Book': Managing Urban Stormwater: soils and construction (Volume 1 and 2E – Mines and Quarries).
  - Areas will be rehabilitated and stabilised as soon as possible following disturbance.

The mitigation measures are considered to represent a suitable suite of management strategies that are well known and routinely implemented in biodiversity management plans for mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and therefore are considered to represent a low risk of failure. HVO's existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (HVO 2025) includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions. This includes specific monitoring, annual review processes and updating of plans on a regular basis to ensure best practice mitigation and improvements once new information is available or changed circumstances arise.

6.6 Uncertain Impacts

There are no uncertain impacts predicted to occur as a result of the HVO North Action. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the HVO North Action are well known, as outlined in the sections above, and particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley.

HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions, many of which are specifically proposed in **Section 5.3**. This includes specific monitoring, annual review processes and updating of plans on a regular basis to ensure best practice mitigation and improvements once new information is available or changed circumstances arise.

6.7 International Conventions

Australia is party to several international conventions including the:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention), and
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Actions that cause avoidable biodiversity loss, weaken protected areas or threatened species protections, or permit unlawful trade of wildlife would be inconsistent with Australia's obligations under the CBD, the Apia Convention and CITES. The Action is not considered to be inconsistent with these international conventions as discussed further below.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Under the CBD, Australia is required to:

- Conserve biological diversity, including ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.
- Ensure sustainable use of biodiversity components so that ecological processes are maintained while allowing ongoing use.
- Promote fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, including through access and benefit-sharing arrangements.

Australia would act inconsistently with the CBD where actions undermine conservation, sustainable use, or integration of biodiversity into decision-making. Approving developments that cause avoidable or unmitigated biodiversity loss, without credible offsets or strategic justification, is likely to be inconsistent with CBD obligations.

The Action has sought to avoid the highest quality biodiversity on the site and is proposing to offset in accordance with the BAM, which has been endorsed by the Commonwealth. While the Action does result in impacts on biodiversity, it is considered that it is not inconsistent with the requirements of the CBD.

Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention)

Under the Apia Convention, Australia has committed to:

- Establish and maintain protected areas (national parks and reserves) to safeguard representative ecosystems, significant landscapes, and areas of scientific, cultural or aesthetic value.
- Avoid reduction of protected areas unless subject to full investigation and justification, and ensure such areas are not subject to commercial exploitation.
- Prohibit or strictly control hunting, capture or collection of protected species within designated protected areas.

Approving developments that encroach on or weaken protected areas, without demonstrable conservation justification, would be inconsistent with the Apia Convention. The Action does not propose to impact or weaken protected areas (such as National Parks or Reserves) and therefore is not inconsistent with the Apia Convention.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES requires Parties to:

- Give domestic legal effect to the Convention.
- Designate Management and Scientific Authorities to assess trade impacts, issue permits and make non-detriment findings.
- Enforce compliance, including border controls, inspections, seizures and penalties for illegal wildlife trade, supported by the Australian Border Force and Federal Police.

Australia gives domestic legal effect to the Convention through the operations of the EPBC Act. Contraventions generally arise from failures in wildlife trade control, permitting, or enforcement. The Action does not promote and will not result in unlawful wildlife trade and is therefore not inconsistent with CITES.

7.0 Biodiversity Offset Requirements

7.1 Biodiversity Offset Strategy for Commonwealth Matters

A comprehensive biodiversity offset strategy will be developed for the Project in accordance with relevant NSW State legislation and/or policies, currently being assessed under the BAM in accordance with the BC Act. Accordingly, the offset strategy for the Project will be developed in consultation with the DPHI and Commonwealth DCCEEW.

The NSW and Australian governments agree that endorsement of the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS) to avoid, minimise and offset biodiversity impacts on both NSW and Commonwealth listed entities provides for the best biodiversity and streamlining outcomes. The Australian Government supports the use of the BAM as the underpinning methodology for calculating biodiversity credit requirements.

While the Project is not being assessed under the Bilateral agreement, consultation with Commonwealth DCCEEW was undertaken to inform the development of the biodiversity offset strategy and, as per the PER Guidelines, this assessment utilises the generation of credits in accordance with the BAM to determine the quantum and type of credits required to compensate for the residual impacts of the Project.

The following assessment parameters have been applied to the additional Commonwealth areas for assessment for the Project:

- All PCTs occurring in the additional domains (i.e. Domain 2b and 4) was sampled and surveyed in accordance with the minimum requirements of the BAM and all data was incorporated into the BAM-C.
- All potential habitat for threatened species was sampled in accordance with relevant BAM and/or Commonwealth survey guidelines.
- The outputs of the BAM-C were used to determine the credit liability for each PCT and species-credit species occurring in Domain 2b and 4 that are not subject to NSW approval requirements.
- Domain 3 (State Approval Area) is presented as per the results of the BDAR (Umwelt 2026). While impacts to MNES in Domain 3 are reported and assessed in this report, the BAM-C assessment remains unchanged.

The NSW BOS has requirements for retiring like-for-like credits or funding conservation actions that directly benefit the species or community impacted, and these meet the Commonwealth Government's offsetting requirements. The NSW BOS also allows for variation rules to be used after reasonable steps have been taken to source like-for-like credits. NSW amended BC Regulation so the variation rules do not apply to offsets required for Commonwealth listed entities for controlled actions. If the NSW approval requires biodiversity offsets for NSW only listed entities, proponents will still be able to use the variation rules for these.

To meet offsets required for Commonwealth-listed entities for controlled actions under the NSW BOS, proponents retain the ability to:

- retire biodiversity credits based on the like-for-like provisions in the NSW BC Regulation

- fund biodiversity conservation actions that are listed in the Ancillary rules: Biodiversity conservation actions and directly benefit the threatened entity impacted
- pay into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund, noting it is the proponent's responsibility to notify the Biodiversity Conservation Trust that their payment is for a controlled action.

The Biodiversity Conservation Trust is required to meet the Commonwealth offset requirement component in a like-for-like manner. This is by retiring like-for-like credits, or by funding conservation actions that are listed in the *Ancillary rules: Biodiversity conservation actions* (DCCEEW 2025) approved by the NSW Minister for Energy and Environment that directly benefit the entity impacted.

Where an action will impact on a Commonwealth listed entity that is not listed under NSW law, the Australian Government will set the assessment requirements and consent conditions for that entity. The NSW Government is investigating options for including all Commonwealth listed entities under the BOS to avoid separate offset requirements and achieve further streamlining benefits.

7.2 Residual Impacts Requiring Offset

Table 7.1 outlines the ecosystem credits associated with the Commonwealth impact areas. Note: **Table 7.1** does not include areas within the Wider Easement Area, which are not proposed for impact.

Table 7.1 Vegetation Zones Requiring Offset and Ecosystem Credits

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)	Credits		
			Domain 3	Domain 2b	Domain 4
3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	*Moderate*	100.0	1876	54	1219
	Thinned Woodland	11.3	254	0	57
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3	38	0	185
	Plantation	47.4	51	0	998
	Scattered Regeneration	65.0	967	0	510
	Cooba Woodland	62.0	291	0	1187
	Bulloak Variant	38.0	677	0	110
	White Box/Grey Box Variant	1.6	0	0	34
	Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland	257.1	0	0	0
	Exotic Grassland	158.5	0	0	0
	Mine Rehabilitation (conforming to a PCT)	14.9	0	468	0
	TOTAL for PCT3431	**772.1**	**4154**	**522**	**4300**
3485 – Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	*Moderate*	7.3	313	0	11
	TOTAL for PCT3485	**7.3**	**313**	**0**	**11**

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)	Credits		
			Domain 3	Domain 2b	Domain 4
4015 – Central Hunter Riparian Forest	*Moderate*	3.4	65	0	42
	TOTAL for PCT4015	**3.4**	**65**	**0**	**42**
4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	*Moderate*	1.8	39	0	0
	TOTAL for PCT4081	**1.8**	**39**	**0**	**0**
4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	*Moderate*	5.1	33	0	209
	Low to Moderate	1.5	2	0	29
	Cooba Woodland	0.1	3	0	0
	Derived Native Grassland	5.1	9	0	14
	Exotic Grassland	79.3	0	0	0
	TOTAL for PCT4089	**91.1**	**47**	**0**	**265**
Total Native Vegetation Requiring Ecosystem Credits		**875.7**	**4618**	**522**	**4618**

Table 7.2 outlines the biodiversity credits associated with MNES that are considered to have the potential to be impacted by the Action. Credits in this table are ecosystem credits only, unless noted.

Table 7.2 Ecosystem Credits and Impact Areas Associated with MNES

Species/TEC	Total Impact Area (ha)	Total Credits
Likely Significant Impact		
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	166.3	4824
Hunter Valley Delma^	948.0	4223
Swift parrot	205.4	5801
Unlikely Significant Impact		
White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland Derived Native Grassland CEEC	4.8	202
Regent honeyeater	207.2	5840
Spotted-tailed quoll	308.9	8176
Large-eared pied bat	228.5	6120
Grey-headed flying-fox	243.4	6588
White-throated needletail	248.5	6734
Brown treecreeper	205.4	5801
Latham's snipe	7.9	N/A

Please note: credits in this table are not cumulative and credits assigned to EPBC-listed species are captured through the ecosystem credit component (i.e. vegetation offsets) of the offsetting obligations unless otherwise noted.

^Species generates species credits only and ecosystem credits are not relevant to this species.

7.3 Offsets for Residual Indirect and Prescribed Impacts

Table 7.3 below outlines the indirect and prescribed impacts considered likely to occur as a result of the Project and whether additional offset strategies are suitable or proposed for these impacts.

Table 7.3 Offset Measures for Indirect and Prescribed Impacts

Impact	Biodiversity Feature Impacted	Offsets Proposed
Indirect Impacts		
Drawdown impacts	GDEs	As no significant impacts are expected to occur in relation to drawdown impacts, no specific offset measures are proposed.
Edge effects (weeds, light emissions, noise, dust, rubbish dumping along Lemington Road realignment)	All adjacent plant communities and locally-occurring threatened species	The majority of indirect impacts associated with edge effects are likely to be captured in the proposed HVO North BIAA, as the footprint allows for appropriate buffers around the actual area proposed for direct impacts and clearance. No additional offsets proposed.
Cumulative impacts of HVO North and South	All locally-occurring plant communities and threatened species.	The cumulative impacts of HVO North and South are captured with the combined credit assessments. No additional offsets proposed.
Prescribed Impacts		
Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity	Ground-dwelling species such as spotted-tailed quoll	The proposed rehabilitation strategy outlined in **Section 5.5.1** and Appendix F of the EIS is proposed to result in long-term connectivity around the HVO Complex. The Project will be undertaken in stages, which will allow the continued rehabilitation of decommissioned areas and reduction in immediate loss of habitats in the HVO North BIAA. No additional offsets are proposed.
Impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species – Lemington Road realignment	Ground-dwelling species such as spotted-tailed quoll	Mitigation and minimisation measures are proposed in **Section 5.5.2** to address the impact of vehicle strike on local fauna following the establishment of the Lemington Road realignment. Offsetting this impact (the extent of which is not currently measurable) is unlikely to appropriately alleviate the impacts. Road kill has been recorded along many of the major road networks in the locality and is known to occur across all road networks in NSW. It is considered that the mitigation measures proposed provide practical measures for reducing this impact as a result of the Project. No additional offsets are proposed.

Impact	Biodiversity Feature Impacted	Offsets Proposed
Impacts associated with non-native vegetation associated with Category 1 – Exempt Land in mine rehabilitation	Hunter Valley Delma	The Commonwealth DCCEEW has stated that, it would be expected that these impacts would require a credit obligation. However, prescribed impacts (under the BAM) are impacts on biodiversity not readily calculated through the generation of biodiversity credits (e.g. non-native vegetation – where a PCT cannot be assigned). Prescribed impacts are difficult to quantify, as they are often uncertain, related habitat features that generally cannot be readily replaced or offset. Consequently, the BAM does not provide a method for calculating the biodiversity credits to offset a prescribed impact. Following consultation with the Commonwealth DCCEEW, it was determined that assigning the best-fit PCT (the most extensive community in the locality (PCT3431)) and applying the BAM-C was the most appropriate method of determining an offset liability for this impact. Vegetation integrity data was recorded in the rehabilitation zones where the Hunter Valley Delma was recorded.

8.0 Proposed Biodiversity Offset Strategy

HVO is committed to delivering a biodiversity offset strategy that appropriately compensates for the unavoidable loss of ecological values as a result of the Project. As discussed in **Section 5.0**, HVO has, where possible, altered the Project to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts in the Project planning stage, and a range of impact mitigation strategies have been included to mitigate the impact on ecological values prior to the consideration of offsetting requirements. The offset requirements for the Project, as calculated in accordance with the BAM are identified in **Section 5.0**.

Yancoal and Glencore, as participants in the HVO JV, have a strong record in preparing and implementing biodiversity offset strategies that address significant biodiversity matters and adequately counterbalance impacts on them. The offset strategy will be implemented in consideration of the process outlined in the BC Act and the final composition of the offset strategy may evolve as the Project progresses.

A biodiversity offset strategy will be developed in consultation with the DPHI and the Commonwealth DCCEEW and based on the credits required to be retired to offset the impacts of the Project. The biodiversity offset strategy will be established in accordance with the offset options available under the BC Act and BC Regulation including:

- Land based offsets (HVO would retire the required number and class of credits determined in accordance with the offset rules in the BC Regulation through the establishment of new Stewardship Sites (and the subsequent retirement of credits) or by retiring credits from existing Stewardship Sites).
- Purchasing credits from the market, and/or
- Paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.

It is HVO's intention that the offset strategy for the Project will focus on seeking to purchase credits on the market both locally and regionally as per the like-for-like offsetting rules outlined in the BC Regulation. HVO is currently actively seeking the purchase of biodiversity credits on the market for offsets required for the early stages of the Project. Where suitable, paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund, which contributes to regionally strategic offset outcomes will also be undertaken.

8.1 Offset Requirements by Stage

HVO proposes to stage the retirement of credits as clearing of the HVO North BIAA occurs**.** The stages of the HVO North Action are summarised in **Table 8.1.**

Table 8.1 Biodiversity Offset Stages for HVO North Action

Timing for Biodiversity Offset Credit Implementation	Description	NSW and Commonwealth Stages	Commonwealth Stages
Prior to commencement	Areas required for initial construction, mining and ancillary disturbance.	Stage 1	
		N/A	Stage A
Prior to the upgrade of HVLP	Areas associated with the upgrade of the HVLP.	Stage 2	

Timing for Biodiversity Offset Credit Implementation	Description	NSW and Commonwealth Stages	Commonwealth Stages
As required but anticipated from Year 7	Areas required for later stages of construction, mining and ancillary disturbance.	N/A	Stage B
Prior to the construction of haul road to Ravensworth Operations	Areas associated with the construction of the ROM coal haul road to Ravensworth Operations (if constructed).	N/A	Stage C – Haul Road Stage C – Haul Road (Ravensworth Operations Impact)
Required late in mine life	Areas required for later mining, ancillary and mine closure disturbance.	N/A	Stage D

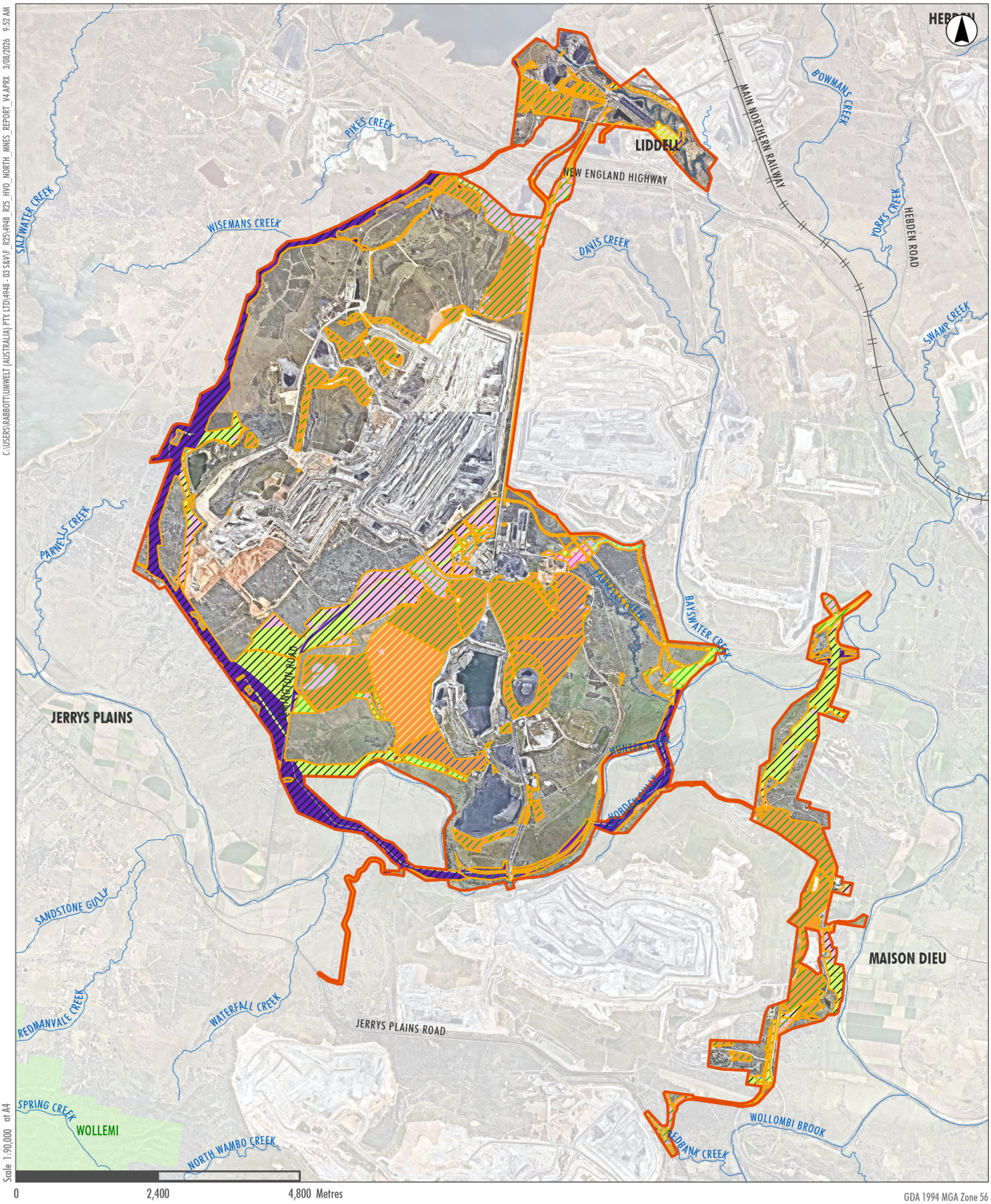
Table 8.2 outlines the credit requirement for the relevant stages of the HVO North Action and **Figure 8.1** shows the staged impacts for residual impacts requiring offset. **Table 8.3** outlines the credit requirement for the relevant stages of the entire HVO North and HVO South Actions.

Appendix E outlines the credit obligations by Domains.

Table 8.2 Staged Credit Requirements – HVO North

Biodiversity Feature	Commencement		HVLP	Mining/ Ancillary	Haul Road		Mine Closure
	Stage 1	Stage A	Stage 2	Stage B	Stage C – Haul Road	Haul Road - Rav	Stage D
Commonwealth TECs							
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	2945	1455	36	25	215	101	47
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC	33	169	0	0	0	0	0
Non-EPBC Listed PCTs*							
PCT3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	1484	2896	2	0	94	0	0
PCT4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	53	42	12	0	0	0	0
PCT4081- Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	39	0	0	0	0	0	0
PCT4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	13	96	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL ECOSYSTEM CREDITS	**4567**	**4657**	**50**	**25**	**310**	**101**	**47**
Species-credit Species							
Hunter Valley Delma	2559	1396	8	76	32	65	87
TOTAL SPECIES CREDITS	**2559**	**1396**	**8**	**76**	**32**	**65**	**87**

*Offsets required for MNES habitat components.



Legend

- HVO North Action Area
- HVO North Biodiversity Impact Assessment Area
- National Parks
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line

Proposed Offset Staging

- Stage 1
- Stage 2 HVLP
- Stage A
- Stage B
- Stage C Haul Rd (Rav Impact)
- Stage C Haul Rd
- Stage D

Offset

- Areas not requiring assessment
- Residual Impacts that require offsets
- Impacts that do not require offset
- No impact proposed

FIGURE 8.1

Offset Staging – HVO North

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: DFSI (2024)

Table 8.3 Total Staged Credit Requirements – HVO North and HVO South Actions

Biodiversity Feature	Commencement		HVLP	Mining/ Ancillary	Haul Road		Stage D
	Stage 1	Stage A	Stage 2	Stage B	Stage C – Haul Road	Haul Road – Ravensworth Operations	Later mining, ancillary and mine closure
Commonwealth TECs							
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	3010	2821	36	25	215	101	47
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC	33	169	0	0	0	0	0
Non-EPBC Listed PCTs*							
PCT3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	1491	3262	2	0	94	0	0
PCT3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PCT4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	53	91	12	0	0	0	0
PCT4081- Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	39	0	0	0	0	0	0
PCT4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	33	107	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL ECOSYSYEM CREDITS	**4659**	**6449**	**50**	**25**	**310**	**101**	**47**
Species-credit Species							
Hunter Valley Delma	2665	1578	8	76	32	65	87
TOTAL SPECIES CREDITS	**2665**	**1578**	**8**	**76**	**32**	**65**	**87**

*Offsets required for MNES habitat components.

8.2 Secured Biodiversity Credits

HVO has been actively securing biodiversity credits for the Project, focusing on the requirements of the early stages of the Project (Stages 1 and A). At the time of writing, HVO is substantially progressed in securing biodiversity credits required to enable the commencement of the Project. Where required, credits have been sought that conform to *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* to ensure the like-for-like requirements of the Commonwealth are satisfied.

8.3 Additional Offsets for Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) in Mine Rehabilitation

As outlined in **Table 6.3**, Category 1 – Exempt Land in mine rehabilitation provides habitat for the Hunter Valley Delma, which was recorded within Exotic Grassland and Cooba Woodland rehabilitation zones. The species was previously recorded relatively consistently across the remnant native grasslands in the wider BIAA during survey efforts for the State assessment. Targeted fauna surveys were not initially conducted in mine rehabilitation areas, as per the intent of the BAM, however consultation with the Commonwealth DCCEEW indicated that the mine rehabilitation would be considered potential habitat unless it could be demonstrated otherwise.

The Commonwealth DCCEEW has stated that, it would be expected that these impacts would require a credit obligation. However, prescribed impacts (under the BAM) are impacts on biodiversity not readily calculated through the generation of biodiversity credits (e.g. non-native vegetation – where a PCT cannot be assigned).

As outlined in Section 4.5.11 of the BAM Operational Manual (DPE 2023) *"Prescribed impacts are particularly difficult to quantify, as they are often uncertain, related habitat features that generally cannot be readily replaced or offset, or occur beyond the subject land. Consequently, the BAM does not provide a method for calculating the biodiversity credits to offset a prescribed impact."*

The Manual also states that *"it is best practice for the assessor and proponent to propose compensatory measures such as additional biodiversity credits or conservation measures to compensate for any residual prescribed impacts. The biodiversity credits proposed to offset residual prescribed impacts are additional to the baseline credits required for offsetting direct impacts, and will not be part of the credit report generated by the BAM-C."*

Under the 2025 amendments to the BC Regulation, the option for major mining proponents to meet a credit obligation through a commitment to ecological mine site rehabilitation was removed. Therefore, any future mine rehabilitation cannot be formally used to offset the habitat in a like-for-like manner. Existing mine rehabilitation may be established as a Stewardship Site however existing land management requirements and unrelinquished rehabilitation could render the land ineligible.

It was concluded, in consultation with the Commonwealth DCCEEW, that the most suitable process for determining the offset requirements for the species was by applying the BAM Calculator (BAM-C), with careful consideration of the inputs to ensure the offset outcome was commensurate to the impact. This was done by assigning the best-fit PCT to the rehabilitation (PCT3431 was selected as it was the most extensive community in the locality and some discrete areas of the rehabilitation contained a similar flora species composition to other remnant patches of the community). BAM vegetation integrity (VI) plots were undertaken in these zones, targeting the locations where the

species was recorded to accurately determine the habitat condition in these areas. The Exotic Grassland zone returned a VI of 1.4, while the Cooba Woodland zone returned a VI of 3.0, generating a total of 622 credits for the suitable rehabilitation habitat in Domain 2b of the HVO North BIAA.

This credit requirement is reflected in the total credit requirements for the species in **Table 8.2** and **Table 8.3**.

8.4 Offset Strategy for Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)

The HVO North Action is expected to impact 205.4 ha of habitat within the HVO North BIAA. While the habitats of the HVO North BIAA have previously been considered to provide potential foraging habitat for the species, the species was subsequently recorded in August 2025 foraging in flowering Eucalypts surrounding the HVO carpark. Surveys within the wider HVO North BIAA, did not record occupation of the species during the same survey period.

Under the BAM, the swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) is a species assessed through the application of Important Habitat Mapping published by the NSW DCCEEW. Areas containing Important Habitat drives species-credit obligations for impacts and the generation of credits at Stewardship Sites. Under the BAM, no surveys are required to be undertaken. Despite this, HVO elected to undertake targeted winter bird surveys in June and August 2019, July 2020, August 2023, June and August 2025 to address the potential for the species to occur in the locality.

At the time of writing, the closest Important Habitat Mapping for the swift parrot occurs around Broke within the Singleton Army Base and around Branxton in the Lower Hunter. No areas within the HVO North BIAA is mapped as Important Habitat. Therefore, no species-credit species have been generated for the species.

However, under the BAM, the habitat for the swift parrot can be offset using ecosystem credits in accordance with the like-for-like offsetting rules, which includes strict requirements for offsetting, including securing credits:

- For the same threatened ecological community, or for non-threatened vegetation communities the same vegetation class.
- Occurring in the same or an adjoining IBRA subregion as the impacted site, or in any subregion that is within 100 kilometres of the outer edge of the impacted site, and
- That contains hollow bearing trees, if the impacted vegetation contains hollow bearing trees.

This will ensure that the ecosystem credit offsets secured for the HVO North Action will provide the same habitats for the species within the species known winter foraging range in NSW. 5801 ecosystem credits have been calculated to be required for suitable habitats for the swift parrot for the HVO North Action, which will be made up of:

- 5558 credits conforming to:
    - *Central Hunter Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* under the EPBC Act or
    - *Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland EEC* under the BC Act.
- 243 credits associated with PCT4089, conforming to:
    - *White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC* under the EPBC Act,

- *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* under the BC Act, or
- vegetation class Inland Riverine Forests (greater than or equal to 90% cleared).

As a general rule, a Stewardship Site can generate approximately 4–6 species credits per hectare. Based on the calculations for the HVO North BIAA, it is expected that an estimate of between 1,000–1,500 ha in offsets would be required to secure the ecosystem credits associated with habitat for the swift parrot. This would either be secured through land-based offsets established by HVO, credits purchased on existing Stewardship Sites or payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund which is used to secure strategically located credits in a like-for-like manner for Commonwealth offsets.

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Appendix A

Protected Matters Search Report



umwelt

Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

EPBC Act Protected Matters Report

This report provides general guidance on matters of national environmental significance and other matters protected by the EPBC Act in the area you have selected. Please see the caveat for interpretation of information provided here.

Report created: 17-Feb-2025

Summary

Details

- Matters of NES
- Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act
- Extra Information

Caveat

Acknowledgements

Summary

Matters of National Environment Significance

This part of the report summarises the matters of national environmental significance that may occur in, or may relate to, the area you nominated. Further information is available in the detail part of the report, which can be accessed by scrolling or following the links below. If you are proposing to undertake an activity that may have a significant impact on one or more matters of national environmental significance then you should consider the Administrative Guidelines on Significance.

World Heritage Properties:	1
National Heritage Places:	1
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar	1
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park:	None
Commonwealth Marine Area:	None
Listed Threatened Ecological Communities:	9
Listed Threatened Species:	61
Listed Migratory Species:	11

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

This part of the report summarises other matters protected under the Act that may relate to the area you nominated. Approval may be required for a proposed activity that significantly affects the environment on Commonwealth land, when the action is outside the Commonwealth land, or the environment anywhere when the action is taken on Commonwealth land. Approval may also be required for the Commonwealth or Commonwealth agencies proposing to take an action that is likely to have a significant impact on the environment anywhere.

The EPBC Act protects the environment on Commonwealth land, the environment from the actions taken on Commonwealth land, and the environment from actions taken by Commonwealth agencies. As heritage values of a place are part of the 'environment', these aspects of the EPBC Act protect the Commonwealth Heritage values of a Commonwealth Heritage place. Information on the new heritage laws can be found at https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage

A permit may be required for activities in or on a Commonwealth area that may affect a member of a listed threatened species or ecological community, a member of a listed migratory species, whales and other cetaceans, or a member of a listed marine species.

Commonwealth Lands:	33
Commonwealth Heritage Places:	None
Listed Marine Species:	21
Whales and Other Cetaceans:	None
Critical Habitats:	None
Commonwealth Reserves Terrestrial:	None
Australian Marine Parks:	None
Habitat Critical to the Survival of Marine Turtles:	None

Extra Information

This part of the report provides information that may also be relevant to the area you have

State and Territory Reserves:	1
Regional Forest Agreements:	1
Nationally Important Wetlands:	None
EPBC Act Referrals:	51
Key Ecological Features (Marine):	None
Biologically Important Areas:	None
Bioregional Assessments:	1
Geological and Bioregional Assessments:	None

Details

Matters of National Environmental Significance

World Heritage Properties [Resource Information]

Name	State	Legal Status	Buffer Status
Greater Blue Mountains Area	NSW	Declared property	In buffer area only

National Heritage Places [Resource Information]

Name	State	Legal Status	Buffer Status
Natural			
The Greater Blue Mountains Area	NSW	Listed place	In buffer area only

Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Wetlands) [Resource Information]

Ramsar Site Name	Proximity	Buffer Status
Hunter estuary wetlands	50 - 100km upstream from Ramsar site	In feature area

Listed Threatened Ecological Communities [Resource Information]

For threatened ecological communities where the distribution is well known, maps are derived from recovery plans, State vegetation maps, remote sensing imagery and other sources. Where threatened ecological community distributions are less well known, existing vegetation maps and point location data are used to produce indicative distribution maps.
Status of Vulnerable, Disallowed and Ineligible are not MNES under the EPBC Act.

Community Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	Critically Endangered	Community likely to occur within area	In feature area
Coastal Swamp Oak (Casuarina glauca) Forest of New South Wales and South East Queensland ecological community	Endangered	Community may occur within area	In feature area
Coastal Swamp Sclerophyll Forest of New South Wales and South East Queensland	Endangered	Community may occur within area	In feature area
Hunter Valley Weeping Myall (Acacia pendula) Woodland	Critically Endangered	Community likely to occur within area	In feature area
Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia	Critically Endangered	Community likely to occur within area	In buffer area only
River-flat eucalypt forest on coastal floodplains of southern New South Wales and eastern Victoria	Critically Endangered	Community may occur within area	In feature area
Subtropical eucalypt floodplain forest and woodland of the New South Wales North Coast and South	Endangered	Community may occur within area	In buffer area only

Community Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
East Queensland bioregions			
Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley	Critically Endangered	Community likely to occur within area	In feature area
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland	Critically Endangered	Community likely to occur within area	In feature area

Listed Threatened Species [Resource Information]

Status of Conservation Dependent and Extinct are not MNES under the EPBC Act.
Number is the current name ID.

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
BIRD			
Anthochaera phrygia			
Regent Honeyeater [82338]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Aphelocephala leucopsis			
Southern Whiteface [529]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Botaurus poiciloptilus			
Australasian Bittern [1001]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Calidris acuminata			
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Calidris ferruginea			
Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Callocephalon fimbriatum			
Gang-gang Cockatoo [768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami			
South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo [67036]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Climacteris picumnus victoriae			
Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern) [67062]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Erythrotriorchis radiatus Red Goshawk [942]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Falco hypoleucos Grey Falcon [929]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Gallinago hardwickii Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe [863]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Grantiella picta Painted Honeyeater [470]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Hirundapus caudacutus White-throated Needletail [682]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Lathamus discolor Swift Parrot [744]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Melanodryas cucullata cucullata South-eastern Hooded Robin, Hooded Robin (south-eastern) [67093]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Neophema chrysostoma Blue-winged Parrot [726]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Pycnoptilus floccosus Pilotbird [525]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In buffer area only
Rostratula australis Australian Painted Snipe [77037]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Stagonopleura guttata Diamond Firetail [59398]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
[Tringa nebularia](#) Common Greenshank, Greenshank [832]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
FROG			
[Heleioporus australiacus](#) Giant Burrowing Frog [1973]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In buffer area only
[Litoria aurea](#) Green and Golden Bell Frog [1870]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
[Litoria booroolongensis](#) Booroolong Frog [1844]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
MAMMAL			
[Chalinolobus dwyeri](#) Large-eared Pied Bat, Large Pied Bat [183]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
[Dasyurus maculatus maculatus (SE mainland population)](#) Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll, Tiger Quoll (southeastern mainland population) [75184]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
[Notamacropus parma](#) Parma Wallaby [89289]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
[Nyctophilus corbeni](#) Corben's Long-eared Bat, South-eastern Long-eared Bat [83395]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
[Petauroides volans](#) Greater Glider (southern and central) [254]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In buffer area only
[Petaurus australis australis](#) Yellow-bellied Glider (south-eastern) [87600]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
[Petrogale penicillata](#) Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby [225]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT)			
Koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory) [85104]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Potorous tridactylus tridactylus			
Long-nosed Potoroo (northern) [66645]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Pseudomys novaehollandiae			
New Holland Mouse, Pookila [96]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Pteropus poliocephalus			
Grey-headed Flying-fox [186]	Vulnerable	Foraging, feeding or related behaviour known to occur within area	In feature area
PLANT			
Allocasuarina glareicola			
[21932]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Androcalva procumbens			
[87153]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Asperula asthenes			
Trailing Woodruff [14004]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Banksia penicillata			
a banksia [91058]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Cynanchum elegans			
White-flowered Wax Plant [12533]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Dichanthium setosum			
bluegrass [14159]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In buffer area only
Eucalyptus glaucina			
Slaty Red Gum [5670]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Euphrasia arguta [4325]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Hibbertia acaulothrix [87409]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Homoranthus darwinioides [12974]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In buffer area only
Lepidium aschersonii Spiny Peppercress [10976]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Olearia cordata [6710]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In buffer area only
Ozothamnus tesselatus [56203]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Persoonia hirsuta Hairy Geebung, Hairy Persoonia [19006]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Picris evae Hawkweed [10839]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Pomaderris brunnea Rufous Pomaderris, Brown Pomaderris [16845]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Prasophyllum sp. Wybong (C.Phelps ORG 5269) a leek-orchid [81964]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Prostanthera cineolifera [11233]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Prostanthera cryptandroides subsp. cryptandroides			
Wollemi Mint-bush [68496]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Pterostylis gibbosa			
Illawarra Greenhood, Rufa Greenhood, Pouched Greenhood [4562]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Rhizanthella slateri			
Eastern Underground Orchid [11768]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Rhodamnia rubescens			
Scrub Turpentine, Brown Malletwood [15763]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In buffer area only
Rutidosis heterogama			
Heath Wrinklewort [13132]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Thesium australe			
Austral Toadflax, Toadflax [15202]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Wollemia nobilis			
Wollemi Pine [64545]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In buffer area only
REPTILE			
Aprasia parapulchella			
Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Pink-tailed Legless Lizard [1665]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Delma vescolineata			
Hunter Valley Delma [92599]	Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area

Listed Migratory Species			[Resource Information]
Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Migratory Marine Birds			
Apus pacificus			
Fork-tailed Swift [678]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Migratory Terrestrial Species			

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Cuculus optatus Oriental Cuckoo, Horsfield's Cuckoo [86651]		Species or species habitat may occur within area	In buffer area only
Hirundapus caudacutus White-throated Needletail [682]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail [644]		Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Migratory Wetlands Species			
Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Calidris acuminata Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Calidris melanotos Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Gallinago hardwickii Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe [863]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
Pandion haliaetus Osprey [952]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Tringa nebularia Common Greenshank, Greenshank [832]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area

Other Matters Protected by the EPBC Act

Commonwealth Lands [Resource Information]

The Commonwealth area listed below may indicate the presence of Commonwealth land in this vicinity. Due to the unreliability of the data source, all proposals should be checked as to whether it impacts on a Commonwealth area, before making a definitive decision. Contact the State or Territory government land department for further information.

Commonwealth Land Name	State	Buffer Status
Communications, Information Technology and the Arts - Telstra Corporation Limited		
Commonwealth Land - Australian Telecommunications Commission [12615]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Australian Telecommunications Commission [12585]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Australian Telecommunications Commission [12587]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Australian Telecommunications Commission [12578]	NSW	In feature area
Commonwealth Land - Australian Telecommunications Commission [12586]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Australian Telecommunications Commission [12570]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Telstra Corporation Limited [12614]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Telstra Corporation Limited [12579]	NSW	In feature area
Defence - Defence Housing Authority		
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12612]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12592]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12596]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12597]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12594]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12595]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12602]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12603]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12600]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12606]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12601]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12598]	NSW	In buffer area only

Commonwealth Land Name	State	Buffer Status
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12599]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12588]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [16533]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [16532]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12593]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [16534]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12605]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [12604]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [16531]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - Defence Housing Authority [16530]	NSW	In buffer area only
Unknown		
Commonwealth Land - [12581]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - [12583]	NSW	In buffer area only
Commonwealth Land - [12582]	NSW	In buffer area only

Listed Marine Species [Resource Information]

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Bird			
Actitis hypoleucos			
Common Sandpiper [59309]		Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Apus pacificus			
Fork-tailed Swift [678]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Bubulcus ibis as Ardea ibis			
Cattle Egret [66521]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Calidris acuminata			
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [874]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
[Calidris ferruginea](#) Curlew Sandpiper [856]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Calidris melanotos](#) Pectoral Sandpiper [858]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Chalcites osculans as Chrysococcyx osculans](#) Black-eared Cuckoo [83425]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Gallinago hardwickii](#) Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe [863]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Haliaeetus leucogaster](#) White-bellied Sea-Eagle [943]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area	In feature area
[Hirundapus caudacutus](#) White-throated Needletail [682]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Lathamus discolor](#) Swift Parrot [744]	Critically Endangered	Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Merops ornatus](#) Rainbow Bee-eater [670]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
[Monarcha melanopsis](#) Black-faced Monarch [609]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area

Scientific Name	Threatened Category	Presence Text	Buffer Status
Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail [644]		Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Myiagra cyanoleuca Satin Flycatcher [612]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Neophema chrysostoma Blue-winged Parrot [726]	Vulnerable	Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Pandion haliaetus Osprey [952]		Species or species habitat likely to occur within area	In feature area
Pterodroma cervicalis White-necked Petrel [59642]		Species or species habitat may occur within area	In feature area
Rhipidura rufifrons Rufous Fantail [592]		Species or species habitat known to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Rostratula australis as Rostratula benghalensis (sensu lato) Australian Painted Snipe [77037]	Endangered	Species or species habitat likely to occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area
Tringa nebularia Common Greenshank, Greenshank [832]	Endangered	Species or species habitat may occur within area overfly marine area	In feature area

Extra Information

State and Territory Reserves			[Resource Information]
Protected Area Name	Reserve Type	State	Buffer Status
Wollemi	National Park	NSW	In buffer area only

Regional Forest Agreements [Resource Information]

Note that all areas with completed RFAs have been included. Please see the associated resource information for specific caveats and use limitations associated with RFA boundary information.

RFA Name	State	Buffer Status
North East NSW RFA	New South Wales	In feature area

EPBC Act Referrals [Resource Information]

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status	Buffer Status
Ashton Coal Operations Ravensworth Underground Mine	2022/09208		Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Bowmans Creek Wind Farm	2020/8631		Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Extension of Liddell open cut coal mining operations, NSW	2013/6908		Post-Approval	In feature area
Hunter Transmission Project	2024/09874		Assessment	In feature area
Hunter Valley Coal Mining Operations North - State approved mining, NSW	2016/7640		Post-Approval	In feature area
Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project	2022/09207		Completed	In feature area
Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project	2023/09651		Completed	In feature area
Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project	2022/09206		Completed	In feature area
Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project	2023/09652		Completed	In feature area
Liddell Future Land Use and Enabling Works Project	2022/09330		Assessment	In buffer area only
Maison Dieu Solar Farm	2023/09638		Assessment	In buffer area only
Mara Team Testing Release 37 - Allira	2024/09835		Assessment	In buffer area only
Maxwell Coal Mine, Hunter Valley, NSW	2018/8287		Post-Approval	In buffer area only

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status	Buffer Status
South Wambo underground coal mine extension, NSW	2016/7636		Approval	In feature area
Controlled action				
Bayswater Power Station Water Infrastructure Upgrade	2020/8623	Controlled Action	Proposed Decision	In feature area
Bulga Coal Optimisation Project Modification, near Singleton, NSW	2018/8300	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Bulga Complex Underground Coal Mine Extension	2002/773	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Drayton South Coal Project	2011/5911	Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Drayton South Coal Project, NSW	2014/7402	Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Extending Existing operations at Warkworth Coal Mine	2002/629	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In feature area
Extension of existing open cut coal mine at the Bulga Coal Complex	2012/6637	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Gas Transmission Pipeline	2011/5917	Controlled Action	Completed	In feature area
Mt Arthur Coal Extension Project Hunter Valley NSW	2011/5866	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Mt Arthur Coal open cut mine modification, Muswellbrook, NSW	2014/7377	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Mt Owen continued coal mining operation	2013/6978	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline, approximately 825 km in length	2008/4483	Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Ravensworth Operations Project	2010/5389	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In feature area
Relocation of Flying Foxes From Burdekin Park	2008/4323	Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
South Bates Extension Underground Mine, Warkworth, NSW	2016/7816	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Thomas Mitchell Drive Upgrade, Muswellbrook, NSW	2012/6533	Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
United and Wambo open cut coal mine project, Hunter Valley, NSW	2015/7600	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In feature area

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status	Buffer Status
Controlled action				
Wambo Coal Mine Development Project	2003/1138	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In feature area
Warkworth Mine Extension	2009/5081	Controlled Action	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Not controlled action				
Ashton Coal Project	2001/524	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Ashton Coal South East Open Cut Project	2010/5315	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Clearance of 35 ha in Ravensworth State Forest for extension of Mt Owen coal mining operations	2004/1369	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In feature area
clearing of GWB Woodland for residential development	2004/1771	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Hunter Valley Coal Mining Operations South - Modification 5	2016/7641	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In feature area
Improving rabbit biocontrol: releasing another strain of RHDV, sthrn two thirds of Australia	2015/7522	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In feature area
Integra Underground Mine Longwall Extension Modification, NSW	2017/8105	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Liddell Battery, Decoupling and Bayswater Ancillary Works	2020/8844	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In feature area
Mount Owen Continued Operations ??? Modification 2, Mount Owen Complex, 20km north-west of Singleton	2017/8083	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Production specialty steels for aerospace and machinery industry	2002/554	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline, approximately 833 km in length	2008/4620	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Rix's Creek Continuation of coal Mining Project, northwest of Singleton, NSW	2014/7348	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Sodium Chlorate Plant	2001/258	Not Controlled Action	Completed	In buffer area only
Not controlled action (particular manner)				
Aerial baiting for wild dog control	2006/2713	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval	In feature area

Title of referral	Reference	Referral Outcome	Assessment Status	Buffer Status
Not controlled action (particular manner)				
Aerial baiting for wild dog control	2006/2717	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Aerial baiting for wild dog control at Singleton Military Area and Bulga Coal Mine	2005/2078	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval	In buffer area only
Redbank 2 Power Station & Infrastructure	2003/1088	Not Controlled Action (Particular Manner)	Post-Approval	In feature area
Referral decision				
Bayswater B 2000 MW Power Station	2009/5201	Referral Decision	Completed	In buffer area only

Bioregional Assessments			[Resource Information]
SubRegion	BioRegion	Website	Buffer Status
Hunter	Northern Sydney Basin	BA website	In feature area

Caveat

1 PURPOSE

This report is designed to assist in identifying the location of matters of national environmental significance (MNES) and other matters protected by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (EPBC Act) which may be relevant in determining obligations and requirements under the EPBC Act.

The report contains the mapped locations of:

- World and National Heritage properties;
- Wetlands of International and National Importance;
- Commonwealth and State/Territory reserves;
- distribution of listed threatened, migratory and marine species;
- listed threatened ecological communities; and
- other information that may be useful as an indicator of potential habitat value.

2 DISCLAIMER

This report is not intended to be exhaustive and should only be relied upon as a general guide as mapped data is not available for all species or ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act (see below). Persons seeking to use the information contained in this report to inform the referral of a proposed action under the EPBC Act should consider the limitations noted below and whether additional information is required to determine the existence and location of MNES and other protected matters.

Where data is available to inform the mapping of protected species, the presence type (e.g. known, likely or may occur) that can be determined from the data is indicated in general terms. It is the responsibility of any person using or relying on the information in this report to ensure that it is suitable for the circumstances of any proposed use. The Commonwealth cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any use of the report or any part thereof. To the maximum extent allowed under governing law, the Commonwealth will not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance on the contents of this report.

3 DATA SOURCES

Threatened ecological communities

For threatened ecological communities where the distribution is well known, maps are generated based on information contained in recovery plans, State vegetation maps and remote sensing imagery and other sources. Where threatened ecological community distributions are less well known, existing vegetation maps and point location data are used to produce indicative distribution maps.

Threatened, migratory and marine species

Threatened, migratory and marine species distributions have been discerned through a variety of methods. Where distributions are well known and if time permits, distributions are inferred from either thematic spatial data (i.e. vegetation, soils, geology, elevation, aspect, terrain, etc.) together with point locations and described habitat; or modelled (MAXENT or BIOCLIM habitat modelling) using point locations and environmental data layers.

Where little information is available for a species or large number of maps are required in a short time-frame, maps are derived either from 0.04 or 0.02 decimal degree cells; by an automated process using polygon capture techniques (static two kilometre grid cells, alpha-hull and convex hull); or captured manually or by using topographic features (national park boundaries, islands, etc.).

In the early stages of the distribution mapping process (1999-early 2000s) distributions were defined by degree blocks, 100K or 250K map sheets to rapidly create distribution maps. More detailed distribution mapping methods are used to update these distributions when time permits.

4 LIMITATIONS

The following species and ecological communities have not been mapped and do not appear in this report:

- threatened species listed as extinct or considered vagrants;
- some recently listed species and ecological communities;
- some listed migratory and listed marine species, which are not listed as threatened species; and
- migratory species that are very widespread, vagrant, or only occur in Australia in small numbers.

The following groups have been mapped, but may not cover the complete distribution of the species:

- listed migratory and/or listed marine seabirds, which are not listed as threatened, have only been mapped for recorded breeding sites; and
- seals which have only been mapped for breeding sites near the Australian continent

The breeding sites may be important for the protection of the Commonwealth Marine environment.

Refer to the metadata for the feature group (using the Resource Information link) for the currency of the information.

Acknowledgements

This database has been compiled from a range of data sources. The department acknowledges the following custodians who have contributed valuable data and advice:

-Office of Environment and Heritage, New South Wales
-Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Victoria
-Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania
-Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, South Australia
-Department of Land and Resource Management, Northern Territory
-Department of Environmental and Heritage Protection, Queensland
-Department of Parks and Wildlife, Western Australia
-Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT
-Birdlife Australia
-Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme
-Australian National Wildlife Collection
-Natural history museums of Australia
-Museum Victoria
-Australian Museum
-South Australian Museum
-Queensland Museum
-Online Zoological Collections of Australian Museums
-Queensland Herbarium
-National Herbarium of NSW
-Royal Botanic Gardens and National Herbarium of Victoria
-Tasmanian Herbarium
-State Herbarium of South Australia
-Northern Territory Herbarium
-Western Australian Herbarium
-Australian National Herbarium, Canberra
-University of New England
-Ocean Biogeographic Information System
-Australian Government, Department of Defence
Forestry Corporation, NSW
-Geoscience Australia
-CSIRO
-Australian Tropical Herbarium, Cairns
-eBird Australia
-Australian Government – Australian Antarctic Data Centre
-Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory
-Australian Government National Environmental Science Program
-Australian Institute of Marine Science
-Reef Life Survey Australia
-American Museum of Natural History
-Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk, Tasmania
-Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania
-Other groups and individuals

The Department is extremely grateful to the many organisations and individuals who provided expert advice and information on numerous draft distributions.

Please feel free to provide feedback via the Contact us page.

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Appendix B

Assessments of Significance



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Assessments of Significance

The EPBC Act requires an Assessment of Significance relating to the potential impacts of a Project on listed MNES. These assessments have been conducted in accordance with the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 (DoE 2013b), based on the HVO North BIAA.

Under the EPBC Act, the approval of the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment is required for any action that may have a significant impact on MNES. The MNES deemed likely to be impacted by the action according to the controlled action decision are:

- Listed threatened species and ecological communities (section 18 & section 18A).
- Coal seam gas or large coal mining development with impact on water resources (sections 24D and 24E).

A search of the DCCEEW Protected Matters Search Tool in February 2024 and collated information from literature reviews identified a range of threatened ecological communities, threatened species and terrestrial migratory species listed under the EPBC Act that are known to occur, or considered to have the potential to occur on the basis of habitat modelling within the HVO Complex BIAA. Each of these has been included in **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** (note that purely marine or pelagic species were excluded due to lack of habitat), together with an indication of those species that warrant further assessment by way of an Assessment of Significance.

As outlined in **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2**, the following EPBC Act listed species and communities are considered to have the potential to occur or be impacted by the Project, based on previous records or suitable habitat, and are subject to an Assessment of Significance:

Critically Endangered or Endangered Ecological Communities

- *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*
- *White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC*.

Critically Endangered and Endangered Species

- Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- Regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)
- Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) (SE mainland population)
- Hunter valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)
- Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*).

Vulnerable Species

- Grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- Brown treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
- Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*).

Migratory Species Listed under International Conventions

The HVO Complex BIAA does not provide habitat for an important population of any of the migratory species predicted to occur by the protected matters database, however an assessment against the criteria is provided below.

B.1 Critically Endangered or Endangered Ecological Communities

Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC

Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland (CHVEFW) CEEC occurs in the Hunter Valley region on soils derived from Permian sedimentary bedrock (TSSC 2015). Typically, it is characterised as a eucalypt woodland and open forest, with a shrub layer of variable density and/or a grassy ground layer. Across its range, one or more of a complex of four eucalypt tree species, namely spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*), narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) or grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) dominate the canopy (TSSC 2015).

Targeted surveys to map CHVEFW CEEC were undertaken in March, June, August, September, and October 2020, April 2021, September 2023 and February and March 2025 in accordance with the sampling protocols and with consideration to the key diagnostic characteristics and condition thresholds provided in the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015). Additional flora transects and rapid assessments in October 2021 sought to identify the community in additional areas proposed for disturbance, following boundary amendments. These 'key diagnostic characteristics' and 'condition thresholds' provided by the Approved Conservation Advice formed the basis for delineating and identifying patches of native vegetation as being the CEEC and distinguishing between patches of different quality.

Additional surveys were conducted in May 2023 to determine if any of the mine rehabilitation (Domains 2b and 2c) or native vegetation in Domain 4 at HVO conformed to the listing criteria for the CEEC.

The results of the assessment for vegetation patches within the HVO North BIAA against the key diagnostic characteristics according to the Approved Conservation Advice are detailed in **Table B.1** below.

Table B.1 Assessment of Vegetation Patches within the HVO North BIAA against the Key Diagnostic Features according to the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015)

Key Diagnostic Characteristics for CHVEFW as per Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015)	Vegetation patches within the Biodiversity Impact Assessment Areas
It occurs in the Hunter River catchment (typically called the Hunter Valley region)	**Yes** – the HVO North BIAA is within the Hunter River catchment.
It typically occurs on lower hillslopes and low ridges, or valley floors in undulating country; on soils derived from Permian sedimentary rocks	**Yes** – the HVO North BIAA is underlain by Permian derived soils on low hills of the valley floor, except where aeolian and alluvial soils occur.

Key Diagnostic Characteristics for CHVEFW as per Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015)	Vegetation patches within the Biodiversity Impact Assessment Areas
It does not occur on alluvial flats, river terraces, aeolian sands, Triassic sediments or escarpments	**Yes** – the CEEC has been recorded in parts of the HVO North BIAA that do not contain alluvial flats, river terraces, aeolian sands, Triassic sediments or escarpments.
It is woodland or forest, with a projected canopy cover of trees of 10 per cent or more; or with a native tree density of at least 10 native tree stems per 0.5 ha (at least 20 native tree stems/ha) that are at least one metre in height	**Yes** – suitable vegetation patches within the HVO North BIAA comprises a projected canopy of cover at least 10 per cent with a native tree density of at least 10 native tree stems per 0.5 ha that are at least one metre in height.
The canopy of the ecological community is dominated by one or more of the following four eucalypt species: *Eucalyptus crebra* (narrow-leaved ironbark), *Corymbia maculata* (syn. *E. maculata*) (spotted gum), *E. dawsonii* (slaty gum) and *E. moluccana* (grey box) OR a fifth species, *Allocasuarina luehmannii* (bulloak, buloke) dominates in combination with one or more of the above four eucalypt species, in sites previously dominated by one or more of the above four eucalypt species	**Yes** – many vegetation patches of forest/woodland within the HVO North BIAA comprises a canopy dominated by either or a combination of narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana),* slaty box (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) in combination with bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*).
Allocasuarina torulosa (forest oak/ she-oak, rose she-oak/oak), *Eucalyptus acmenoides* (white mahogany) and *Eucalyptus fibrosa* (red/broad-leaved ironbark) are largely absent from the canopy of a patch. Largely absent: meaning no more than two trees per hectare on average across a patch.	**Yes** – the majority of vegetation patches within the HVO North BIAA does not contain contraindicative species. Woodland areas in the east of the HVO North BIAA were excluded from the CEEC due to the presence of broad-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus fibrosa*). Similar, a small area of mine rehabilitation was excluded from the CEEC due to the presence (and dominance) of sugar gum (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) in the canopy.
A ground layer is present (although it may vary in development and composition), as a sparse to thick layer of native grasses and other native herbs and/or native shrubs	**Yes** – vegetation patches within the HVO North BIAA has sparse to dense ground layer dominated by native grasses and other native herbs and/or native shrubs. Areas of woodland with a predominantly exotic ground layer were excluded from the CEEC.

The patches that were determined to meet the key diagnostic characteristics were then assessed against the condition thresholds from the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015). The majority of the patches meet the high-quality condition despite most of the patches being highly fragmented and disturbed due to past land uses that include agriculture and mining.

Three PCTs were found to conform (or partially conform) to the CHVEFW CEEC. The vegetation communities and condition zones that conform to the CEEC and the approximate area of each is outlined in **Table B.2** and **Table B.3** provides a summary of the CEEC occurring across the HVO North BIAA. Photos of the vegetation zones that conform entirely and partially to the CEEC are shown in **Table B.4** and **Table B.5.**

Table B.2 Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC occurring in PCTs in the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Condition	Area (ha)
3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	*Moderate*	100.0
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Plantation	1.3
	Bulloak Variant	21.4
	White Box Variant	1.6
	*Scattered Regeneration^*	1.9
	*Cooba Woodland^*	1.0
	*Poor Condition DNG^*	5.6
	*Mine Rehabilitation**	14.9
3485 – Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	Moderate	7.3
Total		**166.3**

^Derived components of the CHVEFW CEEC.

*Mine rehabilitation within Category 1 Land in Domains 2b.

Table B.3 Summary of Area of Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC in the HVO North BIAA

Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC Component	Area (ha)
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	142.9
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC – derived components^	8.5
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC – mine rehabilitation	14.9
Total	**166.3**

^ Note that derived native grasslands and shrublands are only included where the grassland connects discrete patches as per the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015).

Table B.4 Vegetation Zones that conform entirely to Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC

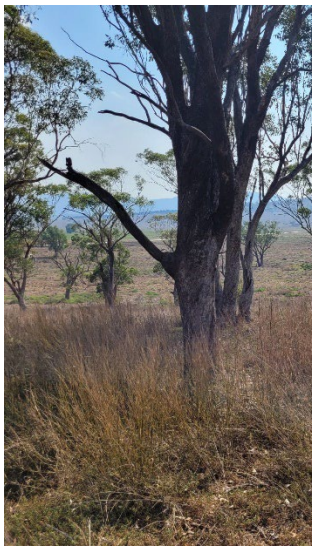
Vegetation Zones that conform entirely to *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC*			
			
3485 Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest *Moderate*	3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Moderate*	3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Thinned*	3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *White box Variant*

Table B.5 Vegetation Zones that partially conform to Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC

Vegetation Zones that partially conform to *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* where there is a gap, in or at the edge of a patch; or connecting two patches across a short distance OR where characteristic eucalypts are present in the canopy, in suitable abundance			
			

Vegetation Zones that partially conform to *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* where there is a gap, in or at the edge of a patch; or connecting two patches across a short distance OR where characteristic eucalypts are present in the canopy, in suitable abundance			
3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Cooba Woodland*	3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Poor Condition DNG*	3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Scattered Regeneration*	3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Bulloak Variant*



3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Mine Rehabilitation*



3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Plantation*

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered ecological community if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- reduce the extent of an ecological community.

Available data indicates the CEEC has undergone a decline of at least 65%; and, if the condition of the ecological community is taken into account, the decline in extent is higher (i.e. greater than 70%) (TSSC 2015). The community is limited to the Permian sediments in the central Hunter Valley.

The CHVEFW CEEC is present within the HVO North BIAA, primarily located in remnant vegetation between the Mitchell and Carrington Pits adjacent to Lemington Road, but also sporadically occurring in isolated patches across the HVO North BIAA (refer to **Figure 3.2**). Up to 166.3 ha is predicted to be directly impacted as a result of the HVO North Action, made up of 142.9 ha of woodland/forest components, 8.5 ha of derived grassland/shrubland and 14.9 ha occurs in mine rehabilitation. The CEEC present within the HVO North BIAA comprises fragmented areas containing isolated large mature trees, as well as planted and regenerating areas containing young eucalypts.

The removal of up to approximately 166.3 ha represents a reduction in the extent of the community of approximately 0.4%, based on an estimated extant area of 37,000 ha (TSSC 2015) (noting the derived grassland/shrubland components are not included in the estimated extent of the community in the Approved Conservation Advice).

- fragment or increase fragmentation of an ecological community

The CHVEFW CEEC is highly fragmented and with a very restricted distribution, as indicated by an estimated median patch size of 1.7 ha. Almost all (86%) of the remnants are less than 10 ha in size and only 2% of patches are larger than 100 ha in size (TSSC 2015).

The HVO North Action will lead to further fragmentation of the CEEC with up to 166.3 ha being removed, 142.9 ha of which constitutes moderate quality condition woodland/forest. The overall fragmentation to the community as a whole is expected to be around 0.4% of the community's extent.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of an ecological community

The Approved Conservation Advice for the CHVEFW CEEC (TSSC 2015) recommends that areas which meet the minimum condition thresholds, or are within the buffer zone (recommended buffer is 30 m), are considered critical to the survival of the CEEC. As the HVO North BIAA contain approximately 166.3 ha of the CEEC, the Project is therefore likely to adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of the ecological community.

- modify or destroy abiotic factors necessary for an ecological community's survival, including reduction of groundwater levels, or substantial alteration of surface water drainage patterns

The CHVEFW CEEC occurs within the HVO North BIAA and the key impact will be the direct clearance of the community, however the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015) states that "mining can lead to the disruption of hydrological processes, erosion and changes to soil structure and chemistry, all of which negatively impact the landscape and potentially the ecological community".

Groundwater modelling (EMM 2026) shows only small parts of the alluvial aquifer will be impacted by dewatering as a result of the Project. Alluvium along the main channel of the Hunter River is largely buffered from drawdown by low permeability groundwater barriers installed along sections of the aquifer and because infiltration from the Hunter River will recharge the aquifer. Localised incremental drawdown is predicted in the Hunter River alluvium adjacent to the Carrington West Wing extension area. This is predicted to be of short duration as the Hunter River is a regulated river system with controlled flow. The CHVEFW at HVO North will not be impacted by groundwater drawdown. There is also no alluvium present in that area at HVO North, and the depth to groundwater is likely too deep for the vegetation to be accessing groundwater.

The Project is unlikely to modify abiotic factors necessary for the CEEC's survival in the HVO North BIAA.

- cause substantial change in the species composition of an occurrence of an ecological community, including causing a decline or loss of functionally important species

The CHVEFW CEEC is an open forest or woodland, typically dominated by eucalypt species with mid-layer of shrubs and a ground layer of grasses, forbs and small shrubs. The CEEC is characterised by one or more of spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*), narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) or grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) (TSSC 2015). Vegetative components of the ecological community are important as they provide food and habitat for faunal components of the ecological community. Specific data related to the role of functionally important species such as burrowing mammals and nomadic nectarivores in this CEEC are not available (TSSC 2015).

Up to 165.4 ha of the ecological community will be removed as a result of the HVO North Action.

- cause a substantial reduction in the quality or integrity of an occurrence of an ecological community, including, but not limited to:
    - assisting invasive species that are harmful to the listed ecological community to become established, or
    - causing regular mobilisation of fertilisers, herbicides or other chemicals or pollutants into the ecological community which kill or inhibit the growth of species in the ecological community

It is well documented that the establishment of exotic species contributes to a reduction in ecological function of the CHVEFW CEEC. Weeds compete with locally indigenous flora for available resources and often limit the diversity and regenerative capacity of a native ecosystem. Although a number of weeds pose a serious threat to the ecological community, amongst the most serious threats are African olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*), fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) and bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) (TSSC 2015). The CHVEFW CEEC recorded in the HVO North BIAA was found to contain a range of weed species including African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), galenia (*Galenia pubescens*), turnip weed (*Rapistrum rugosum*), Coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*) and lamb's tongues (*Plantago lanceolata*).

The Project has the potential to result in indirect impacts such as an increase in invasive weeds or mobilisation of fertilisers, herbicides or other chemicals or pollutants on adjoining and surrounding areas of CEEC habitat, however, existing plans contained within the site Environmental Management Strategy ensure the risk of this occurring are minimised.

- interfere with the recovery of an ecological community;

A National Recovery Plan has not been prepared for the CHVEFW CEEC, however the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015) outlines a range of Priority Conservation Actions, which include some of the following highest priorities:

- Avoidance of further clearance and fragmentation of the ecological community and of surrounding native vegetation.
- Minimisation of unavoidable impacts from any developments or other activities in areas adjacent to the ecological community that might result in their further degradation.
- Regeneration, revegetation and rehabilitation of the ecological community; with an appropriate mix of species.
- Implementation of effective control and management techniques for invasive species (e.g. African olive).
- Ensuring that patches of particularly high quality or importance in a landscape context are considered for inclusion in formal reserve tenure or other land tenure for biodiversity conservation purposes.

Due the direct impact of clearing up to 166.3 ha of the CHVEFW CEEC, the HVO North Action will likely interfere with the recovery of the CEEC within the HVO North BIAA and in the wider locality. A comprehensive offset and restoration strategy will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme that will seek to undertake a range of the Priority Conservation Actions outlined in the Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015). The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

It is considered that the HVO North Action is **likely** to result in a significant impact on *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* due to the removal of up to 166.3 ha of this community and potential indirect impacts, including fragmentation and edge effects.

White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

The White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC (Box-Gum Woodland CEEC) includes woodlands dominated by white box (*Eucalyptus albens*), yellow box (*E. melliodo*ra) or Blakely's red gum (*E. blakelyi*) and grasslands previously containing an overstorey dominated by these species (TSSC 2006). The species-rich understorey typically contains native tussock grasses, herbs and scattered shrubs. The ecological community is known to occur along the western slopes and tablelands of the Great Dividing Range from central Victoria, through NSW, to southern Queensland (TSSC 2006).

Targeted surveys to map Box-Gum Woodland CEEC were undertaken in May, June, August and September 2020, and in May 2023 in accordance with the sampling protocols and with consideration to the key diagnostic characteristics and condition thresholds provided in the EPBC Act Policy Statement (DEH 2006). The flow chart for determining the presence of the ecological community in the EPBC Act Policy Statement formed the basis for delineating and identifying patches of native vegetation as being the CEEC.

The results of the assessment for vegetation patches within the HVO North BIAA against the key diagnostic characteristics according to the Approved Conservation Advice are detailed in **Table B.6** below.

Table B.6 Assessment of Vegetation Patches within the HVO North BIAA against the Key Diagnostic Features according to the EPBC Act Policy Statement (DEH 2006a)

Key Diagnostic Characteristic as per EPBC Act Policy Statement (DEH 2006)	Vegetation patches within HVO North BIAA
Is, or was previously, at least one of the most common overstorey species White Box, Yellow Box or Blakely's Red Gum?	**Yes** – patches of remnant woodland located in the HVO North BIAA is dominated by yellow box.
Does the patch have a predominantly native understorey?	**Yes** – the understorey of the patch is predominantly native.
Is the patch 0.1 ha or greater in size?	**Yes** – the entire patch is greater than 3 ha in size.
There are 12 or more native understorey species present (excluding grasses). There must be at least one important species	No – two floristic plots sampled in the community, within the HVO North BIAA, recorded 7 and 10 native understorey species (excluding grasses), including three 'important species' in each plot.
If d) is not met, is the patch 2 ha or greater in size?	**Yes** – the patch is greater than 2 ha.
If the answer at e) is "yes", does the patch have an average of 20 or more trees per hectare, or is there natural regeneration of the dominant overstorey eucalypts?	**Yes** – there is an average of greater than 20 trees per hectare. **Outcome: the patch is the listed ecological community.**

One PCT was found to conform to the CEEC in the HVO North BIAA. The vegetation communities and condition zones that conform to the CEEC and the approximate area of each is outlined in **Table B.7.**

Table B.7 White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC occurring in PCTs in the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Condition	Area (ha)
4089	*Moderate*	4.8
Total		**4.8**

Table B.8 Vegetation Zones that conform to White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

Vegetation Zones that conform to White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC

PCT 4089 – Namoi Upper Hunter River Red Forest *Moderate*

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered ecological community if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- reduce the extent of an ecological community

The Approved Listing and Conservation Advice for Box-Gum Woodland CEEC estimates the total national extent to be approximately 416,000 ha (TSSC 2006), of which approximately 250,729 ha is known to occur in NSW. This community was recently updated on the NSW BC Act as critically endangered and is broadly consistent with the Commonwealth listing. The revised final determination for the community states that while the very large historical decline in geographic distribution is corroborated by many sources, there is uncertainty surrounding both the current extent of Box-Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Grassland and the extent of its pre-1750 distribution.

A revised estimate of 134,202 ha of remaining Box-Gum Woodland CEEC is provided (NSW TSSC 2020), however this is based on reporting from 2004 and 2005 and it is acknowledged that additional clearance and loss since this time has occurred. It is expected that less than 0.1% of the community remains in a near-intact condition. Much of the original extent of the community has been cleared for agriculture. In most of the areas that remain, grazing and pasture-improvement have effectively removed the characteristic understorey, leaving only the overstorey trees with an understorey dominated by exotic species.

The HVO North Action is predicted to clear approximately 4.8 ha of the Box-Gum Woodland CEEC, between the Carrington and Mitchell Pits adjacent to Lemington Road (refer to **Figure 3.2**).

The permanent loss of approximately 4.8 ha of Box-Gum Woodland CEEC as a result of the proposal represents a negligible reduction in the estimated current extent of the community across its national range, estimated to be approximately 0.003% of the current extent of the community in NSW.

- fragment or increase fragmentation of an ecological community

This ecological community has been heavily cleared across most of its range. The remaining extent of the ecological community is highly fragmented, occurring in small, isolated patches within a cleared environment, or within a landscape of other disturbed woodlands (TSSC, 2006).

Vegetation occurring within the HVO North BIAA is currently highly fragmented as a result of historic and current agricultural land practices. The removal of 4.8 ha of vegetation conforming to Box-Gum Woodland CEEC is not likely to result in an increase in the level of fragmentation of this CEEC in the local area or across its range.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of an ecological community

The National Recovery Plan for the CEEC identifies habitat critical to the survival of Box-Gum Woodland is on the moderate to highly fertile soils of the western slopes of NSW and Queensland, the northern slopes of Victoria, and the tablelands of the Great Dividing Range from southern Queensland through NSW and the ACT. Given the current highly fragmented and degraded state of this ecological community, all areas of Box-Gum Grassy Woodland which meet the minimum condition criteria outlined in the National Recovery Plan are critical to the survival of this ecological community.

The approximately 4.8 ha of Box-Gum Woodland CEEC within the HVO North BIAA would be critical to the survival of the CEEC, in accordance with the criteria prescribed in the National Recovery Plan for the CEEC (DECCW 2011).

The HVO North Action would result in the removal of a small area of habitat critical to the survival of Box-Gum Woodland CEEC, however the extent of proposed clearing represents a small area in the context of the broader range of the community both in NSW and in Australia.

- modify or destroy abiotic factors necessary for an ecological community's survival, including reduction of groundwater levels, or substantial alteration of surface water drainage patterns

The Box-Gum Woodland CEEC occurs within a small portion of the HVO North BIAA and the key impact will be the direct clearance of the community. While approximately 4.8 ha of Box-Gum Woodland CEEC will be removed from the HVO North BIAA, the HVO North Action is not expected to adversely affect retained areas of the CEEC occurring outside the HVO North BIAA as the HVO North Action will be designed to avoid offsite impacts. The HVO North Action will include detailed consideration of the effect of changes to groundwater regimes and surface water flows with the minimisation of adverse impacts a key consideration in the design process.

The groundwater impact assessment modelling predicts localised incremental drawdown in the Hunter River alluvium adjacent to the Carrington West Wing extension area. The CEEC within the HVO North BIAA will be directly impacted by land clearance and not groundwater drawdown. There is also no alluvium present in that area at HVO North, and the depth to groundwater is likely too deep for the vegetation to be accessing groundwater.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to modify abiotic factors necessary for the CEEC's survival in the HVO North BIAA.

- cause substantial change in the species composition of an occurrence of an ecological community, including causing a decline or loss of functionally important species

The Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2006) states that the degradation and fragmentation of this CEEC can involve the loss of suites of species, such as woodland birds, understorey plant species and soil crusts. The removal of these functionally important species has the potential to precipitate change in structure or function sufficient to lead to the eventual extinction of the ecological community.

The HVO North Action will result in the direct removal of approximately 4.8 ha of Box-Gum Woodland CEEC. This small reduction in the extent of the CEEC is not expected to result in a change in native flora and fauna species in the locality such that the composition of species in adjacent areas of CEEC is affected.

- cause a substantial reduction in the quality or integrity of an occurrence of an ecological community, including, but not limited to:
    - assisting invasive species that are harmful to the listed ecological community to become established, or
    - causing regular mobilisation of fertilisers, herbicides or other chemicals or pollutants into the ecological community which kill or inhibit the growth of species in the ecological community

The Listing Advice for this community states that there has been an overall reduction in the integrity of this ecological community compared with its pre-1750 state. There are essentially no areas remaining that could be considered fully intact, as most patches have at least some degree of weed invasion.

It is well documented that the invasion and establishment of exotic species contributes to a reduction in ecological function of the Box-Gum Woodland CEEC. Weeds compete with locally indigenous flora for available resources and often limit the diversity and regenerative capacity of a native ecosystem. The patches of Box-Gum Woodland CEEC recorded in the HVO North BIAA was found to already include substantial weed infestation, including exotic groundcovers black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), Paddys lucerne (*Sida rhombifolia*) and *Medicago* spp.

The HVO North Action has the potential to result in indirect impacts such as an increase in invasive weeds or mobilisation of fertilisers, herbicides or other chemicals or pollutants on adjoining and surrounding areas of CEEC habitat, however, existing plans contained within the site Environmental Management Strategy ensure the risk of this occurring are minimised.

- interfere with the recovery of an ecological community

A National Recovery Plan has been prepared for Box-Gum Woodland CEEC (DECCW, 2011). The objectives of this plan includes achieving no net loss in the extent and condition of the CEEC, increasing protection of sites with high recovery potential, increasing landscape functionality through management and restoration of degraded sites and increasing transitional areas around remnants and linkages between remnants.

Any impacts to known occurrences of the CEEC will likely contravene the objectives of the recovery plan. Recovery recommendations includes avoiding clearance and fragmentation of the CEEC. The HVO North Action includes the removal of approximately 4.8 ha of the CEEC however this is not considered to substantially interfere with the recovery of the community. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

A comprehensive offset strategy will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, and will seek to undertake a range of the Recovery Actions and Objectives outlined in the Recovery Plan (DECCW 2011).

Conclusion

It is considered that the HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on *White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC* due to the removal of a very small highly fragmented and degraded area (approximately 4.8 ha) of this community in the HVO North BIAA in relation to the estimated extent of the CEEC in NSW and Australia.

B.2 Critically Endangered and Endangered Species

The following critically endangered or endangered species are considered in this assessment:

- Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- Regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)
- Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) (SE mainland population)
- Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)
- Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*).

Species descriptions, in the Assessments of Significance below, are referenced from DPE and DCCEEW online threatened species profiles, unless otherwise noted.

Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)

In this case, a *population* means:

- a geographically distinct regional population, or collection of local populations; or
- a regional population, or collection of local populations, that occurs within a particular bioregion.

The swift parrot occurs as a single population that migrates annually from breeding grounds in Tasmania to the winter foraging grounds on the coastal plains and slope woodlands of mainland eastern Australia (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). The number of swift parrots that occur in the Hunter Region over winter is difficult to determine, however historical estimates indicate up to 10% of the total estimated population are known to occur.

As the species occurs as a single population in Australia, any record of the species would constitute a *population* as described above. The swift parrot has been recorded 14 times within the locality, with the closest records occurring approximately 4 km to the south near the Golden Highway, and approximately 7 km east in Ravensworth State Forest. There have been few records of the species within the central Hunter Valley in the past few years.

Since 2015, most of the swift parrot records in the Hunter have been observed in areas of the lower Hunter (Paxton, Quorrobolong, Singleton) where eucalypt flowering has been prominent (Birdline 2020).

The swift parrot does not breed on mainland Australia, and as such the HVO North BIAA only represents potential foraging habitat for this species. The HVO North BIAA would be considered to form part of a regional dispersal route close to important winter foraging areas in the lower Hunter Valley. This species may make use of the open forest and woodland habitats of the HVO North BIAA, particularly where there are prolific flowering eucalypts as this species is likely to move throughout the area in response to mass flowering events. A flock of up to five swift parrots were identified utilising grey box (*Eucalyptus molucanna*) at the HVO site offices near the HVO North Action area during winter bird surveys conducted in August 2025.

The spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) occurring in the HVO North BIAA is associated primarily with mine rehabilitation and has been planted. It is reasonably young and less likely to produce mass flowering foraging resources than the mature habitats in nearby Wollemi National Park or Ravensworth State Forest. The yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) within the HVO North BIAA have the potential to produce mass flowering events, however, the total area is relatively small when compared to nearby foraging habitat in Wollemi National Park and Ravensworth State Forest.

The *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* Policy Statement (DoEE 2016) states that this CEEC can be valuable as a "source of winter-flowering eucalypts for transient threatened species such as regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*) and swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)". While this community occurs in the HVO North BIAA, without the suitable winter foraging species, this habitat would be considered marginal and temporary habitat between higher quality foraging areas.

Table B.9 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. Where these condition zones contain foraging resources as per the Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot (Saunders and Tzaros 2011), these are noted. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas mapped as 'Important Habitat' under the BAM.

Table B.9 Swift Parrot Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Foraging Resources as per Recovery Plan	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	-	100.0
	Plantation	*Corymbia maculata*	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	-	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	-	16.3
	Mine Rehabilitation	*Corymbia maculata*	14.9
	White Box Grey Box Variant	*Eucalyptus albens x moluccana*	1.6
3485	Moderate	-	7.3
4089	Moderate	*Eucalyptus melliodora*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	-	1.5
Total habitat with foraging resources (as per recovery plan)			**69.0**
Other associated PCTs/condition zones			**136.4**
Area within Important Habitat Mapping			**0**
TOTAL			**205.4**

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population

A flock of up to five swift parrots were identified utilising grey box (*Eucalyptus molucanna*) at the HVO site offices adjacent to the HVO north Action area during winter bird surveys conducted in August 2025.The species was recorded in the region during winter 2025 and it has historically been recorded using nearby habitats in Ravensworth State Forest and woodland in Warkworth as a winter foraging resource. The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 69 ha of habitat containing the key feed trees including mature spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and/or yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) in the HVO North BIAA and up to 136.4 ha of associated PCTs and condition zones across the HVO North BIAA.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action will lead to a long-term decrease in the size of the *population* of swift parrot.

- reduce the area of occupancy of the species

A flock of up to five swift parrots was identified utilising mature grey box (*Eucalyptus molucanna*) at the HVO site offices adjacent to the HVO North Action area during winter bird surveys conducted in August 2025. The species was recorded in the region during winter 2025 and it has historically been recorded using nearby habitats in Ravensworth State Forest or where there are prolific winter flowering resources. Important Habitat Mapping for the swift parrot (published by the NSW DPE) occurs approximately 20 km to the southeast of the most southerly point of the HVO North BIAA. This mapping is published to assist assessments under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme to determine where credits for the species are calculated. The Important Habitat Mapping for the swift parrot does not occur on or near the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 69 ha of vegetation containing spotted gum, white box or yellow box winter foraging resources for the species and up to 136.4 ha of associated PCTs and condition zones habitat. The HVO North Action will result in a minor reduction of the potential area of occupancy for the swift parrot in the HVO North BIAA, however this is unlikely to substantially reduce the area of known occupancy in the wider locality or region.

- fragment an existing population into two or more populations

Some habitat containing key feed trees will be removed as part of the HVO North Action, and the level of fragmentation will increase for this species in the locality. However, given the highly dispersive nature of the swift parrot and the extensive areas of suitable and known foraging habitat in the surrounding area, it is unlikely that the HVO North Action would create a significant change to the species' dispersal capacity or create a significant barrier the movement of the species that would result in the existing population being fragmented.

The HVO North Action will not result in the fragmentation of the existing national *population* of swift parrot into two or more populations.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

Habitat critical to the survival of the swift parrot is identified in the species' Recovery Plan (DCCEEW 2024b) as breeding and foraging habitat in Tasmania, and all preferred foraging species within known and likely foraging habitat on the mainland, including yellow gum (*E. leucoxylon*); red ironbark (*E. tricarpa*); mugga ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*); grey box (*E. macrocarpa*); white box (*E. albens*); yellow box (*E. melliodora*); swamp mahogany (*E. robusta*); forest red gum (*E. tereticornis*); blackbutt (*E. pilularis*); and spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*).

Foraging habitat occurring in the nearby Ravensworth State Forest could be considered habitat critical to the survival as the species has shown occasional site fidelity to these mature forest habitats.

A flock of up to five swift parrots was identified utilising grey box (*Eucalyptus molucanna*) at the HVO site offices adjacent to the HVO North Action area during winter bird surveys conducted in August 2025.The species was recorded in the region during winter 2025 and it has historically been occasionally recorded in low numbers. The HVO North BIAA does include vegetation containing young spotted gum (PCT3431 Plantation) and mature yellow box (PCT4089 Moderate), which are key feed tree species for the swift parrot in the Hunter-Central Rivers (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 69 ha of this foraging habitat in the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North Action will not adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of the swift parrot.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of a population

The swift parrot breeds and nests exclusively in Tasmania and migrates to mainland Australia during the non-breeding season. There is no potential for breeding habitat to occur in the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North Action is not expected to disrupt the breeding cycle of the *population* of swift parrot.

- modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

The HVO North Action will involve the removal of up to approximately 69 ha of quality habitat that contains key feed tree species for the swift parrot. Larger trees provide a better foraging resource for swift parrots (Saunders and Tzaros 2011). Areas of the Hunter support habitat that contains suitable woodland and forest vegetation that would also provide potential habitat for this species, including Wollemi National Park and Ravensworth State Forest. 136.4 ha of associated PCTs and condition zones in the HVO North BIAA constitutes only marginal and transitional habitat for the species.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action would modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the swift parrot would decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a critically endangered or endangered species becoming established in the endangered or critically endangered species' habitat

According to the National Recovery Plan for the species (Saunders and Tzaros 2011), swift parrots are less likely to occur at known foraging sites where there is an abundance of large, aggressive nectar feeders such as noisy miner (*Manorina melanocephala*). Aggressive exclusion of birds from potential woodland and forest habitat by over-abundant noisy miners was listed as a key threatening process under the EPBC Act in May 2014.

Surveys of the HVO North BIAA indicate that noisy minors are already established in this area, and the HVO North Action is not expected to result in an increase in additional invasive species that are harmful to the swift parrot becoming further established in this habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

Psittacine beak and feather disease is a common and potentially deadly disease of parrots caused by a circovirus named beak and feather disease virus. The disease appears to have originated in Australia and is widespread and continuously present in wild populations of Australian parrots. Beak and feather disease affecting endangered psittacine species (parrots and related species) was listed in April 2001 as a key threatening process under the EPBC Act.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action will introduce beak and feather disease or any other disease that may cause the swift parrot to decline.

- interfere with the recovery of the species

The National Recovery Plan for the Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) (Saunders and Tzaros) was prepared in 2011. A strategy scorecard was prepared in 2018 to document population trends and management actions undertaken.

Any impacts to known habitat of the swift parrot will likely contravene the objectives of the recovery plan, however the species has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA. 69 ha of foraging habitat has been identified and the species has been recorded utilising foraging habitats in the nearby Ravensworth State Forest. It is unlikely that the HVO North Action will substantially interfere with the recovery of the swift parrot, given that it will only result in the removal of a small amount of vegetation containing key foraging resources. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **likely** to result in a significant impact on the *population* of the swift parrot.

Regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*)

In this case, a *population* means:

- a geographically distinct regional population, or collection of local populations; or
- a regional population, or collection of local populations, that occurs within a particular bioregion.

The regent honeyeater comprises a single population, with some exchange of individuals between regularly used areas (DoE 2016). As at 2010, the total population size is estimated at 350–400 mature individuals (DoE 2016). The average number of birds seen per year between 2009 and 2018 is 136. While the wild population has been augmented by substantial releases of captive bred birds, their nesting success is about half that of wild-raised birds and the Final Determination for the species' critically endangered listing for NSW (NSWSC 2019) states that the population may now be fewer than 250 mature individuals.

As the species occurs as a single population in Australia, any record of the species would constitute a *population* as described above. The *population* of regent honeyeater has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA, however, four records ranging from 1987 to 2002 occur in the nearby locality. This species may make use of the open forest and woodland habitats of the HVO North BIAA, particularly where there are prolific flowering eucalypts as this species is likely to move throughout the area in response to mass flowering events. No regent honeyeaters were identified utilising the HVO North BIAA during the winter bird surveys conducted in June, August 2019 or July 2020.

The spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) occurring in the HVO North BIAA has been planted and is reasonably young and less likely to produce mass flowering foraging resources than the mature habitats in nearby Wollemi National Park or Ravensworth State Forest. The yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) within the HVO North BIAA have the potential to produce mass flowering events, however, the total area is relatively small when compared to nearby foraging habitat in Wollemi National Park and Ravensworth State Forest. Mistletoe species (*Amyema miquelii*) was found to occur in one vegetation plot in PCT3431 Thinned Woodland in the HVO North BIAA.

The *Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC* Policy Statement (DoEE 2016) states that this CEEC can be valuable as a "source of winter-flowering eucalypts for transient threatened species such as regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*) and swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)". While this community occurs in the HVO North BIAA, without the suitable winter foraging species, this habitat would be considered marginal and temporary habitat between higher quality foraging areas.

Table B.10 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. Where these condition zones contain foraging resources as per the Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater (DoE 2016), these are noted. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas mapped as 'Important Habitat' under the BAM.

Table B.10 Regent Honeyeater Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone	Foraging Resources as per Recovery Plan	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	-	100.0
	Plantation	*Corymbia maculata*	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	*Amyema miquelii*	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	-	16.3
	Mine Rehabilitation	*Corymbia maculata* *Eucalyptus albens*	14.9
	White Box Grey Box Variant	*Eucalyptus albens x moluccana*	1.6
3485	Moderate	-	7.3
4081	Moderate	-	1.8
4089	Moderate	*Eucalyptus melliodora*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	-	1.5
Total habitat with foraging resources (as per recovery plan)			**80.3**
Other associated PCTs/condition zones			**126.9**
Area within Important Habitat Mapping			**0**
TOTAL			**207.2**

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population

The *population* of the regent honeyeater has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA, though four records occur immediately south with the most recent from April 2002 from the Warkworth area. The HVO North Action is predicted to result in the loss of approximately 80.3 ha of vegetation containing key foraging species across the HVO North BIAA as per the National Recovery Plan for the species (DoE 2016) being mature yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), young spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*). 126.9 ha of associated PCTs and condition zones habitat occurs across the HVO North BIAA. No nesting habitat or behaviour was recorded during the surveys undertaken in the HVO North BIAA.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action will lead to a decrease in the size of the *population* of regent honeyeater.

- reduce the area of occupancy of the species

The regent honeyeater has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA but has been occasionally recorded in the Warkworth locality. Figure 1 in the National Recovery Plan (DoE 2016) notes that the HVO North BIAA is within an area where the species is "likely to occur". However, despite extensive surveys during key potential foraging periods, the regent honeyeater has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA, with the latest record from the local area was recorded 20 years ago. Important Habitat Mapping for the regent honeyeater (published by the NSW DPE) occurs approximately 20 km to the southeast of the most southerly point of the BIAA. This mapping is published to assist assessments under the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme to determine where credits for the species are calculated. The Important Habitat Mapping for the regent honeyeater does not occur on or near the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 80.3 ha of vegetation in the HVO North BIAA containing spotted gum, yellow box and mistletoe foraging resources for the species and up to 126.9 ha of other associated PCTs and condition zones. The HVO North Action will result in a minor reduction of the potential area of occupancy for the regent honeyeater in the HVO North BIAA, however this is unlikely to substantially reduce the area of known occupancy in the wider locality or region.

- fragment an existing population into two or more populations

The population of the regent honeyeater has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA and has only been occasionally recorded in the wider locality. As some habitat containing key feed trees will be removed as part of the HVO North Action, the level of fragmentation will increase for this species in the locality. However, given the highly dispersive nature of the species and the extensive areas of suitable and known foraging habitat in the surrounding area, it is unlikely that the HVO North Action would create a significant change to the species' dispersal capacity or create a significant barrier the movement of the species that would result in the existing population being fragmented.

It is unlikely that the HVO North Action would result in the fragmentation of the existing *population* into two or more populations.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

Habitat critical to the survival of the regent honeyeater includes any breeding or foraging areas where the species is likely to occur and any newly discovered breeding or foraging locations (DoE 2016). The National Recovery Plan for the species (DoE 2016) indicates that the Hunter region is a key breeding area for the species. The regent honeyeater is also known to occur in the lower Hunter region (around Cessnock and Kurri Kurri) to utilise foraging resources in the winter months. These sites are located approximately 45 km from the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North and South BIAA contain vegetation comprising areas of mature yellow box, planted spotted gum and mistletoe which are key feed species for the regent honeyeater (DoE 2016). The HVO North Action will result in the loss of approximately 80.3 ha of this habitat, along with 126.9 ha of habitat associated the other PCTs and condition zones. The species has not been recorded breeding in the HVO North BIAA or the wider locality despite extensive surveys.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to substantially adversely affect habitat that is critical to the survival of the species.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of a population

The regent honeyeater mainly breeds in three key sites in NSW being the Bundarra-Barraba area, the Capertee Valley, and the Lower Hunter Valley (DoE 2016). Other breeding areas are known in the Pilliga woodlands and the Mudgee-Wollar areas of NSW. The regent honeyeater has not been recorded in the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North Action is not expected to disrupt the breeding cycle of the *population* of regent honeyeater.

- modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

The HVO North Action will involve the removal of up to approximately 80.3 ha of vegetation that contains areas of key feed species for the regent honeyeater, including yellow box, spotted gum and mistletoe. While the areas of yellow box woodland contain mature canopy trees, large areas of other woodland and forest vegetation are planted and reasonably young. The wider locality supports large areas of habitat that contain suitable woodland and forest vegetation that would provide potential habitat for this species, including those which occur in the nearby Wollemi National Park.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action would modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the regent honeyeater would decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a critically endangered or endangered species becoming established in the endangered or critically endangered species' habitat

According to the National Recovery Plan (DoE 2016) the regent honeyeater faces increased competition from larger, more aggressive nectarivores, such as the noisy friarbird (*Philemon corniculatus*), red wattlebird (*Anthochaera carunculata*) and the noisy miner (*Manorina melanocephala*). Aggressive exclusion of birds from potential woodland and forest habitat by over-abundant noisy miners was listed as a key threatening process under the EPBC Act in May 2014.

Surveys of the HVO North BIAA indicate that noisy minors are already established in this area. The HVO North Action is not expected to result in an increase in additional invasive species that are harmful to the regent honeyeater becoming further established in the species' habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

No diseases are directly attributed to the decline in the regent honeyeater population. The HVO North Action is not expected to introduce any disease that may cause the regent honeyeater to decline.

- interfere with the recovery of the species

The National Recovery Plan for the Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*) (DoE 2016) has been prepared for this species. Any impacts to known habitat for the regent honeyeater will likely contravene the objectives of the recovery plan. The regent honeyeater has not been recorded within the HVO North BIAA, however potential foraging habitat has been identified.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action will substantially interfere with the recovery of the regent honeyeater. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on the population of the regent honeyeater. Although the HVO North BIAA provides potential foraging habitat for this species, the site is not known to support the species.

Spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*)

In this case, a *population* means:

- a geographically distinct regional population, or collection of local populations; or
- a regional population, or collection of local populations, that occurs within a particular bioregion.

The spotted-tailed quoll was recorded during targeted surveys on one remote camera within the HVO North BIAA (refer to **Figure 3.2**). The camera recorded the spotted-tailed quoll over two nights, on 9 June and 24 June 2020 within bulloak forest located 200 m southeast of Lemington Road, and approximately 2.7 km north of the Hunter River. Two recent (2018) records of the spotted-tailed quoll occur approximately 8.5 km to the west of the HVO North BIAA along the Golden Highway (DPE 2024a). An individual was recorded in January 2022 along Glennies Creek following monitoring at Ashton Coal Mine approximately 3 km east of the HVO North BIAA (Umwelt 2022).

Further remote camera surveys undertaken specifically in the mine rehabilitation in 2023 at HVO did not record the species occurring in these habitats, however the species is known to occur frequently around the Mt Owen Complex to the north of HVO where den sites have also been recorded.

According to the National Recovery Plan for the spotted-tailed quoll (DELWP 2016), it is considered that this species has declined by 50–90%. Home range estimates vary considerably according to location and habitat quality, however females have been known to occupy home ranges up to 1,515 ha and males up to 5,512 ha, and both sexes usually traverse their ranges along densely vegetated creek lines. Extant populations are highly fragmented and declining. The geographic distribution of the species is contracting and its subpopulations are becoming increasingly fragmented.

The vast majority of records occurring in the region (to the northeast of the HVO North BIAA near the Mt Owen Complex) are considered to be part of a regional population centred on the Barrington Tops southern and western footslopes. Members of this population have been recorded regularly at the Mt Owen Complex during fauna monitoring, with the species recorded annually between 1994 and 2021 (except 1998, 1999, 2005 and 2015–2018) in Ravensworth State Forest and surrounding woodland and forest communities, including mine rehabilitation (Forest Fauna Surveys 2021). The Barrington Tops is listed as an 'important population' in the National Recovery Plan for the Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) (DELWP 2016) due to the area containing a population stronghold and its importance to researching the species.

The species is only infrequently recorded south of the Hunter River between the Hunter River and Wollemi National Park and any records in this locality (Warkworth and Jerrys Plains) are likely individuals moving occasionally to the valley floor from higher quality connected habitats in the National Park. The species was recorded in 2013 in vegetation at the United Coal Mine and a record from 2019 occurs near Jerrys Plains. The Hunter River may serve as a geographical barrier between the regional population associated with the southern and western footslopes of the Barrington Tops with records south of the Hunter River likely individuals moving from the Wollemi National Park. Both populations are likely to constitute a population as defined above.

Table B.11 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat, being predominantly woodland and forest habitat and riparian movement habitat. Under the BAM, the spotted-tailed quoll is an ecosystem credit species and all offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Table B.11 Spotted-tailed Quoll Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Cooba Woodland	62.0
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4015	*Moderate*	3.4
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
	Cooba Woodland	0.1
Total Woodland and Forest Habitat		**298.8**
Total Riparian Movement Habitat		**10.1**
Total Denning Habitat		**0.0**

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population

The spotted-tailed quoll has been recorded utilising habitat southeast of Lemington Road within the HVO North BIAA and has also frequently been recorded in the nearby Mt Owen Complex to the northeast. Few records occur south of the Hunter River. All of the woodland and forested vegetation communities within the HVO North BIAA is likely to provide foraging or dispersal habitat for the spotted-tailed quoll. The HVO North BIAA is not known to contain den or breeding sites for the species, and none were recorded during extensive habitat surveys.

The HVO North Action will result in the total loss of up to approximately 298.8 ha woodland habitat in the HVO North BIAA that provides for the movement and foraging of the species. Of key importance are riparian zones which the species is known to use as movement corridors. The HVO North Action may impact up to approximately 10.1 ha of riparian woodland habitat across the HVO North BIAA. The HVO North Action will result in a reduction in the area of habitat available to the species in the local area and in the home range of the individuals occurring in the wider region.

Approximately 86,000 ha of woodland habitat is available to the Barrington Tops (southern and western footslopes) regional population of the spotted-tailed quoll. Wollemi National Park contains over 500,000 ha of suitable habitat, however this is connected to other substantial areas of wooded and forested habitat in the wider region. The reduction of 308.9 ha of movement and foraging habitat represents 0.06% of available woodland habitat for the regional population, and is considered minor.

The proposed reduction in habitat associated with the HVO North Action is considered unlikely to result in a long-term decrease in the size of the Barrington Tops (southern and western footslopes) regional population or individuals associated with a population occurring in Wollemi National Park.

- reduce the area of occupancy of the species

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 308.9 ha of woodland habitat (including riparian woodland habitat) which provides for the movement and foraging of the species, however no denning or breeding sites have been recorded in the HVO North BIAA. The majority of the impacts associated with the HVO North Action are related to the extensive areas of derived native grassland habitats which are not likely to be permanently occupied by the species.

The reduction of up to 308.9 ha of known movement and foraging habitat for the species constitutes a small reduction in the area of occupancy for the Barrington Tops regional population of the species (0.06%). The impact to any populations associated with Wollemi National Park and its surrounds is considered to be negligible.

- fragment an existing population into two or more populations

A local population of spotted-tailed quoll occurs within and around the HVO North BIAA, however the regional population of the species identified as the Barrington Tops (southern and western) footslopes encompasses an area of some 1,800 km^2.

The HVO North Action will contribute to the further fragmentation of habitat for the species in the local area, however the Barrington Tops regional population of the species is not expected to be fragmented into two or more populations as a result of the HVO North Action. The HVO North Action will result in the removal of up to 308.9 ha of potential movement habitat, however linkages to the northeast portion of the population will remain in tracts of woodland vegetation around the western side of the HVO North BIAA, and along the riparian corridor of the Hunter River to the south.

It is considered that the HVO North Action may result in a reduction in the current habitat corridors used by the local population of spotted-tailed quoll in the locality, however the regional populations associated with the Barrington Tops and Wollemi National Park are not expected to be fragmented into two or more populations as a result of the HVO North Action.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

The habitat critical to the survival of the spotted-tailed quoll includes large patches of forest with adequate denning resources and relatively high densities of medium-sizes mammalian prey (DELWP 2016). The threshold densities of these critical habitat components to support quoll populations are currently unknown meaning that the critical habitat to the survival of the species is not possible to define (DELWP 2016). Therefore, all habitats within the species current distribution that are known to be occupied are considered important.

The spotted-tailed quoll was recorded within the HVO North BIAA in 2020, and the species is likely to use this habitat for dispersal and foraging. Important habitat is present in the wider region, including den sites, known breeding habitat and high quality foraging habitat associated with the Ravensworth State Forest (to the northeast). The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 308.9 ha of moderate quality habitat.

While the HVO North Action will impact known dispersal and foraging habitat for the species, the HVO North BIAA does not contain areas of large patches of forest with adequate denning resources and relatively high densities of medium-sizes mammalian prey. Therefore, the HVO North Action is unlikely to adversely affect habitat that is critical to the survival of the species.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of a population

The spotted-tailed quoll generally dens in rock shelters, small caves, hollow logs or tree hollows and utilises numerous dens within its home range. It is a highly mobile species and there are numerous records of overnight movements of several kilometres. Known den sites occur in Ravensworth State Forest to the northeast and in the nearby Mt Owen Complex mine rehabilitation.

The species has not been recorded breeding within the HVO North BIAA, and potential den sites have not been recorded during surveys. There is no evidence to suggest that breeding has occurred within the HVO North BIAA. Known breeding habitat for the species will not be impacted by the HVO North Action.

While the HVO North Action is likely to result in local impacts to foraging and dispersal habitat for the species in proximity to the HVO North BIAA, the breeding cycle of the Barrington (southern and western footslopes) population or Wollemi National Park population of the spotted-tailed quoll is unlikely to be adversely affected.

- modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

According to the National Recovery Plan for the species (DELWP 2016) it is considered that this species has declined by 50–90% and extant populations are highly fragmented and declining. The HVO North Action will involve the removal of up to approximately 308.9 ha of habitat for the species. The central Hunter supports other areas of habitat that contain suitable habitat for the species, however the species has not been recorded in many of these areas.

The HVO North Action will not modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species as a whole is likely to decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a critically endangered or endangered species becoming established in the endangered or critically endangered species' habitat

The HVO North Action is not expected to result in invasive species that are harmful to the spotted-tailed quoll becoming established in the species habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

The spotted-tailed quoll is not known to be affected by diseases that are causing the species to decline. Therefore, the HVO North Action is not likely to result in the introduction of disease.

- interfere with the recovery of the species

The following recovery plan has been prepared:

- National Recovery Plan for the Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) (DELWP 2016).

Any impacts to known habitat for the spotted-tailed quoll will likely contravene the objectives of the recovery plan. This species has recently been recorded within the HVO North BIAA twice in June 2020, and foraging habitat has been identified as part of a wider home range. The HVO North Action will result in the reduction of movement habitat for the species, though alternative movement corridors between known important habitat to the northeast will remain to the west and south of the HVO North BIAA.

The loss of habitat connectivity and foraging habitat associated with the HVO North Action is unlikely to significantly interfere with the recovery of the species. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on the Barrington Tops (southern and western footslopes) *population* or Wollemi National Park *population* of the spotted-tailed quoll.

Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)

In this case, a *population* means:

- a geographically distinct regional population, or collection of local populations; or
- a regional population, or collection of local populations, that occurs within a particular bioregion.

Numerous records of the large-eared pied bat occur in the locality, ranging from 1999 to 2015 (Forest Fauna Surveys 2021, DPE 2025a). The species was recorded using echolocation surveys within and immediately adjacent the HVO North BIAA in March 2020 (refer to **Figure 3.2)**. Species calls were identified as 'definite' in two locations in riparian vegetation along the Hunter River, and one 'probable' call was recorded near a dam between Comleroi Road and Wollombi Brook. All woodland and forest vegetation within the HVO North BIAA is expected to provide potential foraging habitat for this species, however no roosting or breeding habitat for this cave-dependant species has been identified.

The majority of records of the species in the locality occur within several kilometres of clifflines or caves. Records within the Hunter Valley generally occur near the escarpment habitat associated with Yengo and Wollemi National Parks. No evidence exists of the large-eared pied bat roosting in tree hollows (DERM 2011). The calls recorded during 2020 surveys were likely from individuals using the Hunter River and Wollombi Brook as flyways.

Table B.12 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered **potential foraging habitat only**. According to the Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2023) the species *"has been recorded foraging in fertile (relative to surrounding landscape) valleys and plains, as well as areas with moderately tall to taller trees in woodland along water courses and upper slopes and crests of ranges . . . The majority of records are from canopied habitat, suggesting a sensitivity to clearing, although narrow connecting riparian strips in otherwise cleared habitat are sometimes quite heavily used (DERM 2011)"*.

Under the BAM, the large-eared pied bat requires species credits for roosting/breeding habitat only and within 2 km of these features. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas of confirmed roosting or breeding habitat under the BAM.

Table B.12 Large-eared Pied Bat Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Potential Woodland and Forest Foraging Habitat		**228.5**
Confirmed Roosting/Breeding Habitat		**0.0**

An action has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on endangered species if it does, will, or is likely to:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population of a species

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 228.5 ha of potential forest and woodland foraging habitat for the species, however, will not impact any cliffline or escarpment habitat that could be used as roosting or breeding habitat.

It is unlikely that the HVO North Action will lead to a long-term decrease in the size of the *population* of this species.

- reduce the area of occupancy of the species

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 228.5 ha of forest and woodland foraging habitat for the species, however, will not impact any cliffline or escarpment habitat that could be used as roosting habitat. The large-eared pied bat has been recorded utilising riparian areas within the HVO North BIAA, likely as flyways during foraging.

It is unlikely that the HVO North Action will reduce the area of occupancy of this species.

- fragment an existing population into two or more populations

It is unlikely that the HVO North Action will fragment an existing population into two or more populations of this highly mobile species given that the potential habitat within the HVO North BIAA is already highly fragmented and the majority of the habitat present is derived native grasslands which is unlikely to be important to the large-eared pied bat.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

The National Recovery Plan for the large-eared pied bat (DERM 2011) states that habitat critical for the survival of the species requires the presence of diurnal roosts and shelter habitat, usually in the form of sandstone cliffs and adjacent fertile woodland valley foraging habitat. The habitat in the HVO North BIAA does not contain overhanging clifflines with adjacent fertile woodland valley habitat.

The HVO North BIAA is not considered to contain critical habitat for the large-eared pied bat and consequently the HVO North Action is not expected to adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of this species.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of a population

No breeding populations or roosting habitat for this species been recorded to occur in the HVO North BIAA.

The HVO North Action is not expected to disrupt the breeding cycle of a *population* of this species.

- modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

Given the lack of preferred habitat for the species in the HVO North BIAA, the HVO North Action will not modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that this species area is likely to decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the endangered species' habitat

The HVO North Action is unlikely to result in an invasive species that is harmful to the large-eared pied bat becoming established in this species habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

The HVO North Action is unlikely to introduce disease that may cause the large-eared pied bat to decline.

- interfere substantially with the recovery of the species

The Recovery Plan for the Large-eared Pied Bat (DERM 2011) has an overall objective to ensure the persistence of viable populations of the species throughout its geographic range.

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 228.5 ha of potential forest and woodland foraging habitat. No significant effect on the recovery of the large-eared pied bat is expected to occur as a result of the HVO North Action. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on the large-eared pied bat due to the lack of suitable roosting and cliffline habitat in the HVO North BIAA.

Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)

In this case, a population means:

- a geographically distinct regional population, or collection of local populations; or
- a regional population, or collection of local populations, that occurs within a particular bioregion.

The Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) has only recently been described as a separate species, as it was previously thought to be a subpopulation of the striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*). There is limited information available regarding the ecology of the Hunter Valley delma specifically, with most of the species' ecological characteristics being assumed to be similar to the closely related striped legless lizard (DCCEEW 2024c).

The Hunter Valley delma occurs in secondary native grassland which remains after the removal of woody canopy vegetation. Native grassland with a diverse ground cover layer is likely to be important for the species as such habitat would provide shelter from predators and habitat for foraging and breeding. However, it has also been found in disturbed environments, including heavily disturbed grazing land with no natural surface refugia (DCCEEW 2024c).

The sites where the species has been detected include rehabilitated mine sites and pastoral land used for cattle grazing. It has not been identified to occur in any protected areas (DCCEEW 2024c).

The Hunter Valley delma is known almost entirely from a 25 km wide (60 km2 area) corridor in the Hunter Valley NSW, between Maitland and Muswellbrook. Limited information is available regarding the species' dispersal capabilities. It has been observed crossing roads during the day and sheltering under cow pats in otherwise featureless agricultural land, which suggests it has capacity to disperse across disturbed environments. As such, it is considered likely that the occurrence of the species in the Hunter Valley is likely to comprise a single connected subpopulation (DCCEEW 2024c).

A further specimen has been identified from the Liverpool plains, approximately 80 km north-west of Muswellbrook. It is not clear whether the records within the Hunter Valley and the Liverpool Plains are connected, or whether they are from separate subpopulations (DCCEEW 2024c).

All populations of the Hunter Valley delma are important for conservation across its range (DCCEEW 2024c).

The HVO North BIAA provides habitat in the form of native grassland, mine rehabilitation and sparse canopy grassy woodlands aligning broadly with the habitat vegetative preference of *Delma vescolineata*. **Table B.13** below outlines the associated PCTs for *Delma vescolineata* as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential foraging habitat. It also identifies whether *Delma vescolineata* was identified during targeted surveys in each zone.

Table B.13 Hunter Valley Delma Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Recorded in Habitat?	Area (ha)
3431	*Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	Yes	230.5
	Scattered Regeneration	Yes	59.9
	Thinned Woodland	Yes	10.7
4089	*Derived Native Grassland*	Yes	4.4
Total Remnant Habitat			**305.5**
Mine Rehabilitation	*Exotic grassland*	Yes	430.7
	Cooba Woodland	Yes	211.8
Total Mine Rehabilitation Habitat			**642.5**
		Overall total	**948.0**

An action has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on threatened species if it does, will, or is likely to:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population.

The HVO North Action area occurs within the known range of the Hunter Valley delma, and the species has been confirmed to be present on site during targeted surveys. The total size of the population of Hunter Valley delma within the HVO North BIAA is unknown.

There is no information available regarding the size of the Hunter Valley population as a population census has not yet been completed (DCCEEW 2024c). As such, under the precautionary principle, the total population size of the species is assumed to be small.

The HVO North Action may result in impacts to the Hunter Valley delma, through potential mortality during clearing and in the long term due to habitat loss.

Overall, it is considered possible that the HVO North Action could lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population.

- **reduce the area of occupancy of a population**

The Hunter Valley delma has a limited known range. The species' Conservation Advice estimates that the species has a total area of occupancy of 48 km^2 (DCCEEW 2024c). The total area of impact within the HVO North BIAA is 305.5 ha of remnant habitat and 642.5 ha of disturbed mine rehabilitation habitat. It is unlikely the area of occupancy calculated in the Conservation Advice included mine rehabilitation and therefore the impact on 305.5 ha of remnant habitat represents 6.3% of the total area of occupancy of the species.

Overall, the HVO North Action is considered likely to reduce the area of occupancy of the species.

- **fragment an existing population into two or more populations**

The Hunter Valley population of the Hunter Valley delma is considered thought to occur as a single connected subpopulation. While information regarding dispersal capabilities is limited, it is thought that the species has some capacity to cross disturbed landscapes (DCCEEW 2024c).

The potential habitat which would be impacted within the HVO North BIAA is already largely fragmented and degraded as a result of historic and current land use practices. The species potential occurrence in mine rehabilitation indicates individuals may traverse highly disturbed habitats. The HVO North BIAA is may form important landscape connectivity linkages between areas of important habitat for the Hunter Valley delma, however other areas of suitable habitat will remain in the locality.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to fragment an existing population into two or more populations.

- **adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species**

The species' Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2024c) notes that habitat critical to the survival of the species is not well understood, but likely includes *"the secondary native grassland of the Hunter Valley between Maitland and Muswellbrook where the species is known to occur"*. The Conservation Advice further notes that the Hunter Valley delma relies on *"a diverse grass ground cover layer, as this habitat provides the species with refuge from predators, and habitat for foraging and breeding"*.

The HVO North Action will impact 305.5 ha of secondary native grasslands and open woodland habitat within the BIAA, which consists of 234.9 ha of derived native grasslands, and 70.6 ha of disturbed woodland communities. The mine rehabilitation habitat on site is highly exotic and disturbed and does not contain diverse or majority native groundcover species. This habitat is not likely to be considered habitat critical for the survival of the species. The native remnant habitat to be impacted by the HVO North BIAA is considered more likely to constitute habitat critical to the survival of the species.

The HVO North Action is likely to adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of the species.

- **disrupt the breeding cycle of a population**

Limited information is available regarding the Hunter Valley delma's breeding ecology. Based on information available for the closely related striped legless lizard, adult females are thought to lay up to two eggs annually in December–January under rocks and in soil cavities. Further, native grasslands with a diverse ground layer are thought to provide important habitat for breeding (DCCEEW 2024c).

The Hunter Valley delma was confirmed to be present within the BIAA during targeted species surveys. It is considered likely that the species breeds within habitat within the BIAAs due to the presence of a known population of the species.

The HVO North Action is likely to disrupt the breeding cycle of a population of the species.

- **modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability of or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline**

The Hunter Valley delma has a restricted distribution, with an estimated area of occupancy of 48 km^2. The species has been identified in disturbed environments in the Hunter Valley, including rehabilitated mine sites and areas used for cattle grazing. It has not been identified to occur in any protected areas. The Conservation Advice notes that the area in which most records for the Hunter Valley delma occur is extensively disturbed and fragmented by open cut coal mines. Habitat clearing and degradation due to mining is identified as a key threat in the species' Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2024c).

The HVO North Action has potential to impact 6.3% of the species' total area of occupancy. This is considered to represent a substantial impact to a species with a highly restricted distribution. Further, the consequences of this impact upon the species are exacerbated by:

The cumulative impacts of concurrent mining and agricultural development which are occurring within the species' range in the Hunter Valley. The fact that the species is not known to occur in any protected areas, increasing its vulnerability to impacts from development.

It is therefore considered possible that the HVO North Action may modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.

- **result in invasive species that are harmful to a critically endangered or endangered species becoming established in the endangered or critically endangered species' habitat**

The Conservation Advice identifies predation by invasive species including feral cats (*Felis catus*), dogs (*Canis familiaris*) and European red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) as a likely threat to the Hunter Valley delma (DCCEEW 2024c). This is considered to be an existing landscape-scale threat within the Hunter Valley. It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action would exacerbate this threat.

- **introduce disease that may cause the species to decline**

Disease is not identified as a threat to the Hunter Valley delma in the species' Conservation Advice, suggesting that there is unlikely to be a known disease which poses a threat to the species. It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action would introduce disease that may cause the species to decline.

- **interfere substantially with the recovery of the species**

While there is no Recovery Plan in force for the Hunter Valley delma, the species' Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2024c) contains a series of conservation and recovery actions for the species. Of relevance to this HVO North Action is the following action:

- Protect and prevent impacts to habitat for the species in the planning, construction and post construction phases of mining and other developments. Important components of this action are:
- Identify key sites to protect and maintain suitable habitat to ensure the species' viability.
- Protect both small and large habitat patches, and ensure connectivity is maintained through appropriate management and/or revegetation of suitable habitat.
- Encourage landholders to enter land management agreements, particularly in-perpetuity covenants, which promote the protection and maintenance of habitat for the species.
- Educate stakeholders on their obligations under the EPBC Act to avoid significant impacts to the Hunter Valley delma.

Due to the lack of knowledge regarding the species' ecology, it is possible that the HVO North Action may interfere with the recovery of the species. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **likely** to result in a significant impact to the Hunter Valley delma due to the removal of 305.5 ha of remnant native grassland and open woodland habitat and 642.5 ha of mine rehabilitation habitat confirmed to be occupied by the species. This loss of native remnant habitat constitutes 6.3% of the total area of occupancy for the species and impacts to habitat critical to the species survival.

B.3 Vulnerable Species

The following vulnerable species are considered in this assessment:

- Grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- White-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- Brown treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*).

Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)

In the case of a vulnerable species, an *important population* is a population that is necessary for a species' long-term survival and recovery. This may include populations that are:

- key source populations either for breeding or dispersal; or
- populations that are necessary for maintaining genetic diversity, and/or
- populations that are near the limit of the species range.

The grey-headed flying-fox has been previously recorded in several locations near the HVO North BIAA, with the closest and most recent (2019) occurring in woodland near the Golden Highway. Several thousand individuals of the grey-headed flying fox were recorded during surveys in the nearby Mt Owen Complex in 2016, however no roost sites were recorded. No grey-headed flying foxes camp sites (breeding habitat) have been identified within the HVO North BIAA and are not expected to occur.

The three nearest substantial camp sites of the grey-headed flying fox to the HVO North BIAA is at Burdekin Park, Singleton and the Hunter River at Singleton (approximately 25 km) and at Muswellbrook (approximately 35 km) (DCCEEW 2023b). The population estimate for the grey-headed flying-fox population at Burdekin Park was between 500 and 2,499 individuals during the most recent survey in February 2020 in 2022, the population at the Hunter River in Singleton was estimated at between 16000 and 49,990 in February 2022, and the population at Muswellbrook estimated to be between 1 and 499 individuals during the most recent survey in February 2020 (DCCEEW 2023b). Foraging individuals recorded in the locality are likely to be from these camp sites. The Muswellbrook camp and Singleton Hunter River camp is noted in the National Flying-Fox Monitoring Viewer as a nationally important grey-headed flying-fox camp.

According to the Referral Guideline for Management Actions in Grey-headed and Spectacled Flying-Fox Camps (DoE 2015a) nationally important grey-headed flying-fox camps are recognised as any camps that have contained 10,000 individuals or greater in the last 10 years or have been occupied by 2,500 individuals or greater permanently or seasonally every year for the last 10 years. The HVO North BIAA does not contain a grey-headed flying-fox camp.

Table B.14 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential foraging habitat only. Under the BAM, the grey-headed flying-fox requires species credits for breeding camps only. The HVO North BIAA does not contain any areas of known or historic flying-fox camps for this species.

Table B.14 Grey-headed Flying-fox Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Foraging Habitat		**243.4**
Total Breeding Camps		**0.0**

An action has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on threatened species if it does, will, or is likely to:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of a species

Given that there is not considered to be an *important population* of the grey-headed flying-fox present within the HVO North BIAA, the HVO North Action will not lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an *important population* of this species.

- reduce the area of occupancy of an important population

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 243.4 ha of potential foraging habitat for grey-headed flying-fox. The majority of this area contains a relatively low abundance of eucalypt species with bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*). However, since the HVO North BIAA does not contain an *important population* of the grey-headed flying-fox, the HVO North Action will not reduce the area of occupancy of an *important population* of this species.

- fragment an existing important population into two or more populations

The HVO North BIAA does not contain an *important population* of the grey-headed flying-fox, therefore the HVO North Action will not result in the fragmentation of an *important population* of this species.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

According to the National Recovery Plan for the Grey-headed Flying-fox (DAWE 2021b), foraging habitat that contains important winter and spring flowering vegetation is considered habitat critical to the survival of the species. Relevant to the HVO North BIAA, this includes vegetation that contains *Eucalyptus tereticornis, E. crebra, E. melliodora, Corymbia maculata* and *Grevillea robusta*.

The HVO North BIAA comprises approximately 243.4 ha of suitable habitat that contains the above foraging species. However, given that this species has not been recorded in the HVO North BIAA and the relatively small area of suitable habitat when compared to the surrounding region, it is considered that the HVO North Action is unlikely to affect foraging habitat critical to the survival of the species.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population

No grey-headed flying-fox breeding populations or camps have been identified in the HVO North BIAA. The HVO North Action is not expected to disrupt the breeding cycle of an *important population* of this species.

- modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 243.4 ha of potential foraging habitat for grey-headed flying-fox. Given the small area of potential foraging habitat to be removed, the substantial area of high quality remnant vegetation in the nearby Wollemi National Park and high mobility of the species, the HVO North BIAA is unlikely to be depended upon by local grey-headed flying-fox colonies.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action will modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the grey-headed flying-fox would decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the vulnerable species' habitat

The HVO North Action is not expected to result in invasive species that are harmful to the grey-headed flying-fox becoming established in the species habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

No diseases that may cause the grey-headed flying-fox to decline are likely to be introduced as a result of the HVO North Action.

- interfere substantially with the recovery of the species.

The key objectives of the National Recovery Plan for the Grey-headed Flying-fox (DAWE 2021b) include:

- improving the national population trend
- identifying, protecting and increasing key foraging and roosting habitat
- improve the community's capacity to coexist with flying-foxes; and increase awareness about flying-foxes, the threats they face and the important ecosystem services they provide as seed dispersers and pollinators.

No significant effect on the recovery of the grey-headed flying-fox is expected to occur as a result of the HVO North Action as the potential areas of foraging habitat that will be impacted are not expected to impact an *important population* of this species. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on the grey-headed flying-fox due to the lack of records of the species utilising the habitats of the HVO North BIAA, the highly disturbed nature of the potential foraging habitat within the HVO North BIAA, the lack of breeding camps and the extent of habitat in the wider region.

White throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

In the case of a vulnerable species, an *important population* is a population that is necessary for a species' long-term survival and recovery. This may include populations that are:

- key source populations either for breeding or dispersal; or
- populations that are necessary for maintaining genetic diversity, and/or
- populations that are near the limit of the species range.

The white-throated needletail is widespread in eastern and south-eastern Australia as part of their non-breeding territory. In eastern Australia, it is recorded in all coastal regions of Queensland and NSW, extending inland to the western slopes of the Great Divide and occasionally onto the adjacent inland plains. The species is almost exclusively aerial, from heights of less than 1 m up to more than 1000 m above the ground. White-throated needletails almost always forage aerially, at heights up to 'cloud level', above a wide variety of habitats ranging from heavily treed forests to open habitats, such as farmland, heathland or mudflats.

Important habitat for the species is outlined in the Draft Referral Guideline for 14 Birds Listed as Migratory Species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015b) and states that large tracts of native vegetation, particularly forest, may be a key habitat requirement for species. They are found to roost in tree hollows in tall trees on ridge-tops, on bark or rock faces. The white-throated needletail has been recorded with low accuracy in the north-eastern section of the HVO North BIAA in 2000, with one record approximately 1.5 km to the east near Glennies Creek Road (2001) and two within 5 km near the Golden Highway (2014) (DPE 2024a). The species was not recorded during the surveys undertaken for this assessment.

The species occurrence in the Hunter Valley does not represent a population near the limit of the species range, a key source population for breeding or dispersal or necessary for genetic diversity. Therefore, it is unlikely that an *important population* of white-throated needletail occurs in the HVO North BIAA.

Table B.15 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. White-throated needletail is an ecosystem credit species under the BAM and any offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Table B.15 White-throated Needletail Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Bulloak Variant	38.0
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4015	*Moderate*	3.4
4081	*Moderate*	1.8
4089	*Moderate*	5.0
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Woodland and Forest Habitat		**248.5**
Total Breeding Habitat		**0.0**

An action has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on threatened species if it does, will, or is likely to:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of a species

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 248.5 ha of woodland and forest habitat that may be utilised by the white-throated needletail for foraging. The species breeds in the northern hemisphere so no breeding habitat will be impacted. However, the HVO North BIAA is not likely to support an important population of the species and therefore the HVO North Action will not lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of the white-throated needletail.

- reduce the area of occupancy of an important population.

The area of occupancy of the white-throated needletail in Australia has been estimated at 126 200 km^2 (DoE 2015b). The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to 248.5 ha in the HVO North BIAA which is approximately 0.002% of the area of occupancy of the species. This is unlikely to reduce the area of occupancy for an important population of the species.

- fragment an existing important population into two or more populations.

The HVO North BIAA does not contain an *important population* of the white-throated needletail, therefore the HVO North Action will not result in the fragmentation of an *important population* of this species.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

Important habitat for the species is outlined in the Draft Referral Guideline for 14 Birds Listed as Migratory Species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015b) and states that large tracts of native vegetation, particularly forest, may be a key habitat requirement for species. They are found to roost in tree hollows in tall trees on ridge-tops, on bark or rock faces. The HVO North BIAA comprises approximately 250.4 ha of woodland and forest habitat with few hollow resources. The species has not been recorded utilising the habitats of the HVO North BIAA and therefore the HVO North Action is unlikely to affect habitat critical to the survival of the species.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population

The white-throated needletail does not breed in Australia. The HVO North Action will not disrupt the breeding cycle of an *important population* of this species.

- modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

The HVO North Action will result in the loss of up to approximately 248.5 ha of potential foraging habitat for the white-throated needletail. Given the small area of potential foraging habitat to be removed, the substantial area of high quality remnant vegetation in the nearby Wollemi National Park and high mobility of the species, the HVO North BIAA is unlikely to be depended upon by the species.

It is considered unlikely that the HVO North Action will modify, destroy, remove, isolate, or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the white-throated needletail would decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the vulnerable species' habitat

The HVO North Action is not expected to result in invasive species that are harmful to the white-throated needletail becoming established in the species habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

No diseases that may cause the white-throated needletail to decline are likely to be introduced as a result of the HVO North Action.

- interfere substantially with the recovery of the species

The Approved Conservation Advice (TSSC 2019) for the species includes the following conservation priorities for recovery:

- Work with governments in East Asia to minimise destruction of key breeding habitats.
- Important habitats in Australia are identified and protected.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to substantially interfere with the recovery of the white-throated needletail. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on the white-throated needletail due to the lack of records of the species utilising the habitats of the HVO North BIAA and the extent of habitat in the wider region.

Brown treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)

In the case of a vulnerable species, an *important population* is a population that is necessary for a species' long-term survival and recovery. This may include populations that are:

- key source populations either for breeding or dispersal; or
- populations that are necessary for maintaining genetic diversity, and/or
- populations that are near the limit of the species range.

The brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is widespread through south-eastern Australia, with its range extending from the Grampians in Victoria to the Bunya Mountains in Queensland, and extending west as far as Corowa, Wagga Wagga, Temora, Dubbo, Forbes and Inverell. Intergrades of the arid zone subspecies are likely to occur west of the dividing range.

The brown treecreeper (south-eastern) occupies dry open eucalyptus forests and woodland, predominantly in areas dominated by stringybarks or other rough barked eucalypts with an open native grassy understory. They are also known to occur in floodplain woodlands such as river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) assemblages, although this occurs predominantly in the upper Murray River. The subspecies is not usually found in dense or degraded woodlands or steep rocky hills.

Brown treecreepers (south-eastern) forage arboreally and on the ground, feeding on a variety of invertebrates, as well as on mugga ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) and paperbark nectar.

Brown treecreepers (south-eastern) require large hollow bearing living or dead trees to breed, and have higher reproductive success in habitat with low shrub density, medium ground cover and higher levels of foraging substrate and fallen timber.

Fragmentation is a critical threatening factor in the decline of the brown treecreeper (south-eastern), as their ability to cross habitat gaps is limited, and they are considered a largely sedentary species. Significant population density decline has been observed in remnant vegetation fragments smaller than 300 ha.

There are no recorded occurrences of the brown tree creeper (south-eastern) within the HVO North BIAA. There are five records of the subspecies within 700 m of the Action Area boundary; two on the banks of the Hunter River recorded in 2018, two adjacent to the Golden Highway recorded in 2004 and one to the east recorded in 2014. Due to the absence of records of the species within the HVO North BIAA, the HVO North BIAA is not considered to contain an *important population* of this species.

Table B.16 below outlines the associated PCTs for the species as per the BAM and the relevant condition zones that would be considered potential habitat. Brown treecreeper is an ecosystem credit species under the BAM and any offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Table B.16 Brown Treecreeper Associated PCTs and Suitable Condition Zones in the HVO North BIAA

PCT	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
3431	*Moderate*	100.0
	Plantation	47.4
	Thinned Woodland	11.3
	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	16.3
	Mine Rehabilitation	14.9
	White Box Grey Box Variant	1.6
3485	*Moderate*	7.3
4089	*Moderate*	5.1
	Low to Moderate	1.5
Total Woodland and Forest Habitat		**205.4**

An action has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on threatened species if it does, will, or is likely to:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of a species

The HVO North Action will impact on 205.4 ha of potential brown-treecreeper (south-eastern) woodland and forest habitat. There are limited records of the species occurring close to the HVO North BIAA, therefore it is unlikely that the HVO North BIAA support an important population of brown-treecreepers. The degraded nature of the woodland and forest communities in the HVO North BIAA will also reduce the likelihood of the species occupying the HVO North BIAA. It is unlikely that the loss of an area of this size would lead to a long-term decrease of the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) population.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of the brown treecreeper (south-eastern).

- reduce the area of occupancy of an important population

There are no records of the brown treecreeper within the HVO North BIAA, and as such it is unlikely that the HVO North BIAA would be habitat for an important population of brown treecreepers. The estimated area of occupancy for the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) across its range is 30,000 km^2. The area of potential brown treecreeper habitat that will be impacted by the HVO North Action is HVO North Actioned to be a maximum 205.4 ha, which would constitute 0.007% of the occupancy area.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to lead to a reduction in the area of occupancy of an important population of brown treecreepers (south-eastern).

- fragment an existing important population into two or more populations

The brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is a largely sedentary species, and is considered to be significantly impacted by habitat fragmentation. It is unlikely that the 205.4 ha of suitable brown treecreeper (south-eastern) habitat which will be impacted by the HVO North Action would serve as a significant movement corridor for the local population, therefore it is unlikely that its removal would fragment a local population of the species.

It is unlikely that the HVO North Action will fragment an existing important population or brown treecreepers (south-eastern) into two or more populations.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

As described in the consultation document (DCCEEW 2023d), the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is reliant on large or well-connected areas of dry open woodland or floodplain woodland with a grassy understory and ample foraging habitat. Although the HVO North Action may impact on areas which fit this general description, it is unlikely that the quality of the vegetation would be high enough to support a healthy population of this species.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of the brown treecreeper (south-eastern).

- disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population

As described in the consultation document (DCCEEW 2023d), the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is reliant on hollow bearing trees in areas with low shrub density, medium ground cover and high levels of foraging substrate and fallen timber. It is unlikely that any of the areas impacted by the HVO North Action would be of high enough quality to support the successful breeding of the brown treecreeper (south-eastern).

The HVO North Action is unlikely to disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population of brown treecreeper (south-eastern).

- modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

The brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is reliant on quality remnant vegetation for foraging and breeding. The removal of maximum of 205.4 ha of relatively disturbed habitat is likely to have a minimal impact on the population of brown treecreeper (south-eastern).

The HVO North Action is unlikely to modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) is likely to decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the vulnerable species' habitat

The HVO North Action is not expected to result in invasive species that are harmful to the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) becoming established in the species habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

No diseases that may cause the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) to decline are likely to be introduced as a result of the HVO North Action.

- interfere substantially with the recovery of the species

No recovery plan has been created for the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) to date. As there is not likely to be a significant population of brown treecreepers within the HVO North BIAA, removal of 205.4 ha of potential habitat will likely have very minimal impact on the overall recovery of the species. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on the brown treecreeper (south-eastern) due to the lack of records of the species utilising the habitats of the HVO North BIAA and the extent of habitat in the wider region.

B.4 Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)

In the case of a vulnerable species, an important population is a population that is necessary for a species' long-term survival and recovery. This may include populations that are:

- key source populations either for breeding or dispersal; or
- populations that are necessary for maintaining genetic diversity, and/or
- populations that are near the limit of the species range.

Latham's snipe is a migratory species which breeds in Japan and eastern Russia, and visits Australia during its non-breeding season. It typically arrives in northern Australia in late July to early August, then moves southwards along the coastline to south-eastern Australia between August and November. Few (if any) individuals of the species remain in northern Australia during summer. The species then departs from south-eastern Australia by late February to early March, travelling along the coast to northern Queensland, from where it departs by mid-April to its breeding grounds (DCCEEW 2024e).

While in Australia, the species is generally widely dispersed in low numbers. Latham's snipe inhabits a range of environments, most commonly being open freshwater wetlands with low dense vegetation, but also including habitat with saline or brackish water, modified or artificial wetlands, and areas close to human activity. Smaller numbers occur in drier habitat including open woodlands and high altitude grasslands or herblands, usually in proximity to surface water. The species may be found in a variety of vegetation types within these environments (DCCEEW 2024e).

Latham's snipe is omnivorous and feeds in soft mudflats or shallow water on plant matter and invertebrates during the early morning, evening and at night. It shelters during the day amongst dense inundated vegetation such as sedges, grasses, lignum, reeds and rushes (DCCEEW 2024e).

The species is known to occur in the locality. It has occasionally recorded during annual monitoring surveys of the nearby Mount Owen Complex. Previous records in the locality also occur at Lake Liddell in the north and near Wollombi Brook near Warkworth in the south. The BIAA contains areas of potential dam habitat for the species and small sections of the Hunter River.

Latham's snipe occurs as a single migratory population (DCCEEW 2024e). This population is therefore an important population of the species by default. However, the presence of individuals of Latham's snipe does not necessarily mean that a site supports important habitat for the species. Important habitat is a key concept for the assessment of migratory species. For Latham's snipe, a site constitutes important habitat if it supports at least 18 individuals of the species (DCCEEW 2024e).

Table B.17 below outlines aquatic habitat for the species. Latham's snipe is an ecosystem credit species under the BAM and any offsetting requirements are captured under the ecosystem credit assessment.

Table B.17 Latham's Snipe Aquatic Habitat in the HVO North BIAA

Habitat Type	Condition Zone	Area (ha)
Waterbodies	*Dams*	7.9
Total Aquatic Habitat		**7.9**

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a vulnerable species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of a species

The BIAA contains marginal habitat for the species in the form of dam habitat alongside sections of the Hunter River. Due to the marginal nature of habitat, it is unlikely that Latham's snipe would regularly utilise habitat within the HVO North BIAA. Further, while records of the species are known to exist in the locality, available records are for small numbers of individuals of the species.

The HVO North Action is unlikely to result in a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of Latham's snipe.

- reduce the area of occupancy of an important population

The HVO North BIAA contains 7.9 ha of marginal habitat in the form of farm dams and waterbodies. Given the species' high mobility and the availability of habitat in the wider region, loss of habitat in the BIAA is unlikely to reduce the area of occupancy of an important population of the species.

- fragment an existing important population into two or more populations

Latham's snipe is a highly mobile migratory species. Development within the HVO North BIAA will not fragment an existing population into two or more populations of the species.

- adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

Habitat critical to the survival of the species is defined in the species' Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2024e) as being sites that support at least 18 individuals of the species, and sites which have previously been identified as being internationally important for the species.

It is recognised that available habitat within the HVO North BIAA is of marginal quality for the species, consisting of dam habitat and sections of the Hunter River. The HVO North BIAA lacks habitat features favoured by the species, including low dense vegetation for roosting and shallow water for foraging. The BIAA does not contain habitat critical to the survival of the species.

Further, habitat critical to the survival of the species is not present in the wider locality adjacent to the BIAA. While Latham's snipe has been recorded in the locality, records of the species are for less than 18 individuals.

Overall, the HVO North Action will not adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of the species.

- disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population

Latham's snipe is a migratory species which breeds in Japan and eastern Russia and migrates to Australia during its non-breeding season. The HVO North Action will not disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population of the species.

- modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

The HVO North BIAA contains a small area (7.9 ha) of marginal habitat for the species. Important habitat is not present within the HVO North BIAA, nor in the wider locality surrounding the BIAA. Development associated with the HVO North Action will not modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline.

- result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the vulnerable species' habitat

The HVO North Action is not expected to result in invasive species that are harmful to Latham's snipe becoming established in the species habitat.

- introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

The HVO North Action is unlikely to introduce disease that may cause the species to decline.

- interfere substantially with the recovery of the species

The species' Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2024e) identifies conservation and recovery actions for the species. The key recovery outcome for the species is to ensure no further loss of habitat critical to the survival for the species throughout Australia, and to identify, protect and restore areas of habitat critical to the survival of the species. As the HVO North Action will not impact upon habitat critical to the survival of the species, the HVO North Action is considered unlikely to interfere substantially with the recovery of the species. The Action is not inconsistent with any relevant Threat Abatement Plans.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is unlikely to result in a significant impact on the Latham's snipe due to the highly mobile nature of the species, the marginal condition of the habitat and the availability of other quality habitat in the locality and region.

B.5 Migratory Species Listed under International Conventions

The following migratory species are considered in this assessment:

- Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)
- white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- rufous fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*).

All three species have been recorded in the locality.

The HVO North BIAA contain small areas of potential dam habitat and sections of the Hunter River which may be utilised by Latham's snipe. The white-throated needletail and fork-tailed swift are almost exclusively aerial species often recorded above wooded areas, some of which occur in the HVO North BIAA. While the rufous fantail is known to occur in moist, dense habitats including rainforest and mangroves, woodland habitat within the HVO North BIAA may provide movement corridors for this species.

An area of important habitat is:

- habitat utilised by a migratory species occasionally or periodically within a region that supports an ecologically significant proportion of the population of the species; or
- habitat utilised by a migratory species which is at the limit of the species range; or
- habitat within an area where the species is declining.

The habitats within the HVO North BIAA for migratory species listed under international conventions is not considered to meet the criteria listed above, and *important habitat* is not likely to occur.

The Draft Referral Guideline for 14 Birds Listed as Migratory Species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015b) defines important habitat for the white-throated needletail and rufous fantail (**Table B.18**).

Table B.18 Important Habitat for Migratory Species (DoE 2015b)

Species	Important Habitat
white-throated needletail	Non-breeding habitat only: Found across a range of habitats, more often over wooded areas, where it is almost exclusively aerial. Large tracts of native vegetation, particularly forest, may be a key habitat requirement for species. Found to roost in tree hollows in tall trees on ridge-tops, on bark or rock faces. Appears to have traditional roost sites.
rufous fantail	Moist, dense habitats, including mangroves, rainforest, riparian forests and thickets, and wet eucalypt forests with a dense understorey. When on passage a wider range of habitats are used including dry eucalypt forests and woodlands and Brigalow shrublands.

The Draft Referral Guideline for 14 Birds Listed as Migratory Species under the EPBC Act (DoE 2015b) does not include a definition of important habitat for the Latham's snipe, however this species is known to occur at permanent and ephemeral wetlands.

The habitats within the HVO North BIAA for migratory species listed under international conventions is not considered to meet the criteria listed above, and *important habitat is* not likely to occur.

The HVO North Action is considered likely to result in a significant impact on migratory species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

- substantially modify and/or destroy an area of important habitat for a migratory species
- seriously disrupt the lifecycle (breeding, feeding, migration or resting behaviour) of an ecologically significant proportion of the population of a migratory species, and/or
- result in an invasive species that is harmful to the migratory species becoming established in an area of important habitat for the migratory species.

The HVO North BIAA is not considered to comprise *important habitat* for any of the identified migratory species listed above, and therefore the HVO North Action is not likely to substantially modify or destroy important migratory species habitat. Similarly, the HVO North Action will not seriously disrupt the lifecycle of an ecologically significant proportion of the population of a migratory species; or result in an invasive species that is harmful to migratory species becoming established within the HVO North BIAA.

Conclusion

The HVO North Action is **unlikely** to result in a significant impact on any migratory species listed under the EPBC Act or international conventions.

Appendix C

BAM-C Credit Reports



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BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00060513/BAAS17005/26/00065129

Proposal Name
HVO North Commonwealth Assessment - Domain 2b

BAM data last updated *
05/08/2025

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
30/03/2026

BAM Data version *
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Assessor Number
BAAS17005

BAM Case Status
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Date Finalised
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Assessment Revision
1

BOS entry trigger

Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
1	3431_Moderate	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	57.9	57.9	1.5	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		54
2	3431_Rehabilitation	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	50.2	50.2	14.9	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		468
											Subtotal	**522**
											Total	**522**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00060513/BAAS17005/25/00060514

Proposal Name
HVO North Commonwealth Assessment - Domain 4

BAM data last updated *
05/08/2025

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
30/03/2026

BAM Data version *
Current classification (live - default) (82)

Assessor Number
BAAS17005

BAM Case Status
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Date Finalised
30/03/2026

Assessment Revision
1

BOS entry trigger

Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
1	3431_Moderate_TEC	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	57.9	57.9	33.7	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		1219
2	3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	53.8	53.8	1.7	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		57
7	3431_Poor_DNG_TEC	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	16.2	16.2	1.4	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		0
10	3431_White_Box_Variant	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	34.1	34.1	1.6	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		34
											Subtotal	**1310**

Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
3	3431_Plantation	Not a TEC	44.4	44.4	45	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		998
4	3431_Scattered_Regen	Not a TEC	46.5	46.5	21.9	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		510
5	3431_Cooba_Woodland	Not a TEC	47.8	47.8	49.7	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		1187
6	3431_Poor_DNG	Not a TEC	16.2	16.2	52.2	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0
8	3431_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	12.9	12.9	37.8	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0
9	3431_Bulloak_Variant	Not a TEC	41.4	41.4	5.3	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		110
17	3431_Woodland_Exotic	Not a TEC	28.7	28.7	12.9	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		185
											Subtotal	**2990**

Central Hunter Riparian Forest											
12	4015_Moderate	Not a TEC	69.8	69.8	1.2	PCT Cleared - 88%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		42
											Subtotal	**42**
Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest												
11	3485_Moderate_TEC	Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland	88.1	88.1	0.2	Environment Protection and Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Not Listed	Critically Endangered	2.50		11
											Subtotal	**11**
Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest												
13	4089_Moderate	Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	82.3	82.3	4.1	Population size	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00	True	169

14	4089_Low_to_Moderate	Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	57	57.0	1.4	Population size	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00	True	40
											Subtotal	**209**
Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest												
15	4089_DNG	Not a TEC	21.8	21.8	4.1	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		56
16	4089_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	9.3	9.3	20.3	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		0
											Subtotal	**56**
											Total	**4618**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits

Delma vescolineata / Hunter Valley Delma (Fauna)									
3431_Scattered_Regen	46.5	46.5	21.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	510
4089_DNG	21.8	21.8	4.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	45
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	1.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	46
3431_Poor_DNG	16.2	16.2	52.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	422
3431_Poor_DNG_TEC	16.2	16.2	1.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	11
								Subtotal	**1034**

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00059988/BAAS17005/25/00059989

Proposal Name
Hunter Valley Delma in Rehabilitation - HVO North

BAM data last updated *
09/04/2026

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
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Assessor Number
BAAS17005

BAM Case Status
Open

Date Finalised
To be finalised

Assessment Revision
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BOS entry trigger

Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits
Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
1	3431_Rehab_Exotic_Grass	Not a TEC	1.4	1.4	430.7	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0

2	3431_Rehab_Cooba	Not a TEC	3	3.0	211.8	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0
											Subtotal	**0**
											Total	**0**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits
Delma vescolineata / Hunter Valley Delma (Fauna)									
3431_Rehab_Exotic_Grass	1.4	1.4	430.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	303
3431_Rehab_Cooba	3.0	3.0	211.8	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	319
								Subtotal	**622**

Appendix D

HVO Continuation Project Biodiversity Assessment Report (BDAR) (Umwelt 2026)



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HUNTER VALLEY OPERATIONS









Biodiversity Development Assessment Report

HUNTER VALLEY OPERATIONS CONTINUATION PROJECT

February 2026

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Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project

Revised Biodiversity Development Assessment Report

FINAL

Prepared by
Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited

On behalf of
HV Operations Pty Ltd

Project Director:	Allison Riley
Project Manager:	Kate Connolly
Report No.:	4948 R01/FINAL REVISED
Date:	February 2026

This report was prepared using Umwelt's ISO 9001 certified Quality Management System.

Acknowledgement of Country



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Document Status

Rev No.	Reviewer Name	Date	Approved for Issue Name	Date
FINAL	Kate Connolly	31/06/2025	Allison Riley	31/06/2025
REVISED FINAL	Kate Connolly	20/02/2026	Allison Riley	20/02/2026

Certification and Declaration

Certification under clause 6.15 *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*

I certify that this report has been prepared based on the requirements of, and information provided under, the Biodiversity Assessment Method and clause 6.15 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act).

Signature:		
Date: 20 February 2026		
BAM Assessor Accreditation No:	BAAS17042	BAAS17005

Conflict of Interest Declaration

I declare that I have considered the circumstances and there is no actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest. This declaration has been made in the interests of full disclosure to the decision-maker. Full disclosure has also been provided to the client.

Signature:		
Date: 20 February 2026		
BAM Assessor Accreditation No:	BAAS17042	BAAS17005

Executive Summary

The Project

Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) is a multi-pit open cut mining complex approximately 24 kilometres (km) north-west of Singleton in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales (NSW). HVO comprises two mine sites separated by the Hunter River, HVO North and HVO South. While the two mine sites are approved under separate development consents, they are operated as one complex with fully integrated environmental management systems. HVO is owned by subsidiary companies of Yancoal and Glencore, as participants in the unincorporated HVO Joint Venture (JV).

The HVO Continuation Project (the Project) broadly comprises the continuation of the life of HVO North and HVO South, from the current approved mining completion dates of 2026 and 2030 respectively, to the end of 2045 at HVO North and the end of 2042 at HVO South. The continuation of mining across the HVO Complex will increase resource recovery from the existing operation, predominantly by mining through previously mined areas and to the extent of existing mining tenements and extracting coal from deeper seams at HVO North.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project (EMM 2022a), including the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), was submitted to the (then) NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and subsequently placed on public exhibition from Monday 30 January 2023 through to Monday 27 February 2023. Following exhibition, the Biodiversity Conservation and Science (BCS) Group of the former NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) provided advice on the BDAR.

To respond to matters raised in submissions on the Project during the public exhibition period, a Submissions Report (EMM 2023a) was prepared, along with an Amendment Report (EMM 2023b) outlining proposed amendments to the HVO North Project (the HVO North Amendment Report) to:

- Amend the Lemington Road alignment to avoid all direct impacts to the Warkworth Sands Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) and avoid impacts to two scarred trees of Aboriginal cultural significance.
- Amend the proposed HVO North development consent boundary to reflect the necessary changes to the Lemington Road realignment corridor.
- Propose changes to the construction timing of the low permeability barrier wall within the Carrington West Wing area, with installation of the low permeability barrier wall to be completed prior to mining within 100 metres (m) of the remnant western arm of the paleochannel in connection to the Hunter River.

During the subsequent assessment of the Project by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), a number of requests for information (RFI) were issued to HVO, who provided responses as required. In response to an RFI received 5 July 2024, HVO completed a detailed review of the Project and is subsequently seeking to amend the SSD applications in the following ways:

- Reduce the project mine plan to avoid coal extraction within gas Domain 1 at HVO North and reduce the total run-of-mine (ROM) coal to be extracted by the Project by approximately 220 million tonnes (Mt).

- Maintain the current approved maximum annual ROM coal production from HVO North of 22 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) but reduce the proposed maximum annual production limit at HVO South from 18 Mtpa to 13 Mtpa.
- Reduce the maximum annual production for the HVO Complex to 26 Mtpa from the current theoretical maximum production of 42 Mtpa.
- Reduce the proposed life of mining operations at HVO North by five years, from the end of 2050 to the end of 2045.
- Reduce the proposed life of mining operations at HVO South by three years from the end of 2045 to the end of 2042.
- Expansion of the HVO North ROM coal stockpile to improve coal management.
- Remove approval for the construction and operation of the Lemington Coal Preparation Plant (LCPP) and associated rail facilities, which is currently approved, but not constructed, under the HVO South Project Approval.
- Temporary transport of product coal by truck from the Howick Coal Preparation Plant (CPP) to the Liddell stockpile for transport to market via the Liddell coal handling and train loading facilities during upgrades of the Newdell Load Point (LP).
- Establishment of a levee (Mitchell East Levee) to provide flood protection for the final void in Mitchell Pit.

The amendments to the Project have been documented in a second Amendment Report (EMM 2025) (the HVO Amendment Report).

This Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) has been prepared by Umwelt to support the HVO amendment report (EMM 2025) using the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) (DPIE 2020a) in accordance with the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) to determine the impact of the amended Project on biodiversity values and identify offsetting requirements following the implementation of suitable avoidance and minimisation measures.

Key Biodiversity Impacts

The landscape within and surrounding the HVO North and HVO South Project Area is characterised by extensive historical clearing for agricultural, mining and rural development.

The HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints are the areas subject to impacts that require assessment under the BC Act. The Development Footprints are substantially (76%) dominated by derived and modified vegetation types (i.e. native and exotic grasslands) and cleared lands. Only approximately 24% of the combined Development Footprints are covered by native (woody) vegetation.

Furthermore, a large area (approximately 313.1 ha) occurs within the wider easement area, not proposed to be impacted by the Project, but included in the Development Footprint until the final design is determined.

The Project proposes to remove 184.8 ha of native vegetation that meets the offsetting threshold under the Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS). Of this, 89.5 ha conforms to Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) under the BC Act (87.2 ha in HVO North and 2.3 ha in HVO South).

The tables below outline the Plant Community Types (PCTs), TECs and species-credit species recorded or assumed present in the HVO North and HVO South additional disturbance area (i.e. areas that will be disturbed by the Project that are outside of existing and approved disturbance areas) and the areas that require offsetting under the BOS as per the BC Act. Impacts relating to vegetation that does not meet the offsetting threshold under the BAM or impacts not requiring further assessment are detailed in **Section 7.1** and **Section 7.2**.

Table ES 1 Plant Community Type (PCT) Impact Areas Requiring Offsetting

Plant Community Type (PCT	BC Act Status	Area, HVO North (ha)	Area, HVO South (ha)
3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	Some condition zones conform to *Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC*	168.2	2.7
3485 – Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	Conforms to Hunter Valley *Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland Vulnerable Ecological Community* (VEC)	7.1	0.0
4015 – Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	-	2.2	0.0
4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	-	1.8	0.0
4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	Some condition zones conform to *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions Endangered Ecological Community* (EEC)	2.2	0.6
	Total	**181.5**	**3.3**

Table ES 2 TEC and Species-Credit Species Impact Areas Requiring Offsetting

Biodiversity Feature	BC Act Status	Area, HVO North (ha)	Area, HVO South (ha)
Threatened Ecological Communities			
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	EEC	1.1	0.0
Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	EEC	79.1	2.3
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion	VEC	7.1	0.0
Species-Credit Species			
southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*)	Vulnerable	78.6	2.2
Eucalyptus camaldulensis population in the Hunter Catchment	Endangered	0.8	0.7
Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	Endangered	224.9	8.7
brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)	Vulnerable	123.3	2.5
masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)	Vulnerable	57.7	18.1

Following avoidance measures, one TEC identified in the combined Development Footprint was identified as a candidate for Serious and Irreversible Impacts (SAII) as a result of the Project, being *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC*. This is proposed to be addressed through restoration and protection of 6.6 ha of land, adjacent to existing areas of successful restoration of the community.

As the Project is located in a highly fragmented and disturbed landscape subject to current extensive mining, indirect impacts such as fugitive light emissions, air quality and noise/vibration associated with mining are not expected to be substantially altered as a result of the Project. Some indirect impacts associated with the Project that have the potential to impact on biodiversity features in the locality include drawdown impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs), edge effects and cumulative impacts. The assessment of indirect impacts described in **Section 6.2** concludes that these potential impacts are unlikely to result in significant impacts on surrounding biodiversity. Identified potential prescribed impacts associated with the Project include impacts on connectivity and species movement habitat and impacts of vehicle strikes associated with the Lemington Road realignment.

Avoidance and Minimisation

Targeted avoidance and minimisation measures were implemented to reduce the Project's impact on areas of higher value vegetation and habitat, including (but not limited to):

- Locating impacts predominantly in previously mined and/or disturbed areas, and areas approved to be disturbed.
- Refinement and location selection of the Lemington Road re-alignment to avoid up to 14.7 ha of *Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC*, including post-EIS exhibition amendments to the proposed Lemington Road re-alignment location to remove all direct impacts to the community at HVO North.
- Careful consideration of proposed transmission line easement alignments to avoid areas of higher quality vegetation and habitats, and to provide for maximum vegetation and habitat retention in easement corridors.
- Habitat retention following decommissioning of existing transmission lines.
- Removal from the Project of some components previously approved under HVO South's existing Project Approval 06_0261, including coal extraction from the Riverview South East Extension, mining in the South Lemington Pits 1 and 2 and the construction of the short rail loop associated with the LCPP. These activities have resulted in the avoidance of disturbance of approximately 87 ha of *Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland EEC*.
- Removal of approval to carry out construction and operation of the LCPP and associated rail spur. These activities have resulted in the avoidance of disturbance of approximately 40 ha of *Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland EEC* and 0.3 ha of *Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC* listed under the BC Act resulting in all direct impacts to the *Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC* at HVO South being removed.

HVO has committed to the design and implementation of a comprehensive biodiversity mitigation strategy to mitigate the unavoidable impacts of the Project.

Biodiversity Offset Strategy

Following the application of avoidance and minimisation measures, the BAM-C assessment identified the following biodiversity credits required to offset the impacts of the Project.

Table ES 3 Summary of Biodiversity Credit Obligations

Biodiversity Feature	Credits Required, HVO North	Credits Required, HVO South
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	4154	72
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	313	0
4015 - Central Hunter Riparian Forest	65	0
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	39	0
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	47	20
southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*)	2024	59
Eucalyptus camaldulensis in the Hunter Catchment	6	8
Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	2567	106
brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)	3331	67
masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)	552	158

HVO is committed to delivering a biodiversity offset strategy that appropriately compensates for the unavoidable loss of biodiversity values and residual impacts of the Project. HVO proposes to stage the retirement of credits to align with main development activities of the Project as defined by two primary stages. The biodiversity offset strategy will be developed in consultation with the DPHI and based on the offset options available under the BC Act and BC Regulation.

Whilst not precluding other options provided under existing legislation, it is HVO's intention that the offset strategy for the Project will focus on purchasing credits on the market both locally and regionally as per the like-for-like offsetting rules outlined in the BC Regulation. Where suitable, other avenues such as paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund, which contributes to regionally strategic offset outcomes will also be undertaken.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
BAM	Biodiversity Assessment Methodology
BAM-C	BAM Calculator
BC Act	NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
BCS	Former Biodiversity Conservation and Science (now CPHR)
BCT	Biodiversity Conservation Trust
BC Regulation	Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017
BDAR	Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
BOAMS	Biodiversity Offsets and Agreement Management System
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
CEEC	Critically Endangered Ecological Community
CPHR	Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation (formerly Biodiversity Conservation and Science (BCS))
CPP	Coal Preparation Plant
DAWE	Former Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
NSW DCCEEW	New South Wales Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water
Commonwealth DCCEEW	Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water
DNG	Derived Native Grasslands
DPE	Former NSW Department of Planning and Environment (now DPHI)
DPHI	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (formerly DPE)
EEC	Endangered Ecological Community
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EP	Endangered Population
EP&A Act	NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
EPBC Act	Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GDE	Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem
GIS	Geographical Information System
GL	Gigalitres
ha	Hectares
HBT	Hollow bearing tree
HVCPP	Hunter Valley Coal Preparation Plant
HVO	Hunter Valley Operations
HVO Complex	Comprises both HVO North and HVO South operations
HVLP	Hunter Valley Load Point
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (Version 7)
JV	Joint Venture
km	Kilometres

Abbreviation	Description
kV	Kilovolts
LCO	Liddell Coal Operations
LCPP	Lemington Coal Preparation Plant
LLS Act	NSW *Local Land Services Act 2013*
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MALD	More Appropriate Local Data
MGA	Map Grid of Australia
MIA	Mine Infrastructure Area
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
Mtpa	Million Tonnes Per Annum
Mt	Million Tonnes
NSW	New South Wales
Newdell LP	Newdell Load Point
NP	National Park
NVRM	Native Vegetation Regulatory Map
OEH	Former Office of Environment and Heritage (now CPHR)
PA	Project Approval
PCT	Plant Community Type
PMST	Protected Matters Search Tool
Project	HVO Continuation Project in its entirety, encompassing the continuation of the life of the complex, i.e. both HVO North and HVO South, within their respective proposed development consent boundaries
ROM	Run of Mine
RSEE	Riverview South East Extension
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SLP	South Lemington Pit
SSD	State Significant Development
SVTM	State Vegetation Type Map
SYB	Sydney Basin Bioregion
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
TBDC	Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection
VCD	Vegetation Classification Database
VEC	Vulnerable Ecological Community
VI	Vegetation Integrity
VIS	Vegetation Information System

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1.0 Background

Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) is a multi-pit open cut mining complex approximately 24 kilometres (km) north-west of Singleton in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales (NSW) (refer to **Figure 1.1**). HVO comprises two mine sites separated by the Hunter River, HVO North and HVO South. While the two mine sites are approved under separate development consents, they are operated as one complex (HVO Complex) with fully integrated environmental management systems.

The existing HVO North operation comprises the approved mining areas of West Pit, Mitchell Pit and Carrington Pit, as shown in **Figure 1.2**. It operates under development consent DA 450-10-2003 which allows extraction of up to 22 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of run-of-mine (ROM) coal until 31 December 2026.

HVO South operates under Project Approval (PA) 06_0261 and comprises the approved mining areas of Riverview Pit and Cheshunt Pit, where mining activities currently take place, and the Riverview South East Extension (RSEE) and South Lemington Pits 1 and 2 (SLP 1 and SLP 2). PA 06_0261 allows the extraction of up to 20 Mtpa of ROM coal until 24 March 2030.

Significant coal resources remain across the HVO Complex beyond what is currently approved for extraction under the existing development consents. HVO is therefore seeking approval for the HVO Continuation Project (the Project) from the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, or delegate, under the provisions of Part 4 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The Project broadly comprises the continuation of mining at HVO North and HVO South, beyond the current approved mining completion dates of 2026 and 2030 respectively. The Project will seek to maintain separate development consents for HVO North and South, as is currently the case.

Given that the two mine sites operate as one complex, one environmental impact statement (EIS, EMM 2022a) was prepared to support the two State significant development (SSD) applications for the Project, being:

- SSD-11826681 – HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project
- SSD-11826621 – HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project.

The EIS was subsequently placed on public exhibition from Monday 30 January 2023 through to Monday 27 February 2023. During the public exhibition of the EIS, a total of 1,060 submissions were received by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) from individuals, organisations, public authorities, councils, and government agencies for the two development applications.

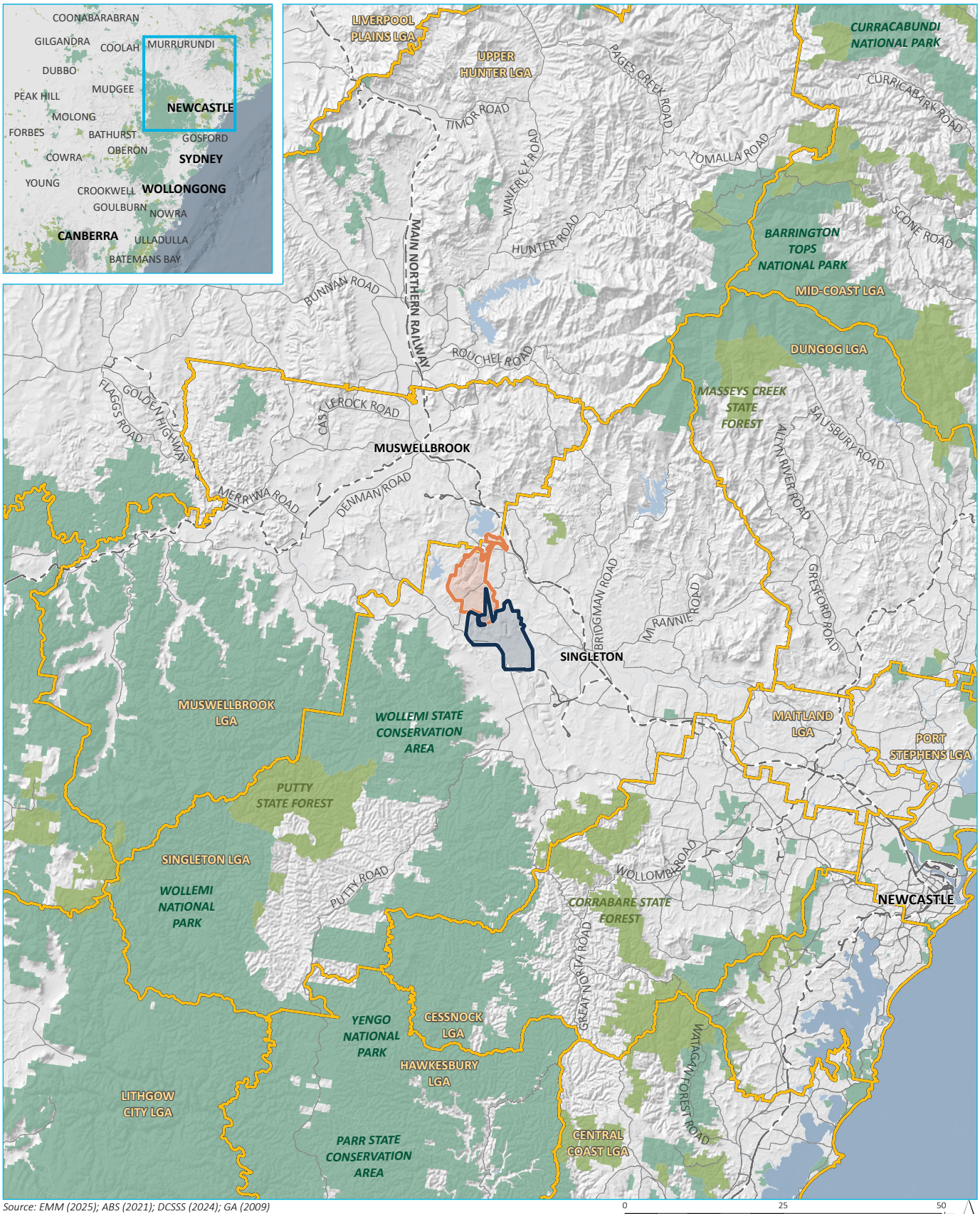
To respond to matters raised in submissions on the Project during the public exhibition period, a Submissions Report (EMM 2023a) was prepared, along with an Amendment Report (EMM 2023b) outlining proposed amendments to the HVO North Project (the HVO North Amendment Report).

During the subsequent assessment of the Project by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), a number of requests for information (RFI) were issued to HVO, who provided responses as required.

In response to an RFI received 5 July 2024, HVO completed a detailed review of the Project and is subsequently seeking to amend the SSD applications in the following ways:

- Reduce the project mine plan to avoid coal extraction within gas Domain 1 at HVO North and reduce the total ROM coal to be extracted by the amended Project by approximately 220 million tonnes (Mt).
- Propose a maximum annual production limit for the HVO Complex of 26 Mtpa ROM, compared to the current approved maximum annual production of 42 Mtpa.
- Maintain the current approved maximum annual ROM coal production from HVO North of 22 Mtpa but reduce the proposed maximum annual production limit at HVO South from 18 Mtpa to 13 Mtpa.
- Reduce the proposed life of mining operations at HVO North by five years, from the end of 2050 to the end of 2045.
- Reduce the proposed life of mining operations at HVO South by three years from the end of 2045 to the end of 2042.
- Expansion of the HVO North ROM coal stockpile to improve coal management.
- Remove approval for the construction and operation of the Lemington Coal Preparation Plant (LCPP) and associated rail facilities, which is currently approved, but not constructed, under the HVO South Project Approval.
- Temporary transport of product coal by truck from the Howick Coal Preparation Plant (CPP) to the Liddell stockpile for transport to market via the Liddell coal handling and train loading facilities during upgrades of the Newdell Load Point (LP).
- Establishment of a levee (Mitchell East Levee) to provide flood protection for the final void in Mitchell Pit.
- Minor alterations to disturbance boundaries to accommodate construction activities such as Lemington Road and electricity transmission lines.

The amendments to the Project have been documented in a second Amendment Report (EMM 2025) (the HVO Amendment Report).



Source: EMM (2025); ABS (2021); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

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KEY

- Existing HVO North development consent boundary (DA 450-10-2003)
- Existing HVO South project approval boundary (PA 06_0261)

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve
- State forest
- Local government area

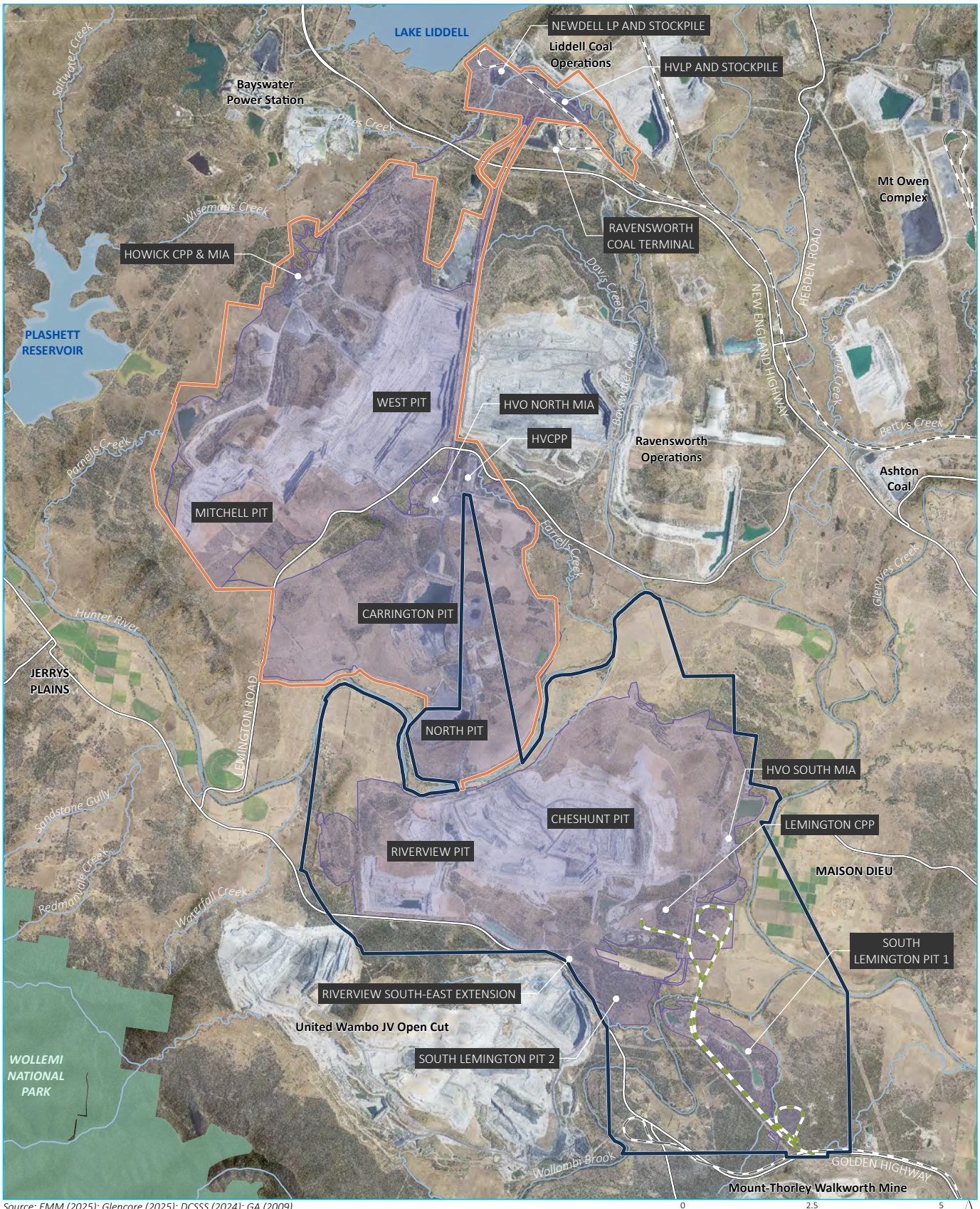
INSET KEY

- NPWS reserve
- State forest

Locality Plan

HVO Continuation Project
BDAR
Figure 1.1

EMM creating opportunities



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Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

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GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

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KEY

- Existing HVO North development consent boundary (DA 450-10-2003)
- Existing HVO South project approval boundary (PA 06_0261)
- Existing and approved disturbance area
- South Lemington Rail Loop and haul route (approved, not yet constructed)

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve

HVO Local Context

HVO Continuation Project
BDAR
Figure 1.2

EMM creating opportunities

1.1 Project Overview

As noted in **Section 1.0**, the Project broadly comprises the continuation of mining at HVO North and HVO South, beyond the current approved mining completion dates of 2026 and 2030 respectively. The key components of the amended HVO North Continuation Project and HVO South Continuation Project are illustrated on **Figure 1.3** and summarised in in the sections below.

1.1.1 HVO North

The key Project elements at HVO North for which approval is sought include those activities required to carry out open cut coal mining and processing and include:

- changes to the HVO North development consent boundary as illustrated in **Figure 1.3**
- continuation of mining operations at HVO North from 1 January 2027 until 31 December 2045
- production of up to 22 Mtpa with no separation of extraction limits between West Pit and Carrington Pit
- infrastructure upgrades, as listed below:
    - realignment of Lemington Road and construction of a new bridge over the Hunter River
    - relocation of the HVO North site access road off the existing Lemington Road
    - increase in the capacity of Parnells Dam from approximately 1 gigalitre (GL) to approximately 4 GL
    - realignment of transmission and telecommunication lines that are currently within the proposed mining area
    - upgrades to the HVO North Mine Infrastructure Area (MIA)
    - expansion of the HVO North ROM coal stockpile to improve coal management
    - maintenance and ancillary activities as required to facilitate operations, including the replacement of plant and equipment where required
    - construction of access roads to facilitate service provider access
    - use of demountable/temporary buildings and other ancillary temporary facilities to enable construction activities and mining operations as required
    - access road establishment to an existing mine-owned property east of realigned Lemington Road
- receipt of ROM coal from HVO South via internal haul roads for processing at all CPP facilities approved for HVO North.
- transport product coal by truck or overland conveyor from all CPPs to loading points (HVLP, Newdell LP and Lemington LP)
- management of tailings in accordance with a Tailings Management Strategy
- upgrade of product coal infrastructure as follows:
    - establishment of a new Newdell product stockpile and upgrade of the existing Newdell train loading facility or an extension of the product coal stockpile footprint at the HVLP to increase the total stockpile capacity of the load point

- construction of a haul road to enable ROM coal to be transported to the neighbouring Ravensworth Operations ROM pad via haul truck for processing, from where product coal is then transferred to the Ravensworth Coal Terminal for transport to market
- ability to temporarily transport product coal by truck from the Howick CPP to the Liddell stockpile for transport to market via the Liddell coal handling and train loading facilities during upgrades of the Newdell Load Point (LP)

- implementation of a revised water management system including construction of levees, clean water diversions and the Carrington West Wing low permeability barrier wall
- establishment of a levee (Mitchell East Levee) to provide flood protection for the final void in Mitchell Pit
- continued employment of up to 1,500 full time equivalents (FTE) across the HVO complex.

Other than as modified above, all activities that are currently approved under the existing HVO North development consent are intended to continue. Key aspects and outcomes of the approved development at HVO North (under DA 450-10-2003 as modified) that will remain the same under the Project include the following:

- the maximum allowable annual ROM coal extraction and processing rate of 22 Mtpa
- receipt of ROM coal from HVO South via internal haul road for processing at all CPP facilities approved for HVO North
- approved heights of overburden emplacement areas
- continued avoidance of the Aboriginal heritage site known as CM-CD1
- operating hours, annual workforce numbers and associated operational traffic generation.

1.1.2 HVO South

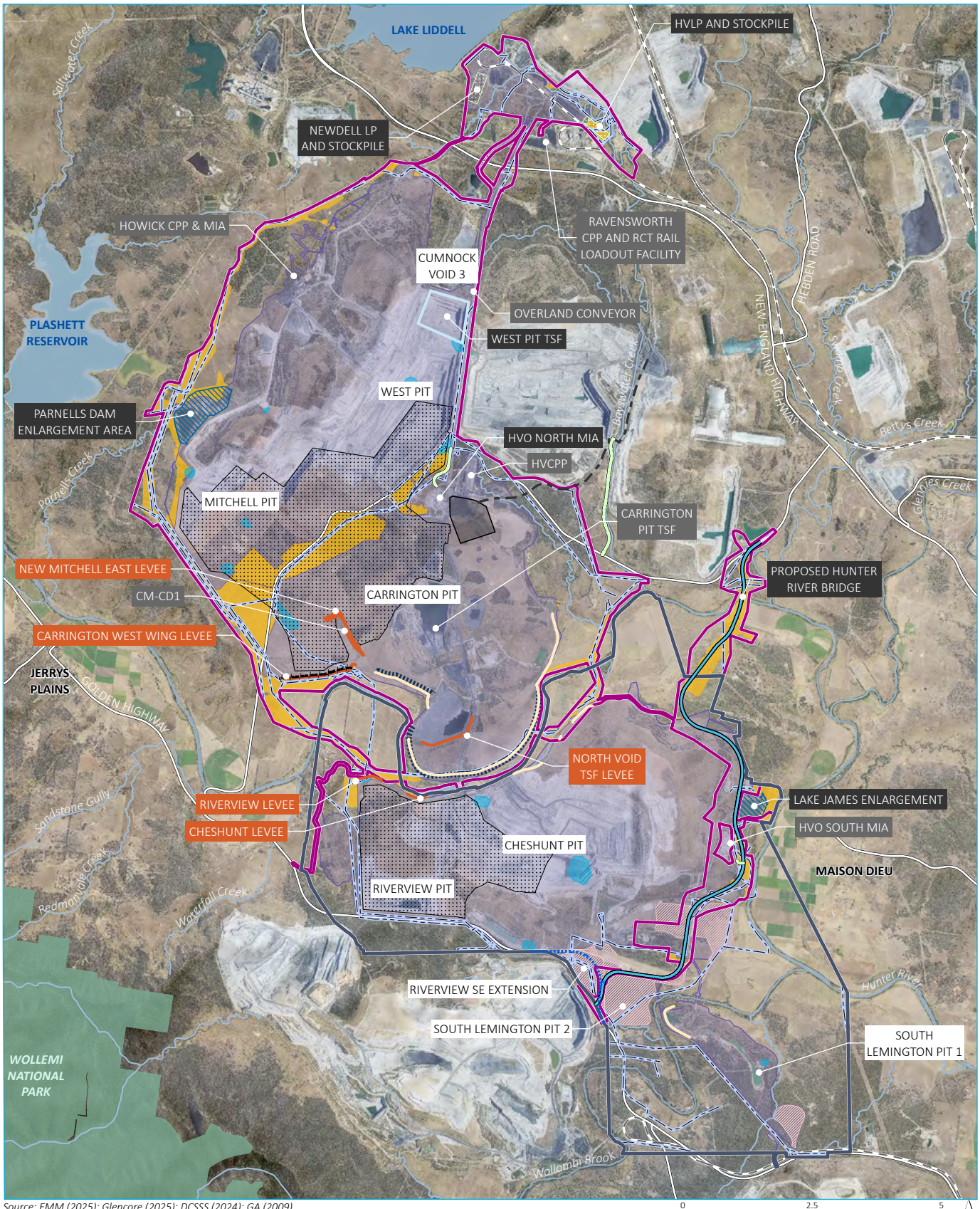
The key Project elements at HVO South for which approval is sought include those activities required to carry out open cut coal mining and processing and include:

- changes to the HVO South development consent boundary as illustrated in **Figure 1.3**
- continuation of mining operations at HVO South from 2030 until 31 December 2042
- a reduction in the approved maximum extraction rate from 20 Mtpa to 13 Mtpa
- removal of coal extraction from the mine plan for the RSEE, and SLP 1 and 2
- infrastructure upgrades including:
  - relocation of some 11 kilovolt (kV) and 66 kV Ausgrid transmission lines
  - realignment of internal transmission lines to support mining activities
  - HVO South access road relocation to join the realigned Lemington Road
  - access roads to facilitate service provider access
  - use of demountable/temporary buildings and other ancillary temporary facilities including laydown areas to enable construction activities and mining operations as required
  - removal of the approval for the construction and operation of the LCPP and rail facilities

    - removal of the construction and operation of the approved conveyor from HVO South to the HVCPP at HVO North (the conveyor has not been constructed)
- continuation of integrated water management with HVO North and water transfers with other mining operations (where permitted under the development consents that apply to those other mining operations)
- construction of the Cheshunt and Riverview flood protection levees
- enlargement of Lake James from approximately 0.7 GL to 1.9 GL
- amendments to final landform.

Other than as modified above, all activities that are currently approved under the existing HVO South development consent are intended to continue. Key aspects of the currently approved development at HVO South (under PA 06_0261as modified) that will remain the same for the Project include:

- no change to the receipt of HVO South coal at all HVO North CPPs via internal haul road for processing
- no change to operating hours
- no change in annual workforce numbers or associated operational traffic generation
- no increase to approved heights of overburden emplacement areas.



Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

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GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

KEY

- Amended proposed HVO North development consent boundary
- Proposed HVO South development consent boundary
- Existing and approved disturbance area
- Additional disturbance area
- Previous approved area not retained
- Existing low permeability barrier wall
- Existing levee

Proposed HVO Continuation Project element

- Approved barrier wall (not yet constructed)
- Alternative Golden Highway alignment
- Lemington Road realignment
- Levee
- Mine access road
- Proposed haul route to Ravensworth Operations
- Dam enlargement
- Mining area
- Product stockpile
- Sediment dam
- West Pit TSF

Existing environment

- Transmission line
- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody
- NPWS reserve

Label format

- Existing item
- Project related item

Proposed Conceptual Layout

HVO Continuation Project
BDAR
Figure 1.3

EMM creating opportunities

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1.2 Purpose

This Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) has been prepared by Umwelt using the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) (DPIE 2020a) in accordance with the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) to determine the impact of the amended Project on biodiversity values and identify offsetting requirements following the implementation of suitable avoidance and minimisation measures.

While the amended Project does not result in significant changes to the Development Footprints, to those documented in the EIS (EMM 2022a), the extension of the Project's assessment beyond 2024 has resulted in the requirement to address biodiversity data currency as per the requirements of Section 3.4 of the BAM Operational Manual – Stage 1 and update the Plant Community Types (PCTs) in line with the revised East Coast PCT Classification of which transitional arrangements expired on 14 April 2025. This BDAR outlines the additional surveys and assessments undertaken since the November 2023 BDAR to address the above and supersedes previous versions of the BDAR. This BDAR includes updated and or revised mitigation measures for the amended Project.

1.3 Project Terminology

The following key terms are used throughout this assessment to describe the HVO Continuation Project:

HVO Complex: Comprises both HVO North and HVO South operations.

HVO North Project: Comprises the HVO North Project only as described in Chapter 4 of the EIS (EMM 2022a) and as amended in Chapter 3 of the HVO North Amendment Report (EMM 2023b) and the HVO Amendment Report (EMM 2025).

HVO South Project: Comprises the HVO South Project only as described in Chapter 4 of the EIS and as amended in Chapter 3 of the HVO Amendment Report (EMM 2025).

The Project: The Project in its entirety as described in Chapter 4 of the EIS and as amended in Chapter 3 of the HVO North Amendment Report (EMM 2023b) and Chapter 3 of the HVO Amendment Report (EMM 2025); encompassing the continuation of the life of the complex, i.e. both HVO North and HVO South, within their respective proposed development consent boundaries.

Project area: The area that is the subject of the two development applications, i.e. the proposed development consent boundary for HVO North and the proposed development consent boundary for HVO South.

Existing and approved disturbance: Areas that are disturbed, previously disturbed and/or approved under the EP&A Act to be disturbed under the current development consents that apply to the HVO Complex.

Approved mining area: The areas within the existing and approved disturbance area that have been previously assessed and approved under the EP&A Act for mining operations.

Additional disturbance area: The areas that will be disturbed by the Project that are outside of the existing and approved disturbance area for the HVO Complex and other neighbouring mines (Ravensworth Operations, United Wambo and Liddell Coal Operations (LCO)). This is the area that is the subject of assessment in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (DPIE 2020a). Under the BAM (2020) this is defined as the **'Subject Land'**.

For the purposes of this assessment, these areas are hereafter referred to as the:

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint.

These areas are inclusive of areas to be disturbed for the purposes of mining and ancillary activities, transmission lines and the realigned Lemington Road corridor (as defined below).

Previously approved areas not retained: Areas that are disturbed and/or approved to be disturbed under the current development consents that apply to the HVO Complex, that will no longer be disturbed by the Project, such as the LCPP, the RSEE and SPL 2 mining areas, and the approved temporary crossing across the Hunter River between HVO North and South.

Project disturbance area: This area is a combination of the existing and approved disturbance area, and the additional disturbance area associated with the Project, minus the areas not being retained by the Project. If the Project is approved, this will become the 'approved disturbance area' under the new SSD development consents.

Proposed mining area – HVO North: Areas where coal extraction will take place for the Project and includes:

- areas already disturbed by mining at HVO North (e.g. West Pit, Wilton Pit, Mitchell Pit and Carrington Pit)
- areas not previously approved for mining (e.g. the area between the Mitchell Pit and Carrington Pit)
- areas approved but not yet disturbed (e.g. the Carrington West Wing area).

Proposed mining area – HVO South: Comprises the Riverview Pit and Cheshunt Pit, where coal extraction will continue under the Project, down to the Bayswater seam. The HVO South proposed mining area does not include the previously approved SLP 1, SLP 2, or the RSEE, as coal extraction is not proposed in these areas as part of the Project.

Amended proposed HVO North development consent boundary: The proposed HVO North development consent boundary as presented in **Figure 1.3**.

Proposed HVO South development consent boundary: The proposed HVO South development consent boundary as presented in the EIS and illustrated on **Figure 1.3**.

Transmission line corridors: Two categories of transmission line corridors have been defined for the purpose of quantifying the extent of disturbance for the Project:

- realigned transmission lines (i.e. new transmission line easements) – the extent of disturbance will be limited to transmission line pole pads and an access road for maintenance along the alignment, as well as vegetation management to maintain safe transmission line clearance
- existing transmission line easements to be decommissioned – disturbance will be confined to existing access tracks, existing easements and cleared areas required for removal of poles and associated infrastructure.

Realigned Lemington Road corridor: The corridor extends from the existing Comleroi Road intersection with the Golden Highway at the southern end of the new alignment, along the Comleroi Road alignment around the south-eastern side of HVO South and then extends in a northerly direction to join the existing Lemington Road approximately 2.3 km south of the existing New England Highway/Lemington Road intersection. The proposed realigned corridor forms part of the HVO North SSD application.

Mining operations: Includes the removal and placement of overburden, the extraction, processing, handling, storage and transportation of coal, and the emplacement of rejects and tailings.

River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area: The area within the existing HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) adjacent to the Hunter River where impacts to the river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) endangered population and *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* are expected to occur as a result of the proposed transmission line relocation (refer to **Section 1.5**).

1.4 The Development Footprints

This BDAR includes an assessment of two development footprints for the HVO Continuation Project to support two development consents (refer to **Figure 1.4**). These are the:

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint.

The HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints are the areas subject to impacts that require assessment under the BC Act.

Areas within the HVO North and HVO South Project Areas that already have approval for disturbance under a NSW development consent (including areas within the HVO, Liddell Coal Operations (DA 305-11-01), United Wambo JV (SSD-7142) and Ravensworth Operations (MP 09_0176) approval areas) are not included in the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints and do not require further assessment in this report [1].

Table 1.1 provides basic details for the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints.

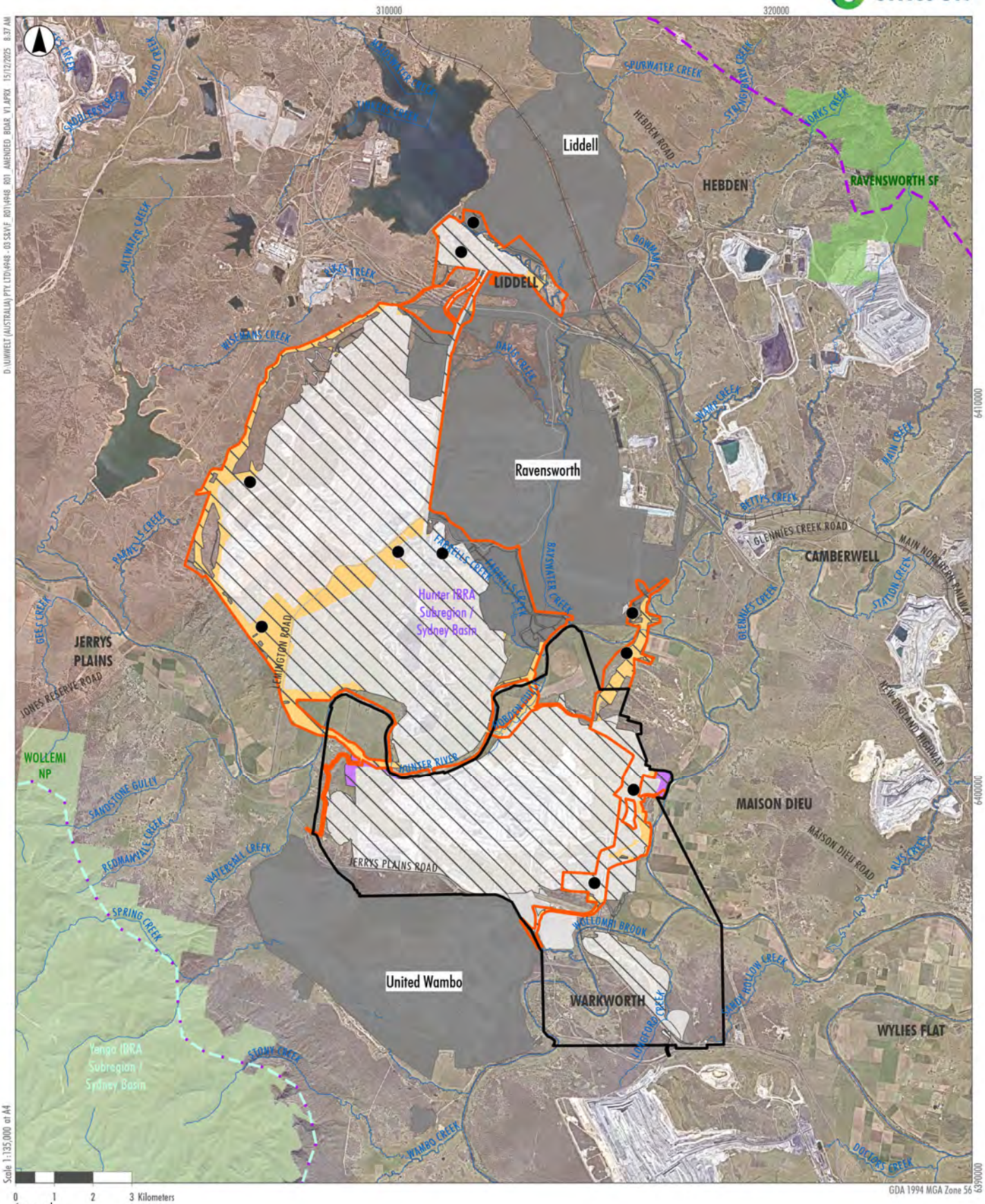
Table 1.1 Development Footprint Details

Site Details	HVO North	HVO South
Name	HVO North Development Footprint	HVO South Development Footprint
Size	903.2 ha	47.2 ha
Current Land Use	Agricultural, mining and power generation	Agricultural and mining
LGA	Singleton Council Muswellbrook Shire Council	Singleton Council
LEP Zoning	RU1 – Primary Production SP2 – Infrastructure C2 – Environmental Conservation^	RU1 – Primary Production C2 – Environmental Conservation^
Assessment Type	Major Project (Site-based)	Major Project (Site-based)

[1] The River Red Gum additional disturbance area is within the HVO South existing development consent boundary and is further discussed in **Section 1.4**.

Site Details	HVO North	HVO South
Assessment ID	Stage 1 - 00054717/BAAS17005/25/00054718 Stage 2 - 00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064417 RRG Additional Disturbance - 00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064423 00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064428	Stage 1 - 00054725/BAAS17005/25/00054726

^ A small portion of the realigned Lemington Road corridor is in an area currently zoned C2 under the Singleton LEP. This area is currently subject to subdivision between HVO and Warkworth Mine in accordance with the Warkworth Mine consent SSD 5464 (as modified). This will result in the rezoning of C2 zone land to RU1 zone land at the time of determination of the Project, resulting in no C2 land in the Project area.



Legend

- HVO North Proposed Consent Boundary
- HVO South Proposed Consent Boundary
- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- HVO Existing and Approved Disturbance Areas
- Project Disturbance Area
- Potential Laydown Area
- Approved Disturbance Area - Other Mine
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line
- Road
- National Parks
- State Forest

IBRA Subregion / Region

- Hunter IBRA Subregion / Sydney Basin
- Yengo IBRA Subregion / Sydney Basin

FIGURE 1.4

The Development Footprints HVO North and HVO South

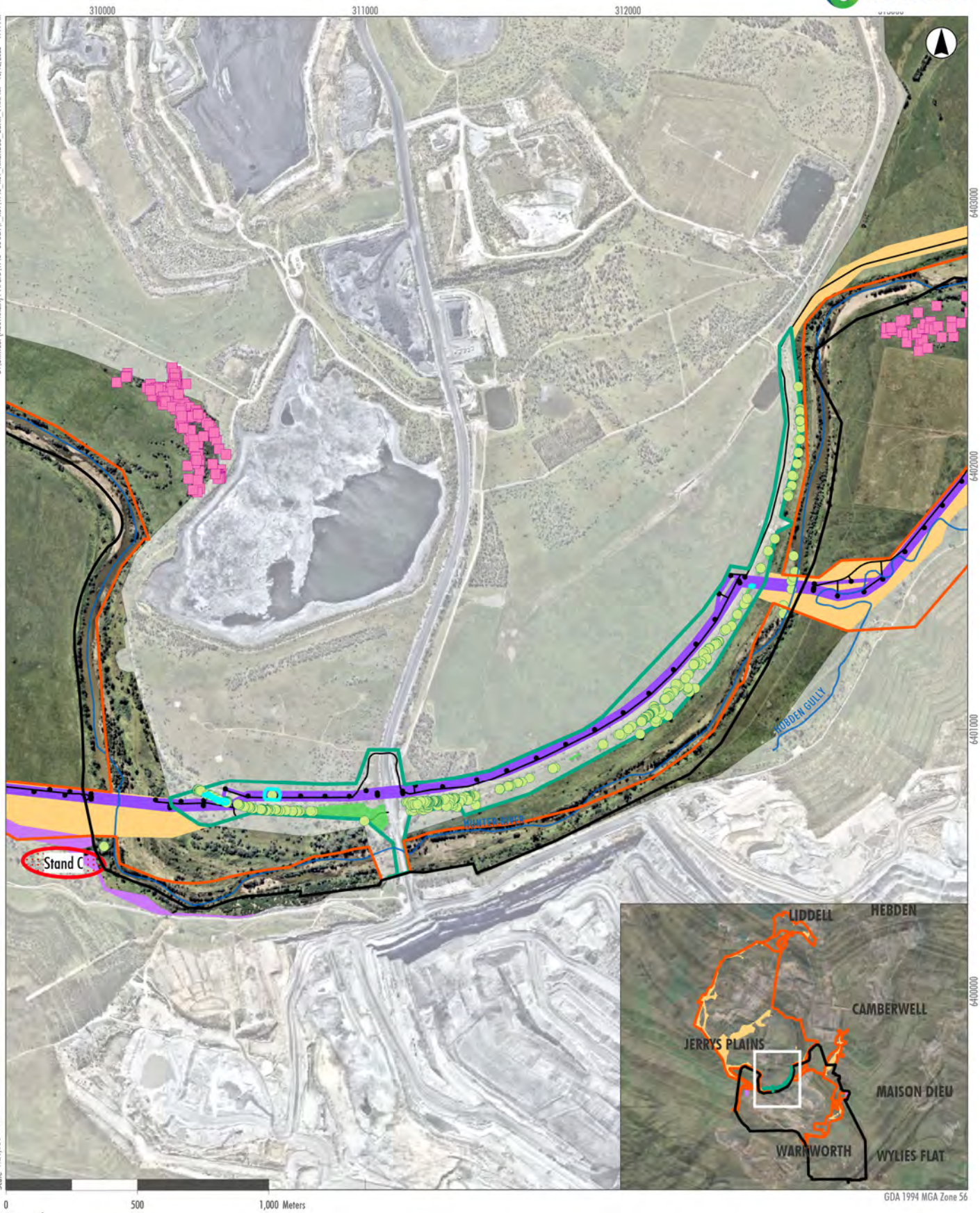
Image Source: Nearmap April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

1.5 River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area

The River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area is an area within the existing HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) adjacent to the Hunter River where minor impacts to the river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) endangered population and *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* are expected to occur as a result of the proposed transmission line relocation (refer to **Figure 1.5**).

While this area is within an existing disturbance boundary, Condition 31 of PA 06_0261 states that "The Applicant must protect all stands of the Hunter Lowland Red Gum Forest (also identified as Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Complex in the EA) endangered ecological community within the site, and adjacent lands under the control of the Applicant, as shown in Appendix 8, to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary."

This area includes part of a stand (Stand C) of river red gums identified in Appendix 8 of the Project Approval where Condition 30 of PA 06_0261 requires a River Red Gum Strategy to be implemented, which conserves and restores the river red gums identified. As a result of this, any impacts in relation to the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* and the river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) endangered population were calculated in this BAM assessment and included in the offsetting obligations for the Project. While the location of the proposed transmission line relocation is indicative, following the identification of river red gums and *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* in this area, the footprint of the transmission line was designed to minimise impacts on these threatened entities (refer to **Section 5.2.3**).



Legend

- HVO North Proposed Consent Boundary
- HVO South Proposed Consent Boundary
- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- HVO Existing and Approved Disturbance Areas
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Stand C
- Drainage Line
- Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC
- Access Tracks and New Pole Pad (MZ1) – indicative only
- Easement Vegetation Maintenance (MZ2) – indicative only
- Impacted River Red Gums and Impacted Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2022)

- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum)

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2020 - 2025)

- *Eucalyptus camuldulensis* (River Red Gum)

FIGURE 1.5

River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

1.6 Entry into the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme

The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS) applies to all SSD and State Significant Infrastructure (SSI), unless the Environment Agency Head and Secretary of the Planning Agency Head determine that the project is not likely to have an impact on biodiversity.

Consequently, an assessment under the BAM (2020) is required for the Project, being SSD, as outlined in this BDAR.

1.7 Assessment Requirements

This BDAR has been prepared following the appropriate guidelines, policies and industry requirements, and following consultation with stakeholders including relevant government agencies.

Key guidelines, policies and legislation referenced are as follows:

- Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020
- Biodiversity Assessment Method Operational Manuals – Stage 1 and Stage 2
- Guidance and Criteria to assist a decision maker to determine a serious and irreversible impact
- Assessing partial loss of biodiversity values Biodiversity Assessment Method guide – consultation draft
- NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*
- NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017*
- NSW *Local Land Services Act 2013*
- EP&A Act
- Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Annexure A includes a checklist of the components required and recommended in a BDAR as per Table 41 of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report Template. This assessment has also been prepared in accordance with requirements of DPHI as set out in the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the HVO North Project (SSD-11826681) and HVO South Project (SSD-11826621), issued on 11 March 2021.

Table 1.2 lists individual requirements relevant to this BDAR and where they are addressed in this report. Note the biodiversity-related SEARs were identical for both the HVO North and HVO South Projects.

Table 1.2 Biodiversity Related SEARs

Assessment Requirements	HVO North	HVO South
The EIS must address the following issues: • Biodiversity – including:		
○ accurate predictions of any vegetation to be cleared on site	**Table 6.1**	**Table 6.1**
○ an assessment of the likely biodiversity impacts of the development, paying particular attention to threatened species, populations and ecological communities and groundwater dependent ecosystems, undertaken in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method and documented in a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report; and	Throughout Aquatic Ecology and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Assessment (refer to Appendix L of the EIS)	Throughout Aquatic Ecology and GDE Assessment (refer to Appendix L of the EIS)

Assessment Requirements	HVO North	HVO South
○ a strategy to offset any residual impacts of the development in accordance with the offset rules under the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme.	**Section 9.0**	**Section 9.0**

To inform the preparation of the SEARs, DPHI invited other government agencies to recommend matters to be addressed in the EIS. The (then) Biodiversity Conservation and Science (BCS) Group within the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW, Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG), Singleton Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council raised matters relevant to the biodiversity assessment. It is noted that BCS did not provide any Project-specific assessment requirements for the Project, rather, included their Standard Environmental Assessment Requirements. The matters raised are listed in **Table 1.3** and have been taken into account in preparing this assessment, as indicated in the table.

Table 1.3 Agency Project-Specific Assessment Requirements

Assessment Requirements	HVO North	HVO South
BCD Standard Environmental Assessment Requirements		
• Biodiversity impacts related to the proposed development (SSD 11826681 and SSD 11826621) are to be assessed in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method and documented in a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). The BDAR must include information in the form detailed in the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (s6.12), *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017* (s6.8) and Biodiversity Assessment Method.	Throughout	Throughout
1. The BDAR must document the application of the avoid, minimise and offset framework including assessing all direct, indirect and prescribed impacts in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method.	**Section 5.0**, **Section 6.0** and **Section 9.0**	**Section 5.0**, **Section 6.0** and **Section 9.0**
2. The BDAR must include details of the measures proposed to address the offset obligation as follows;	-	-
• The total number and classes of biodiversity credits required to be retired for the development/project	**Table 8.1**	**Table 8.1**
• The number and classes of like-for-like biodiversity credits proposed to be retired	**Section 8.0**	**Section 8.0**
• The number and classes of biodiversity credits proposed to be retired in accordance with the variation rules	Not proposed	Not proposed
• Any proposal to fund a biodiversity conservation action	Not proposed	Not proposed
• Any proposal to conduct ecological rehabilitation (if a mining project)	Not proposed	Not proposed
• Any proposal to make a payment to the Biodiversity Conservation Fund. • If seeking approval to use the variation rules, the BDAR must contain details of the reasonable steps that have been taken to obtain requisite like-for-like biodiversity credits.	Offsetting options outlined in **Section 9.0**	Offsetting options outlined in **Section 9.0**

Assessment Requirements	HVO North	HVO South
3. The BDAR must be prepared by a person accredited in accordance with the Accreditation Scheme for the Application of the Biodiversity Assessment Method Order 2017 under s6.10 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.	**Section 1.8**	**Section 1.8**
Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG)		
MEG requests that the Proponent consider potential resource sterilisation in relation to any proposed biodiversity offsets areas. Biodiversity offsets have the potential to preclude access for future resource discovery and extraction and could also potentially permanently sterilise access to mineral resources. The EIS must therefore clearly illustrate the location (including offsite locations) of any biodiversity offsets being considered for the project and their spatial relationship to known and potential mineral and construction material resources and existing mining & exploration titles. MEG requests consultation with both the Geological Survey of NSW – Land Use Assessment team and holders of existing mining and exploration authorities affected by planned biodiversity offsets. Evidence of consultation should be included in the EIS.	Consideration of mining and exploration licences are included in the feasibility of any stewardship site.	Consideration of mining and exploration licences are included in the feasibility of any stewardship site.
Singleton Council		
The EIS should include the preferred option for securing offsets required for the Project, where land-based offsets would (or could) be located (including current and future tenure), the area and location of proposed ecological rehabilitation and communities to be reinstated, the long-term tenure of ecological rehabilitation, and whether the required credits are available for purchase. It is important to note that in perpetuity conservation of land has an economic impact on the community wherever that offset is secured. Offset land is not rateable and the impact on council's with significant offset land can be significant, and outside the area of immediate benefit. That is, offsets can be secured in other council areas where the benefits of the project are not realised.	Offset locations available under the like-for-like offset rules in accordance with the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017* (BC Regulation) outlined in **Table** 8.1	Offset locations available under the like-for-like offset rules in accordance with the BC Regulation outlined in **Table** 8.1
Muswellbrook Shire Council		
Identify how Biodiversity impacts will be managed Council considers that there is a nationally significant biodiversity corridor within this locality, connecting Mt Royal/Barrington Tops World Heritage Area with the Wollemi World Heritage Area via Lake Liddell. Council requests that if there are credit obligations identified for this project that the applicant provide an offset strategy indicating how any credit obligations will be acquitted with Council's preference being that the credits are sourced from within the locality to improve the conservation of this corridor.	Connectivity corridors shown on **Figure 6.4**	Connectivity corridors shown on **Figure 6.4**

1.8 Amendments Following Public Exhibition of the EIS

Table 1.4 provides a summary of key revisions to the BDAR made following public exhibition in response to the BCS submission dated 13 March 2023.

Table 1.5 provides a summary of key updates to the BDAR and additional surveys undertaken in response to subsequent submissions on the revised BDAR from BCS dated 19 June 2024.

Table 1.6 provides a summary of key updates to the BDAR and additional surveys undertaken following the submission of the BDAR that accompanied the HVO Amendment Report (EMM 2025).

Annexure G provides the details of the BCS submissions, the proponent's response and cross references to relevant sections in the BDAR.

Table 1.4 Summary of Updates to the BDAR in Response to BCS Submission 13 March 2023

Update	Section Reference
Amendments to the assessment following changes to a portion of the proposed Lemington Road re-alignment to avoid impacts to Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC	**Throughout** **Section 3.1.6** **Section 5.2.1.1**
Additional flora transect surveys undertaken in September and November 2023	**Section 4.1.3.1** **Figure 4.1** **Annexure C– Detailed Figure Set**
Additional habitat constraints surveys for a range of fauna species undertaken in August 2023	**Section 4.1.3.2** **Figure 4.2** **Annexure C– Detailed Figure Set** **Table D.2 in Annexure D**
Additional Spot Assessment Technique (SAT) surveys and thermal drone surveys for the koala in accordance with the Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) BAM Survey Guide (DPE 2022b) undertaken in June and July 2023	**Section 4.1.3.2** **Figure 4.2** **Annexure C– Detailed Figure Set** **Table D.2 in Annexure D**
Additional pitfall trapping surveys targeting common planigale (*Planigale maculata*) undertaken in May, June, July and August 2023	**Section 4.1.3.2** **Figure 4.2** **Annexure C– Detailed Figure Set** **Table D.2 in Annexure D**
Addressing recommendations from BCS	Throughout **Annexure H**
Updated surveys to account for data currency (i.e. replacement of surveys taken prior to September 2020) utilising updated survey requirements under the BAM.	**Section 3.1.4** **Section 4.1.3** **Annexure C– Detailed Figure Set** **Annexure D**
Updates to the PCT classification following the expiry of the transitional arrangements for the East Coast PCT Classification. This includes changes to candidate species-credit species.	**Section 3.1** **Section 3.2.2**
Amendments to the Development Footprint resulting in complete avoidance of impacts to Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC	**Section 5.2.1**
Identification of additional offsetting measures for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC to address SAII	**Section 9.2**

Table 1.5 Summary of Updates to the BDAR in Response to BCS Submission 19 June 2024

Update	Section Reference
Updated surveys to account for data currency (i.e. replacement of surveys taken prior to September 2020) utilising updated survey requirements under the BAM.	**Section 3.1.4** **Section 4.1.3** **Annexure C – Detailed Figure Set** **Annexure D**
Updates to the PCT classification following the expiry of the transitional arrangements for the East Coast PCT Classification. This includes changes to candidate species-credit species.	**Section 3.1** **Section 3.2.2**
Amendments to the Development Footprint resulting in complete avoidance of impacts to *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*	**Section 5.2.1**
Identification of additional offsetting measures for *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* to address SAII	**Section 9.2**
Addressing recommendations from BCS	**Throughout** **Annexure G**

Table 1.6 Summary of Updates to the BDAR in HVO Amendment Report

Update	Section Reference
Including the methods, results and species polygon outcomes following additional targeted species-credit species surveys undertaken for arboreal mammals, forest owls, hollow-dependant cockatoos and birds of prey.	**Section 3.0** **Section 4.0** **Annexure C – Detailed Figure Set** **Annexure D**
Reassigning areas from Category 1 – Exempt Land to PCT and condition zones and applying the BAM	**Section 2.3** **Throughout**
Inclusion of the Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*) in the BAM Calculator (BAM-C)	**Annexure B – Credit Reports**
Minor clarifications on the proposed additional offsetting to address potential SAII on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC following comments from Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation (CPHR)	**Section 9.0**

1.9 Contributing Accredited Assessors

Table 1.7 below outlines the details of the Accredited BAM Assessors involved in the survey, calculations and reporting for the BDAR.

Table 1.7 Accredited BAM Assessors and their Role on this Project

Name *Position*	Assessor ID	Tasks Performed	Qualifications/Experience
Allison Riley *Senior Principal Ecologist*	BAAS17042	BDAR author (primary BDAR author and technical review, site inspection)	B/Science 26 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys and biodiversity assessments.

Name *Position*	Assessor ID	Tasks Performed	Qualifications/Experience
Kate Connolly *NSW Ecology Manager*	BAAS17005	BAM-C analysis (BAM-C analysis and credit reports) BDAR contributor (contributing author of report, site inspections)	B/Environmental Science and Management 18 years' experience in ecological consulting flora and fauna surveys and biodiversity assessments.
Travis Peake *National Ecology Leader*	BAAS17081	BAM contributor (BDAR review, site inspection, Warkworth Sands Woodland (WSW) mapping)	B/Natural Resources (Hons) 29 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, vegetation mapping and biodiversity assessments.
Ryan Parsons *Principal Ecologist – Botanist*	BAAS17048	BAM contributor (technical review of PCT allocation, vegetation mapping, WSW site inspections) Targeted species survey (threatened flora surveys)	B/Environmental Science and Management (Hons) 18 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, vegetation mapping and biodiversity assessments.
Trish Robinson *Principal Ecologist – Botanist*	BAAS18123	BAM contributor (vegetation mapping, PCT allocation, vegetation descriptions and BDAR preparation) Detailed vegetation survey (BAM plots) Targeted species survey (threatened flora surveys)	B/Environmental Science (Hons) 16 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, vegetation mapping and biodiversity assessments.
Shaun Corry *Principal Ecologist*	BAAS17041	Targeted species survey (threatened flora surveys)	B/ Science (Biology) 18 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, vegetation mapping and biodiversity assessments.
Adam Cavallaro *Principal Restoration Ecologist*	BAAS18056	BAM contributor (vegetation mapping, PCT allocation, vegetation descriptions and BDAR preparation) Detailed vegetation survey (BAM plots)	B/Environmental Science (Conservation Ecology) 22 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, vegetation mapping and biodiversity assessments.
Bill Wallach *Principal Ecologist*	BAAS17068	Detailed vegetation survey (BAM plots)	Bachelor of Biological Sciences (Hons) 15 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, vegetation mapping and biodiversity assessments.

Name *Position*	Assessor ID	Tasks Performed	Qualifications/Experience
James Garnham *Principal Ecologist*	BAAS19021	Targeted species survey (herpetological, bird, koala and nocturnal spotlighting surveys)	B/Environmental Science and Management (Hons) Doctor of Philosophy – PhD, Conservation Biology 15 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys, herpetological surveys and biodiversity assessments.
Rhys Osborne *Senior Ecologist*	BAAS20026	Targeted species survey (herpetological surveys)	B/Environmental Science and Management (Hons) 10 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys and biodiversity assessments.
Philippa Fagan *Senior Ecologist*	BAAS18117	Targeted species survey (herpetological and bird surveys)	B/Biodiversity and Conservation Masters of Environmental and Business Management 13 years' experience in ecological consulting, flora and fauna surveys and biodiversity assessments.

2.0 Landscape Context

2.1 Site Context

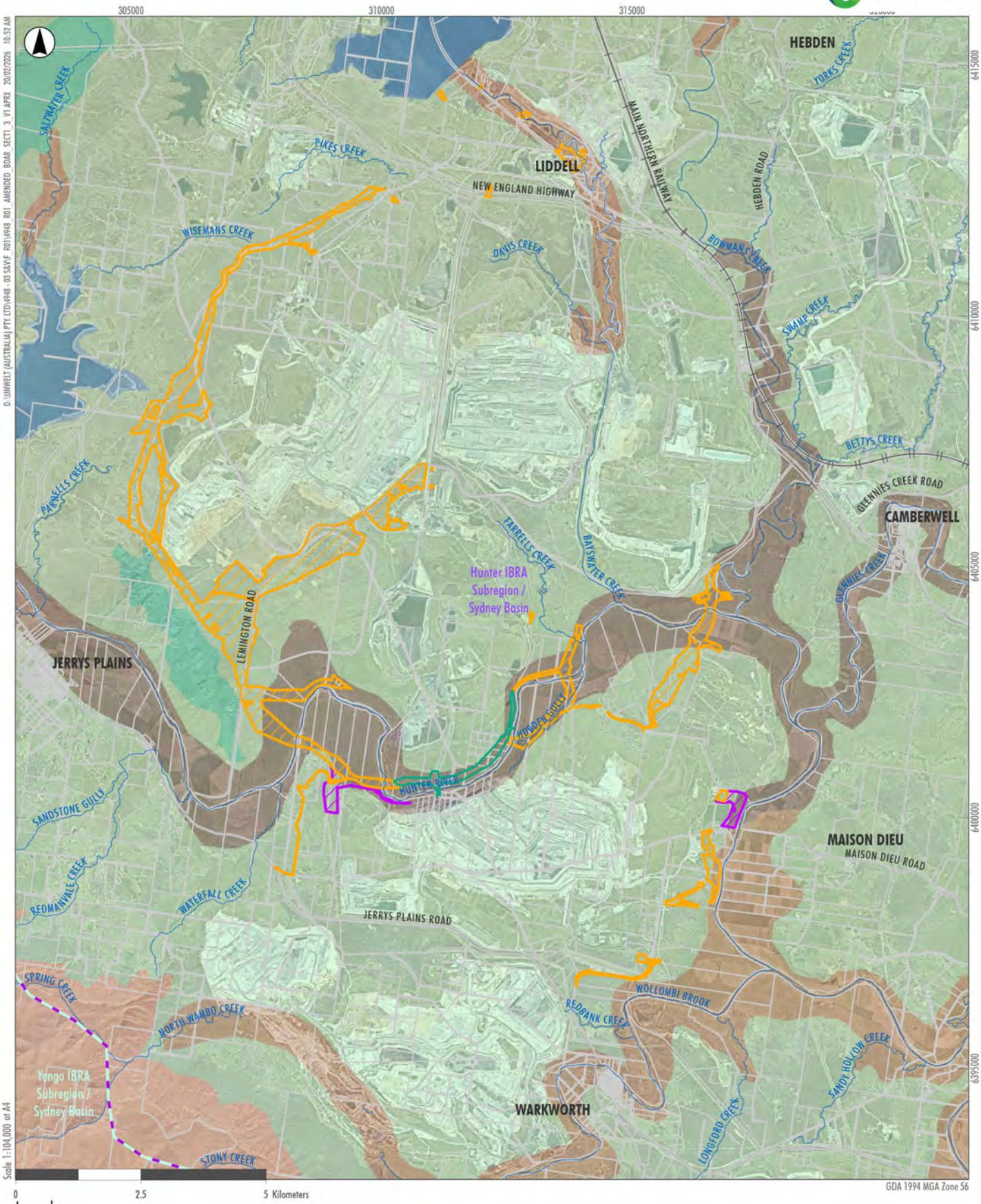
The central Hunter Valley has been largely cleared of intact native vegetation, primarily for agriculture but also other land uses, such as mining and urban development. Similar land use patterns occur in the vicinity of the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints, which are predominantly surrounded by coal mining operations and agricultural land, with small and scattered patches of native vegetation.

The most significant intact vegetation occurring in the wider locality is within Wollemi National Park (NP), which is located approximately 4 km to the southwest at the nearest point to the HVO South Development Footprint and represents a significant refuge area between remnant patches of vegetation in the central Hunter Valley. Ravensworth State Forest is also located in the wider locality, 7 km to the northeast at the nearest point to the HVO North Development Footprint (refer to **Figure** 1.1). The vegetation in Wollemi NP and Ravensworth State Forest is important for its functionality as a fauna refuge in an otherwise widely cleared landscape. The Hunter River, which broadly divides the HVO North and HVO South Project Areas, provides a narrow corridor across the landscape for fauna which utilise riparian vegetation as movement habitat.

The HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints occur entirely in the Sydney Basin IBRA Bioregion and the Hunter subregion. The Hunter Valley is considered to be of great ecological significance given that it represents the only major break in the Great Dividing Range (linking coastal and inland areas of NSW) and includes an overlap between tropical and temperate climate zones.

The Hunter Valley is also characterised by extensive areas of agriculture and coal mining operations. The landscape within and surrounding the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints has been shaped by historical clearing for agricultural, mining and rural development.

Figure 2.1 shows the Site Map and relevant contextual boundaries as required by the BAM (DPIE 2020a). Other relevant landscape features are discussed in Section 2.2 and shown in **Figure 2.2A** and **Figure 2.2B.**



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Hunter IBRA Subregion / Sydney Basin
- Yengo IBRA Subregion / Sydney Basin
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Cadastre

NSW (Mitchell) Landscapes

- Estuary/Water Added
- Central Hunter Alluvial Plains
- Central Hunter Foothills
- Upper Hunter Channels and Floodplain
- Hunter River Basalts
- Yengo Plateau

FIGURE 2.1

Site Map

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

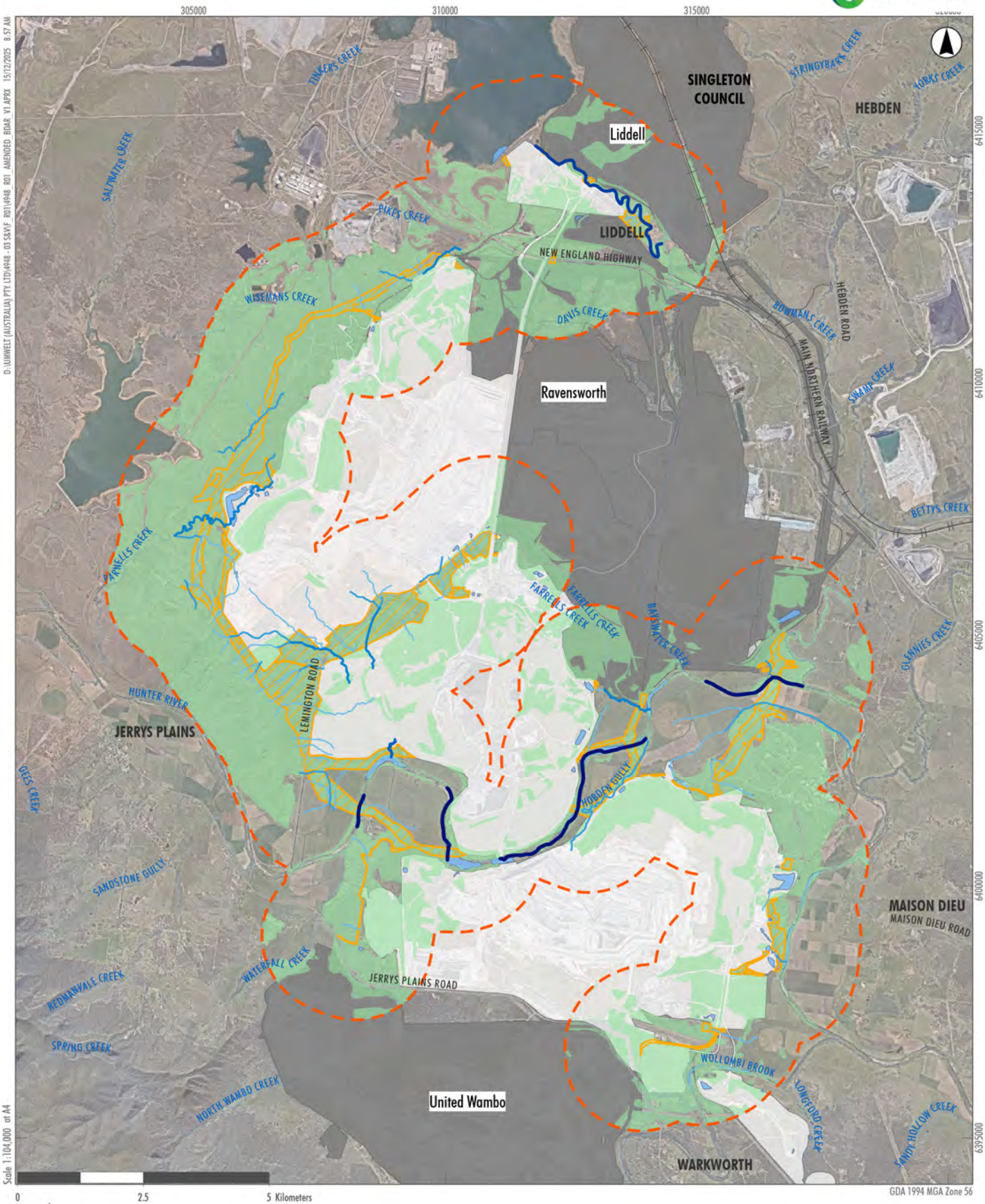
2.2 Landscape Features

Refer to **Table 2.1** for a summary of the other relevant landscape features that pertain to the BAM assessment. Relevant landscape features are shown in **Figure 2.1**, **Figure 2.2A** and **Figure 2.2B.**

Throughout all field surveys and investigations, reconnaissance observations were undertaken to confirm the extent and condition of landscape features and native vegetation cover in the locality. Refer to **Section 3.1** and **Section 4.1** for further detail on survey effort and timing.

Table 2.1 Landscape Features within the Development Footprints

Landscape Features	HVO North	HVO South
IBRA Bioregion	Sydney Basin	Sydney Basin
IBRA Subregion	Hunter	Hunter
NSW (Mitchel) Landscape (dominant)	Central Hunter Foothills	Central Hunter Foothills
Native Vegetation Cover	45.4%	38.1%
Strahler (1952) Streams	9th Order – Hunter River 5th Order – Bayswater Creek 4th Order – Unnamed tributary of the Hunter River southwest of Carrington Billabong 3rd Order – Parnells Creek and Farrells Creek Numerous unnamed 1st and 2nd Order creeks	9th Order – Hunter River 8th Order – Wollombi Brook 4th Order – Unnamed tributary of the Hunter River north of Riverview Pit Several 1st, 2nd and 3rd Order creeks intersecting the HVO South Development Footprint
Important and Local Wetlands	Not present	Not present
Areas of Geological Significance and Soil Hazard Features	None identified	None identified
Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value	Not present	Not present
Connectivity Features	Hunter River	Hunter River
Priority Investment Areas	None identified	None identified



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- 1500m Buffer
- Native Vegetation in the 1500m Buffer
- HVO Existing and Approved Disturbance Areas
- Approved Disturbance Area - Other Mine
- Road
- Railway Line
- Waterbodies
- Drainage Line

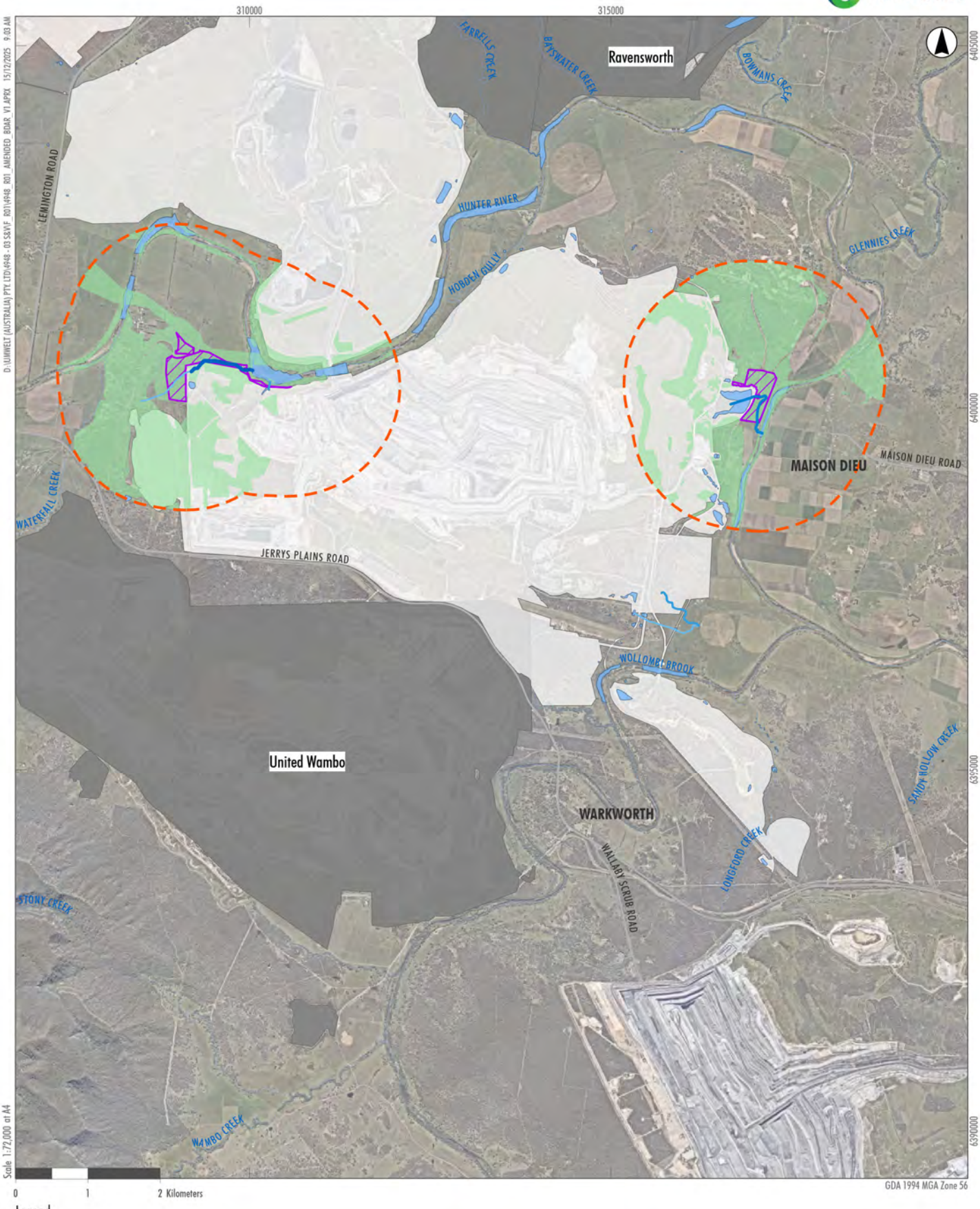
Strahler Stream Order Intersecting Development Footprint

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 9

FIGURE 2.2A

HVO North Location Map

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO South Development Footprint
- 1500m Buffer
- Native Vegetation in the 1500m Buffer
- HVO Existing and Approved Disturbance Areas
- Approved Disturbance Area - Other Mine
- Road
- Waterbodies
- Drainage Line

Strahler Stream Order Intersecting Development Footprint

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

FIGURE 2.2B

HVO South Location Map

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

2.3 Category 1 – Exempt Land

Section 6.12 of the BC Act requires the BDAR to be prepared in accordance with the BAM which is established under Section 6.8 of the BC Act.

Relevantly, section 6.8(3) of the BC Act provides:

> *(3) The biodiversity assessment method is to exclude the assessment of the impacts of any clearing of native vegetation and loss of habitat on category 1-exempt land (within the meaning of Part 5A of the Local Land Services Act 2013), other than any impacts prescribed by the regulations under section 6.3.*

Category 1 – Exempt Land is defined in Part 5A, Division 2 of the NSW *Local Land Services Act 2013* (LLS Act). Subject to certain exceptions, Category 1 – Exempt Land is broadly defined as land which the Environment Agency Head reasonably believes is:

- Land cleared of native vegetation as at 1 January 1990 or lawfully cleared after 1 January 1990 (but before 25 August 2017).
- Low conservation grasslands.
- Land containing only low conservation groundcover (not being grasslands).
- Native vegetation identified as regrowth in a Property Vegetation Plan under the repealed *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.
- Land bio-certified under the BC Act.

The Native Vegetation Regulatory Map (NVR Map) is a statutory mapping tool prepared under Part 5A of the LLS Act to identify and categorise land as Category 1 – Exempt Land, Category 2 – Regulated Land or Category 3 – Biodiversity Certification Land. The NVR Map has been progressively released as a draft to enable landholders to review and, where necessary, seek corrections prior to finalisation. Until the draft NVR Map is finalised for a particular area, landholders are required to determine the applicable land category using the statutory tests set out in Part 5A of the LLS Act and supporting guidance material.

When the biodiversity assessment of the Project commenced in 2020, the draft NVR Map and the mapping of Category 1 – Exempt Land in and around the Project had not been released. As such, when determining how a reasonable person would categorise the Subject Land in accordance with the LLS Act, as landholders are required to do in the interim before the NVR Map is finalised, HVO did not have the benefit of the draft NVR Map. In December 2020, Umwelt, on behalf of HVO, provided, based on its assessment at the time, a draft Category 1 – Exempt Land mapping layer and methods for the Project for review to the then Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) (now Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation (CPHR)).

At the time of this mapping assessment, the Hunter region had been drought declared from mid-2017 up until October 2020 (DPI 2022). Drought conditions limited the ability to assess the conservation value of grasslands during field surveys, and therefore this criterion was not considered in the process. The Interim Grasslands and other Groundcover Assessment Method (IGGAM) (OEH 2017) also notes that "*Assessments should not be conducted when vegetation cover is low (e.g. during or immediately after drought events*".

Advice from the BCS was received in August 2021 which was addressed in Annexure B of the BDAR submitted in December 2022 (Umwelt 2022). No further commentary was provided from the DCCEEW on the Category 1 Land mapping in response to the BDAR (Umwelt 2022) or the revised BDAR following finalisation of the Submissions Report (EMM 2023a).

Following the issue of the Amended Project BDAR (dated June 2025), that supported the HVO Amendment Report (EMM 2025), the CPHR provided a letter (dated 11 September 2025) in relation to the Project's Category 1 Land mapping, highlighting inconsistencies between the Project mapping and the Transitional NVR map and the Draft NVR Map, which were finalised and released, respectively, following the mapping undertaken for the original assessment in 2022.

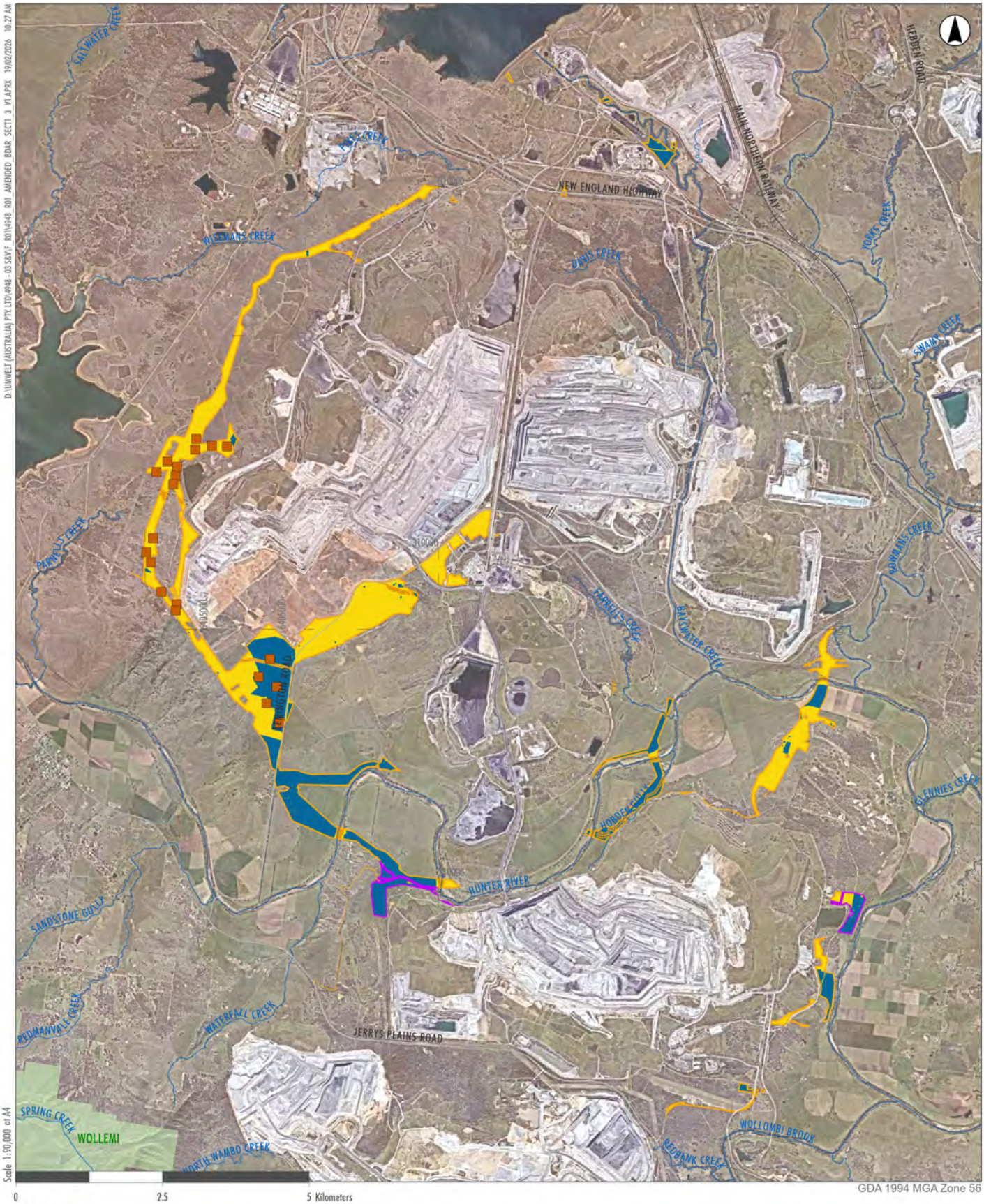
According to the CPHR letter, further evidence was required to demonstrate the Category 1 – Exempt Land mapping across the Development Footprints, including confirmation of absence of critically endangered flora species or ecological communities and the completion of IGGAM transects to determine whether grasslands can be considered 'low conservation grasslands' in accordance with the LLS Act and the IGGAM guidance document (OEH 2017), or the BAM (2020) must be applied.

While the Transitional NVR Map has been finalised, and has force for the identification of some Category 2 land, the draft NVR Map (showing Category 1 – Exempt Land) does not currently have legal effect, and it does not impose any legal obligations and is not binding. While the draft NVR map is under review, land categories must be determined by the landowner applying the criteria in the LLS Act. The draft NVR Map categories across the Development Footprints are shown on **Figure 2.3**.

In October and November 2025, Umwelt undertook threatened flora traverses, rapid assessment points and IGGAM transects in key areas to determine the presence or otherwise of Category 1 – Exempt Land. While some areas demonstrated improvement since the 2017-2020 drought conditions and showed some native diversity, other areas were highly disturbed and dominated by exotic groundcover species. No critically endangered flora species or ecological communities were recorded.

While some of these areas are mapped as draft Category 1 – Exempt Land on the draft NVR Map, there remains doubt as to whether these lands meet the statutory definition of Category 1 land. Furthermore, the IGGAM assessments undertaken produced variable outcomes in terms of the conservation value of the grasslands on the site. According to guidance in *Determining native vegetation land categorisation for application in the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme* (DPE 2023), it is the DCCEEW's policy to adopt an assessment of land categorisation that is consistent with the precautionary principle. In practice, this means the category that affords a higher level of biodiversity protection must be applied when there is uncertainty.

Therefore, it was determined that the proper application of the LLS Act categorisations required all areas in the Development Footprint to be assigned to a PCT and condition zone and assessed in accordance with the BAM, undertaking a precautionary approach to the biodiversity assessment. Accordingly, this BDAR has been updated to reflect the revised land categorisation.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- National Parks
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- IGGAM Location

Draft and Transitional NVR Map (Dec 2025)

- Category 1 - exempt land (draft)
- Category 2 - regulated land (draft)
- Category 2 - vulnerable regulated land (in-force)
- Land excluded from the LLS Act

FIGURE 2.3

Category 1 – Exempt Land

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

2.4 Mine Rehabilitation

Mining operations and related activities have been undertaken at the HVO Complex since the 1950s. Active mining continues at HVO North and HVO South in accordance with existing development consents, which also include areas of previous disturbance that is currently in various stages of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation at HVO is undertaken progressively over the life of the mine, with overburden emplacements and backfilled pits shaped and rehabilitated once dumping is complete. Areas of mine rehabilitation within the HVO Complex do not require formal assessment under the BAM, as discussed below.

All rehabilitation at HVO has been undertaken within areas of historical development consents that are subject to the conditions under the HVO North Consent (DA 450-10-2003 as modified) and the HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261 as modified). None of these rehabilitation areas have been relinquished or as yet meet the completion criteria as outlined in the Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) and both consents acknowledge that further disturbance of these areas may still be required for ongoing rehabilitation maintenance to reach completion criteria.

Approximately 2,856 ha of previously mined land will be subject to rehabilitation within the HVO Complex, at the commencement of the Project in accordance with the HVO Forward Work Program (HVO 2022), which includes areas of native woodland or grazing pasture and grasslands (refer to **Figure 2.4**). Approximately 1,315 ha of varying stages of rehabilitation will be re-disturbed by the Project. The oldest area of formally recorded woodland rehabilitation at HVO is approximately 25 years old (established in 1999), however it is likely that vegetation around the West Pit northern and southern emplacement areas and Wilton Pit emplacement area (all at HVO North) may have been planted in the 1980s and 1990s. While the HVO North Consent includes a specific commitment to rehabilitate 4 ha to Central Hunter Grey Box Ironbark Woodland in relation to the Carrington West Wing Extension (approved under Mod 3), mining in this area as approved has not yet commenced. Furthermore, while the requirement to revegetate an area of at least 0.14 ha using trees representative of the Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest community has been completed as per Schedule 3 Condition 31A of DA 450-10-2003, this area will not be re-disturbed by the Project.

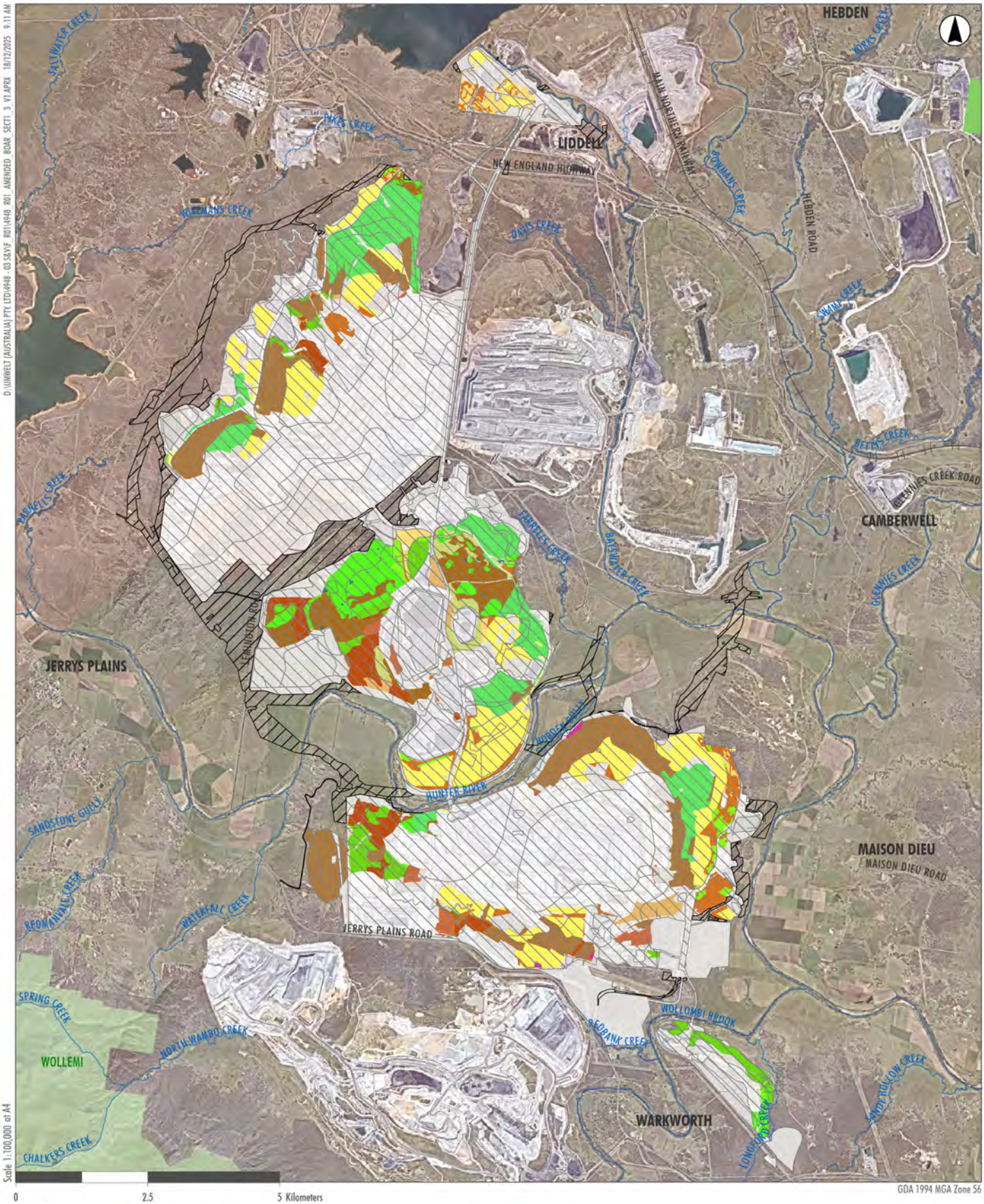
The HVO North Consent and HVO South Project Approval only show the conceptual location of the proposed final rehabilitation and final landform plans, and none of these areas have been formally 'set aside' for conservation purposes, nor are they required to be set aside. The rehabilitation strategy for the Project has reviewed the requirements of the HVO North Consent and HVO South Project Approval and developed a final landform strategy that is generally consistent with its requirements. Further detail on the rehabilitation strategy for the Project is outlined in **Section 5.6.1** and further detailed in the Mine Closure and Rehabilitation Strategy (Appendix T of the EIS) as updated by the HVOCP Amendment Report (EMM 2025).

In summary, the rehabilitated areas at HVO that will be re-disturbed by the Project do not require formal assessment under the BAM due to the following:

- All mine rehabilitation areas are already approved for disturbance.
- None of these areas have been relinquished or meet the completion criteria as outlined in the RMP and the existing consent documents acknowledge that further disturbance to rehabilitated areas may still be required.
- None of the rehabilitation established at HVO that will be disturbed by the Project is required to conform to a PCT or threatened ecological community (TEC).

- The location of the rehabilitation is only shown conceptually by the consent documents and does not represent areas that have been formally 'set aside' for nature conservation, re-vegetation of native vegetation or as a native vegetation offset.
- The obligation to rehabilitate the areas that are currently approved for disturbance under the HVO North Development Consent (DA 450-10-2003) and HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) will be incorporated into the proposed new consents.

Section 4.63 of the EP&A Act provides that if a development consent is to be surrendered as a condition of a new development consent and the development to be authorised by that new development consent includes the continuation of any of the development authorised by the consent to be surrendered, the consent authority is not required to re-assess the likely impact of the continued development, to the extent that it could have been carried out but for the surrender of the consent. As the existing consents will be required to be surrendered as a condition of the proposed new consents for HVO North and HVO South and currently authorise disturbance of the mine rehabilitation areas, any impacts related to that disturbance are not required to be assessed by the consent authority, and therefore in the BDAR.



Legend

- HVO Development Footprints
- Mine Rehabilitation Domains
- HVO Existing and Approved Disturbance Areas
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- State Forest

Rehabilitation

- Interim
- Mixed
- Pasture
- Water Management
- Woodland

Plant Community Types

- Cleared
- Dam
- Mine Rehabilitation - Cooba Woodland
- Mine Rehabilitation - Exotic Grassland
- Mine Rehabilitation - Plantation

FIGURE 2.4

Mine Rehabilitation at HVO Complex

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

3.0 Native Vegetation

3.1 Methods

3.1.1 Literature and Database Review

A review of previous documents and reports relevant to the Project was undertaken. This included regional vegetation mapping reports, site-specific monitoring surveys, ecological surveys undertaken within and in the vicinity of the Development Footprints and also relevant ecological database searches. The information obtained was used to inform survey design and assist in the assessment of potentially occurring threatened species and TECs. Relevant documents included:

- NSW State Vegetation Type Map (Current release C2.0.M2.1) (State Government of NSW and NSW DCCEEW 2024).
- The Vegetation of the Central Hunter Valley, NSW (Peake 2006).
- Greater Hunter Native Vegetation Mapping (Sivertsen et al 2011).
- Upper Hunter State Vegetation Map (OEH 2018b).
- Draft NVR Map and Map Viewer (DCCEEW 2025b)
- Plot to PCT Assignment Tool, accessed April 2025 (DPHI 2025)
- BioNet Vegetation Information System (VIS) Classification Database (DPHI 2025), accessed March 2025.
- Hunter Valley Operations Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (EMM 2018).
- United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Biodiversity Assessment Report (Umwelt 2017).
- Warkworth Sands Woodland Integrated Management Plan (Rio Tinto 2017).
- Preliminary Documentation Report for EPBC 2016/7640 (EMM 2016).
- River Red Gum Monitoring Report 2020 – Carrington Billabong and a reference site (Ecoplanning 2021).
- HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy (HVO 2025)
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – Hunter Valley Operations Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Niche 2015).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – Greater Ravensworth Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Umwelt 2015a).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – United Collieries Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Umwelt 2015b).
- Review of Ecological Assessments for Warkworth Extension EA and HVO South Modification Projects (Umwelt 2011a).
- Hunter Valley Operations – Vegetation Mapping Report (Niche 2011).
- HVO North Modification 3, Carrington West Wing Ecology Assessment (Biosis Research Pty Ltd 2010).

3.1.2 Digital Aerial Photography Interpretation

Digital imagery (aerial photographs) of the Development Footprints was viewed prior to and after vegetation survey to identify spatial patterns in vegetation, land use and landscape features. These informed field survey design and implementation, ecological assessment, and vegetation community mapping of the Development Footprints.

Vegetation communities in the Development Footprints were mapped on-screen overlaying the June 2021 high resolution aerial photographs. Aerials dated January 2025 were reviewed for any substantial changes to vegetation since the initial review. Mapping was undertaken using the Manifold System 8.0 Enterprise Edition GIS in a 64-bit mode. Use of GIS allowed zooming to a relatively large scale, generally at a scale between 1:1,000 and 1:4,000.

3.1.3 Mapping Vegetation and Native Vegetation Extent

Vegetation mapping was undertaken using best-practice techniques to delineate vegetation communities across the Development Footprint. Vegetation mapping involved the following key steps:

- review of digital airborne imagery (as described in **Section 3.1.2**) to explore vegetation distribution patterns as dictated by change in canopy texture, tone and colour, as well as topography
- review of the modelled distribution of vegetation communities within relevant regional mapping projects and ecological studies related to previous development applications
- predicting the distribution of particular vegetation communities based on understanding the distribution of PCTs
- preparation of a draft vegetation community map based on interpretation of digital airborne imagery and preliminary delineation of vegetation community floristics
- ground-truthing of the vegetation map based on survey effort
- revision of vegetation community floristic delineations based on plot data
- revision of the vegetation map based on ground-truthing.

Vegetation communities were delineated through the identification of repeating patterns of plant species assemblages in each of the identified strata.

The Project utilised the PCT Classification available at the time of commencing the BAM assessment. Following the release of the Revised East Coast PCT Classification Project in April 2023, proponents of SSD projects had two years of transitional arrangements to finalise BAM assessments to continue using the legacy PCTs. These transitional arrangements expired on 14 April 2025. Noting the amendments to the Project, as documented in the HVO Amendment Report (EMM 2025), and the requirement to re-collect vegetation integrity (VI) plots (refer to **Section 3.1.4** below), HVO has elected to apply the Revised East Coast PCT Classification for the BAM assessment moving forward.

3.1.4 Floristic and Vegetation Integrity Survey

A total of 134 VI plots have been conducted by Umwelt across the Development Footprints over 29 survey days in March, June, August, September, and October 2020, April 2021, September 2023 and February and March 2025. Plot data was collected in accordance with requirements under the BAM (DPIE 2020a).

Plots undertaken in March, June and August 2020 are subject to data currency considerations, noting these were undertaken more than five years before this current assessment. These plots, while important for contextual purposes, are not included in the BAM-C and are not relied on for minimum plot requirements in accordance with the BAM or for calculating VI scores. Furthermore, some plots are now irrelevant due to vegetation zones no longer proposed to be subject to disturbance. All relevant plots conducted from September 2020 to March 2025, totalling 86, are included in the reporting henceforth. Where plots are contextual only, this is noted.

Rapid assessments were also completed at 101 locations across the Development Footprints during the field surveys, including additional rapid assessments undertaken in October 2021, June, July, August 2022, May 2023, and October and November 2025. Each rapid assessment comprised the recording of the dominant canopy and understorey species. The data from the rapid assessments were primarily used to aid in the delineation and refinement of vegetation mapping.

Table 3.1 outlines the floristic plot survey effort and areas of the vegetation zones across the Development Footprints and this is shown on **Figure 3.1** (vegetation mapping and VI survey locations are also provided in finer detail in **Annexure C**). It is acknowledged that some BAM plots and rapid assessments were undertaken outside the Development Footprints. This is due to the ongoing refinement of the proposed additional disturbance area and avoidance of biodiversity features throughout the assessment process (refer to **Section 5.0** for detail on avoided impacts). In most cases, plots are located proximate to the Development Footprint. The surveys in these locations are considered representative of the vegetation zones they have been assigned to.

Reference was made to the Vegetation Information System (VIS) Classification Database to identify PCTs, as well as reviews of other regional and local vegetation mapping and reporting (refer to **Section 3.1.1**) when designing the field survey. PCTs were stratified into condition states following the initial field survey to determine the appropriate number of transect/plots required in accordance with the BAM (DPIE 2020a).

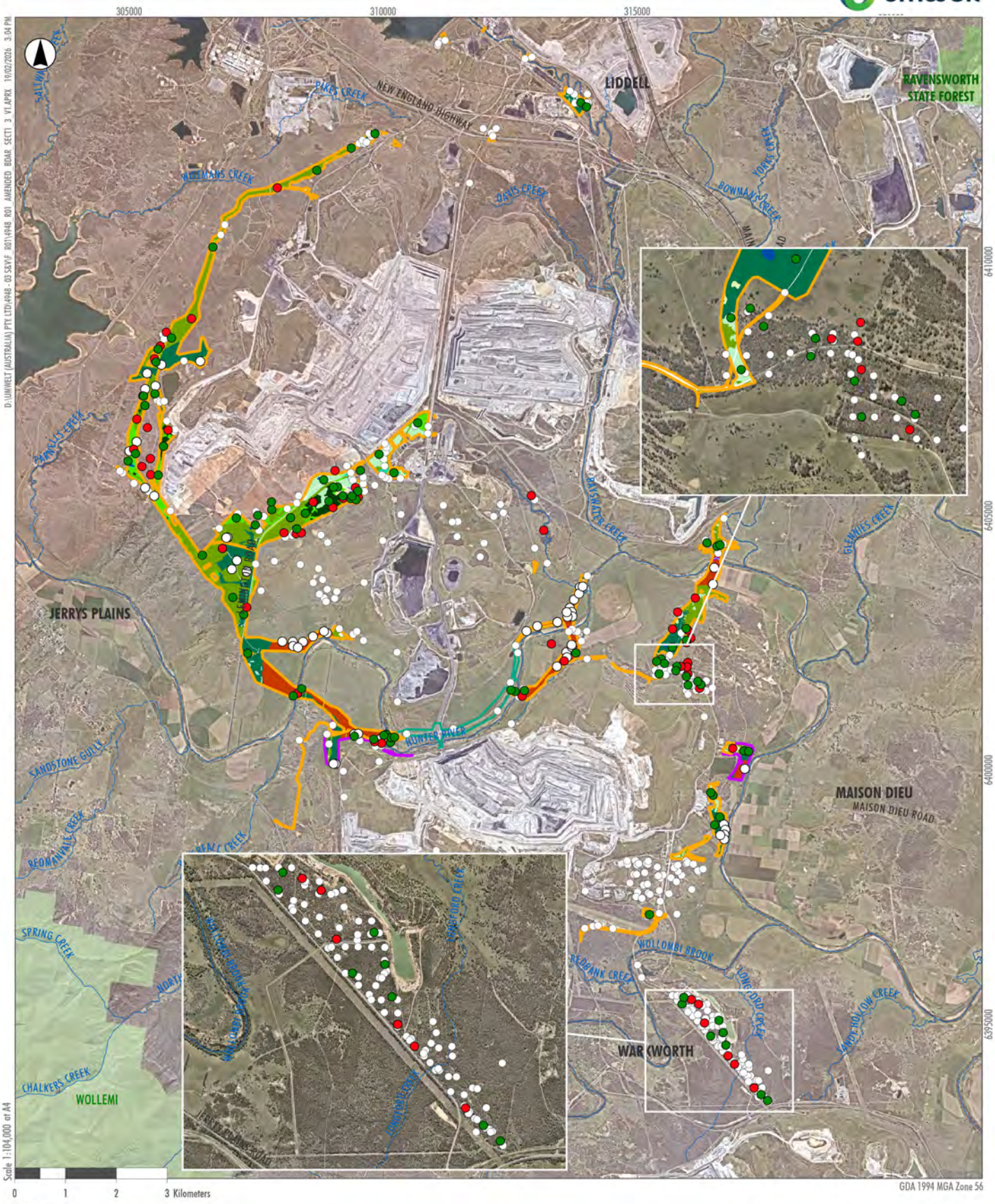
Table 3.1 Summary of Vegetation Survey in the Development Footprints

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone No. and Condition	Development Footprint Area (ha)			Number of BAM Plots Undertaken				
		HVO North	HVO South	Total	HVO North Footprint	HVO South Footprint	Proximate to Footprints	Total Used in BAM-C	Contextual Plots^
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	1. *Moderate*	65.2	0.5	65.7	7	0	12	19	2
	2. *Thinned Woodland*	11.6	1.9	13.5	3	0	2	5	2
	3. *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.4	0.0	3.4	1	0	1	2	3
	4. *Plantation*	11.1	0.1	11.2	3	0	1	4	3
	5. *Scattered Regeneration*	68.9	0.0	68.9	4	0	1	5	5
	6. *Cooba Woodland*	13.2	0.2	13.4	3	0	2	5	0
	7. *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	337.5	7.1	344.6	9	0	0	9	5
	8. *Exotic Grassland*	175.6	21.7	197.3	6	2	0	8	2
	9. *Bulloak Variant*	34.7	0.0	34.7	3	0	5	8	5
	TOTAL for PCT 3431	**721.2**	**31.5**	**752.7**	**39**	**2**	**24**	**65**	**27**
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	10. *Moderate*	7.1	0.0	7.1	4	0	0	4	2
	TOTAL for PCT 3485	**7.1**	**0.0**	**7.1**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**2**
4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	11. *Moderate*	3.0	0.0	3.0	1	0	1	2	2
	TOTAL for PCT 4015	**3.0**	**0.0**	**3.0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**2**
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	12. *Moderate*	4.2	0.0	4.2	2	0	0	2	1
	TOTAL for PCT 4081	**4.2**	**0.0**	**4.2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	13. *Moderate*	1.0	0.0	1.0	1	0	0	1	2
	14. *Low to Moderate*	1.7	0.0	1.7	1	0	0	1	1
	15. *Cooba Woodland*	0.2	0.6	0.8	1	0	0	1	1

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone No. and Condition	Development Footprint Area (ha)			Number of BAM Plots Undertaken				
		HVO North	HVO South	Total	HVO North Footprint	HVO South Footprint	Proximate to Footprints	Total Used in BAM-C	Contextual Plots^
	16. *Derived Native Grassland*	5.1	0.0	5.1	3	0	1	4	1
	17. *Exotic Grassland*	131.2	13.3	144.5	4	1	1	6	1
	TOTAL for PCT 4089	**139.2**	**13.9**	**153.1**	**10**	**1**	**2**	**13**	**6**
Total Vegetation		**874.7**	**45.4**	**920.1**	**56**	**3**	**27**	**86**	**38**
Cleared and non-vegetated land	Non-vegetated	24.2	1.6	25.8	-	-	-	-	-
	Waterbodies/dams	4.4	0.1	4.5	-	-	-	-	-
Total Cleared Lands		**28.6**	**1.7**	**30.3**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINTS		**903.3**	**47.1**	**950.4**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

^ Plots undertaken prior to September 2020 (i.e. greater than five years old). Not used in BAM-C assessment.

Minor differences to vegetation totals are due to rounding.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Rapid Assessment Location
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- State Forest

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3 - 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 10 - 3485 | Moderate
- 11 - 4015 | Moderate
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 13 - 4089 | Moderate
- 14 - 4089 | Low to Moderate
- 15 - 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 16 - 4089 | Derived Native Grassland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland

FIGURE 3.1

Vegetation Integrity Plots and Rapid Assessment Points

Refer to Appendix C Figure for finer detail

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

3.1.5 Additional Assessments for Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC

As part of the biodiversity assessments undertaken for this Project, *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* was identified in areas around Archerfield Road and the SLP 1 and highlighted as an important biodiversity feature in the HVO Complex. Specific geomorphological and soil investigations and detailed surveys to determine the extent of the community was undertaken to assist with avoidance, ultimately resulting in complete avoidance of all direct impacts on the community Avoidance is further outlined in **Section 5.2.1** and a summary of the areas of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* avoided as part of the Project is provided in **Table 5.7**.

3.1.5.1 Geomorphological and Soil Investigations

Geomorphological field investigations were undertaken on 24 and 25 February 2021 to assess the likely extent of aeolian sand near Archerfield Road and SLP 1 to assist in the determination of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* in the Development Footprints and the locality following soil investigations by Minesoils (2020). Whilst the field surveys provided information about soil profile forms, indicative grain size and mineral composition at test pits established in a variety of geomorphic contexts, this information was not sufficient to confirm which profiles are aeolian, fluvial sand or part of a Permian soil profile, because of the potential for bioturbation (mixing) of sand from various sources at any one location. Furthermore, the Final Determination for the *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* refers to its presence on sand dunes generally 1-6 m high, but does not rule out adjacent areas that contain sand on a shallow A horizon or thin veneers of sand where characteristic species are recorded.

For the purposes of this assessment, as the soil sampling and geomorphological investigations did not conclusively determine that the sand present in the locality was of aeolian origin, where the sand could not be proven to be non-aeolian, the precautionary principle was applied and it was considered to be aeolian.

3.1.5.2 Additional Investigations Delineating *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* around Archerfield Road

Following the public exhibition of the EIS (EMM 2022a), further avoidance measures were investigated in relation to the location of the proposed Lemington Road re-alignment relevant to impacts on *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. Previous *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* mapping undertaken by Umwelt identified ecotonal (transition) zones to the west of the original proposed alignment (shown as 'possible WSW' on the original BDAR figures (Umwelt 2022), where the depth of potential aeolian sandy substrate varies and floristic characteristics appear to favour box-ironbark woodland associations.

In further effort to minimise impacts of the Project, HVO conducted additional detailed investigations to move the proposed Lemington Road re-alignment further to the west with the aim of avoiding the HVO North Project's overall impacts to areas of known/accepted *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. The additional design review sought an alignment that considered:

- Adopting an alignment further away (west) on land that transitions away from known/accepted Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC.
- Adopting an alignment further away from existing biodiversity offset areas where Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC is present.

- Further minimising the Project disturbance footprint of the proposed road corridor through remnant vegetation utilising areas of existing disturbance or rehabilitation areas at HVO.
- Maintaining the already established principle design requirements.

Following consideration of the above, a revised portion of the Lemington Road re-alignment was developed that was then subject to ecological assessment for verification of predicted impacts.

As part of additional vegetation surveys for the revised re-alignment of Lemington Road, a review of areas previously considered to have the potential to contain *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* were inspected by Travis Peake (Umwelt National Ecology Leader), Adam Cavallaro (Umwelt Principal Restoration Ecologist) and Clayton Richards (Soil Scientist, Minesoils) on 5 September 2023. The aim of the works was to confirm the extent of the EEC within and adjacent to the new alignment of the road to support additional avoidance measures. Previous assessments had focused on areas that were part of earlier iterations of the proposed Development Footprint, therefore any assessments outside these areas were rapid without detailed vegetation mapping carried out.

The site inspection focused on areas where the new alignment is proposed to be situated and areas previously assigned as possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. The previously mapped possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* adopted a conservative approach based on the presence of a sandy substrate that could not conclusively be ruled out as aeolian sands. During the site inspection some areas previously assigned to be possible Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC were assessed by undertaking a rapid field inspection of vegetation focusing on areas with a canopy and recording domain species across the canopy, shrub layer and groundlayer stratums. Focus areas were selected generally to coincide with the location of previous soil sampling areas undertaken by Minesoils (2023) (refer to **Annexure H**).

An additional floristic/VI plot (Q92) was collected within the new alignment to inform the PCT selection in this area. Vegetation composition was assessed in areas that were confirmed to have a sand dominant substrate and where a thin veneer of sand over clay was present. The areas were re-excavated by Minesoils at the time of the inspection and vegetation was assessed to determine the species composition within a 30 m radius of the point.

The rapid assessment data and visual inspection information was analysed with data from previously collected VI data (ten plots including the new plot) in areas previously mapped as possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* and accepted/known *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. The analysis focused on diagnostic species from the two PCTs regarded as likely to occur in the area containing PCT3431 and PCT3636. In addition, emphasis was placed on determining the association of the vegetation with TECs from the area. An analysis of characteristic species as listed in the Final Determination (NSW Scientific Committee 2011a) of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* was undertaken. Where data had a weak association with the *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* an analysis against characteristic species for the *Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland EEC* was undertaken as this TEC has been confirmed through the presences of the associated PCT3431 in the road alignment.

As a result of the avoidance measures, no areas of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* are expected to be impacted by the revised Lemington Road re-alignment. Further details on the results of the assessment are included in **Section 5.2.1.1**.

3.1.6 Threatened Ecological Community Delineation Techniques

Vegetation communities identified in the Development Footprints were compared to TECs listed under the BC Act and an assessment of similarity with the NSW Scientific Committee Final Determinations was undertaken. The following approach was used:

- full-floristic quadrat assessment, rapid assessments and meandering survey to determine floristic composition and structure of each ecological community
- comparison with published species lists, including lists of 'important species' as identified on the listing advice provided by the NSW Scientific Committee
- comparison with habitat descriptions and distributions for listed TECs
- assessment using guidelines and recovery plans published by the NSW DPE
- comparison with other assessments of TECs in the region.

3.1.7 Plant Community Type Allocation

PCT allocation across the whole of the Subject Land adopts the new east coast PCT classification, which includes PCT numbers above 3000. The east coast classification covers the coast and tablelands bioregions of eastern NSW.

Assignment of vegetation within the Subject Land to 'best fit' PCTs involved following key steps:

- initial PCT allocation with reference to rapid field data points, regional mapping, PCT profiles and the PCT filter tool in the BioNet Vegetation Classification Database (VCD)
- quantitative analysis of floristic plot data using the Plot to PCT Tool to further refine PCT allocation.

In early stages, qualitative vegetation data recorded during field surveys was reviewed to allow for preliminary allocation of PCTs across the Subject Land. The rapid vegetation points were sampled across the landscape with the intent to capture all vegetation types and condition zones, and included information such as dominant species in each strata, landscape position, soils, and proportion of exotic species. This information was used to compare against the descriptive attributes of likely PCTs known from within the region. For more accurate allocation of PCTs, where sufficient floristic data was available, dominant species were entered into the PCT filter tool in the BioNet VCD to identify appropriate matches.

A total of 61 plots sampled within the Subject Land were uploaded to the Eastern NSW Plot to PCT Assignment Tool for analysis (DPHI 2025). This included plots sampled in woodland zones that contained multiple stratum (i.e. Moderate, Thinned, Woodland with Exotic Understorey, Scattered Regeneration) only. Derived Native Grassland plots were not included in the analysis as it is anticipated the results of these would be weaker due to the floristic and structural modifications.

The Plot to PCT tool allows for standardised, quantitative analysis of floristic plot data sampled within the east coast classification area. The tool was utilised to interrogate the relative similarity of each plot uploaded against similar PCTs. The analysis outputs contribute to confidence in PCT selection and strengthening justifications, particularly for PCTs that are difficult to split from qualitative assessment.

The most effective analysis output from the tool is the top ten 'centroid' matches linked with environmental variables including rainfall, elevation and temperature. The centroid matching method determines how floristically related each plot is to PCTs based on the species present and their cover abundance scores. The smaller the 'distance to centroid' value is, the stronger the match is. Ideally, a good match is below the specified threshold of 0.695. The top centroid matches can be filtered by the environmental variables (such that you remove any PCTs that do not fit within the environmental variables at the plot sampling location) to close in on the best fit PCT. The outputs from the centroid matching analysis can be complemented by looking at the 'Characteristic Species' method, which provides the top ten PCTs based on similarity in floristics, not considering relative abundance. The tool suggests that the Characteristic species matching method should not be used in isolation from the centroid matching method, as it is still under development. However, it can still be useful, particularly where the results of the centroid matching are weak. The tool also provides a map of publicly available plots from the BioNet Atlas, which allows you to view and compare the PCT allocation for plots nearby to your sampled plots.

A comprehensive review of the Plot to PCT Tool outputs was undertaken for all 61 plots analysed. Multiple plots were considered together if sampled in vegetation from the same patch or otherwise having similar floristic, structural and landscape characters. The analysis considered all PCTs in the Plot to PCT Tool output, then refined that to a short list of two or three for more detailed comparison. The centroid values, characteristic species matches, environmental variables thresholds, the descriptive attributes/species by growth form from the PCT profiles as well as the State Vegetation Type Map (SVTM) (NSW DCCEEW 2024) were all considered thoroughly before determining the best fit PCT to allocate to each individual plot or group of plots.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Native Vegetation Extent

As outlined in **Table 3.2**, the Development Footprints are substantially (76%) dominated by derived and modified vegetation types (i.e. native and exotic grasslands) and cleared lands. Only approximately 24% of the combined Development Footprints are covered by native (woody) vegetation.

Furthermore, a large area (approximately 313.1 ha) occurs within the wider easement area, not proposed to be impacted by the Project, but included in the Development Footprint until the final design is determined.

Where native vegetation extent mapping was undertaken outside the Disturbance Footprints (and therefore access was not always available for on-ground verification), reference was made to the non-native vegetation mapping provided in the Greater Hunter Vegetation Map (Sivertsen et al 2011), the SVTM (NSW DCCEEW 2024) and cross-referenced with digital aerial photography.

Figure 3.2A and **Figure 3.2B** show the native vegetation extent in the Development Footprints and **Figure 2.2A** and **Figure 3.2B** show the native vegetation extent in the 1500 m buffer.

Table 3.2 Vegetation and Non-Native Cover in the Development Footprints

Cover Type	Condition Types	Area (ha)			Overall % Cover
		HVO North	HVO South	Total	
Native vegetation cover	Native vegetation (woody)	225.3	3.3	228.6	24%
	Derived native grassland (non-woody)	342.5	7.1	349.6	37%
Total native cover		**567.8**	**10.4**	**578.2**	**61%**
Non-native vegetation and excluded lands	Exotic vegetation*	306.8	35.0	341.8	36%
	Cleared land (roads, infrastructure, dams)	28.6	1.7	30.3	3%
Total non-native/excluded lands cover		**335.4**	**36.7**	**372.1**	**39%**

* Includes Exotic Grassland condition types (Vegetation Zones 8 and 17). While it is acknowledged these areas include some native species, they are primarily dominated by exotic vegetation (i.e. on average greater than 50% exotic cover and less than 15% native cover). Furthermore, these zones are below the minimum offsetting threshold in this BAM assessment.

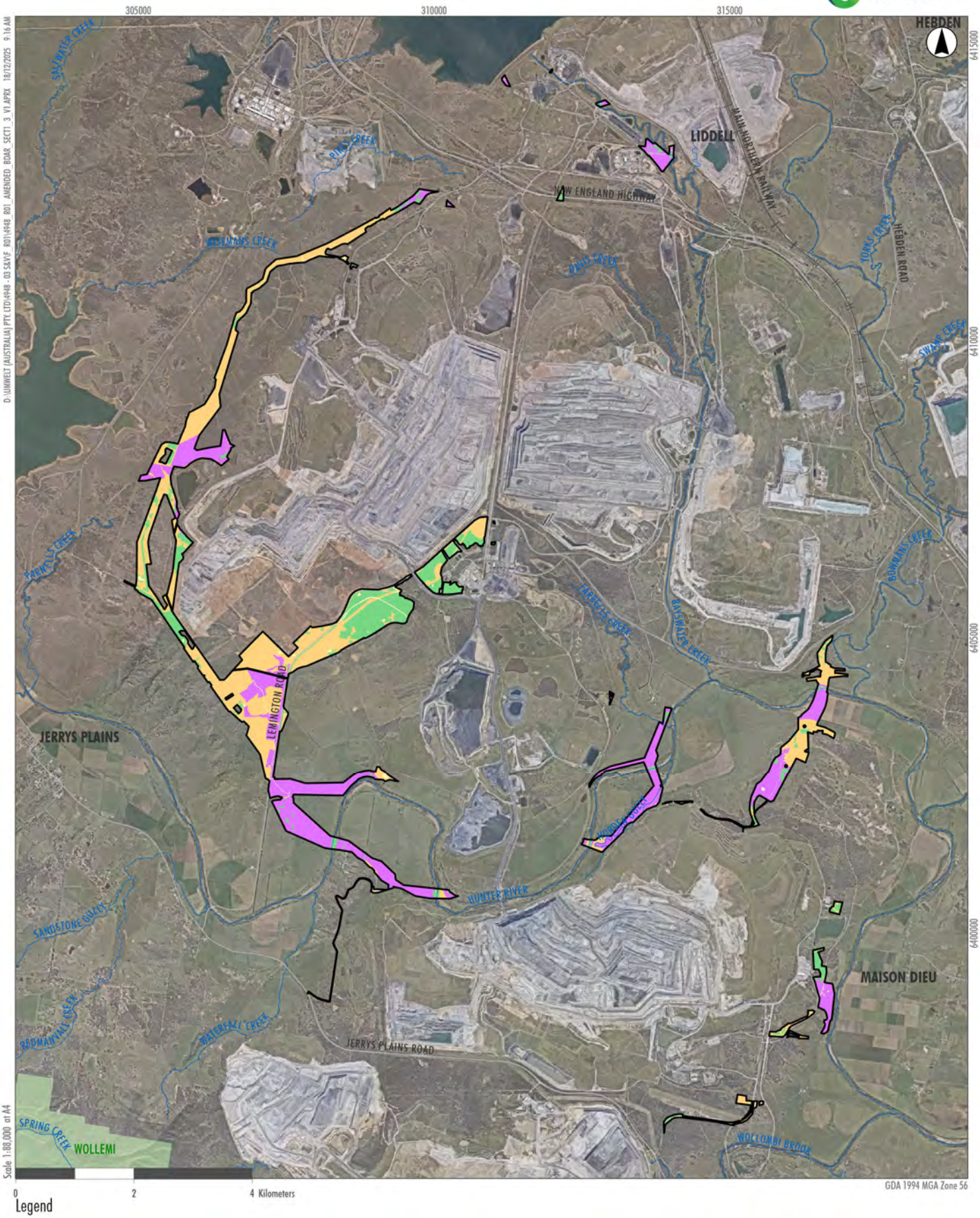
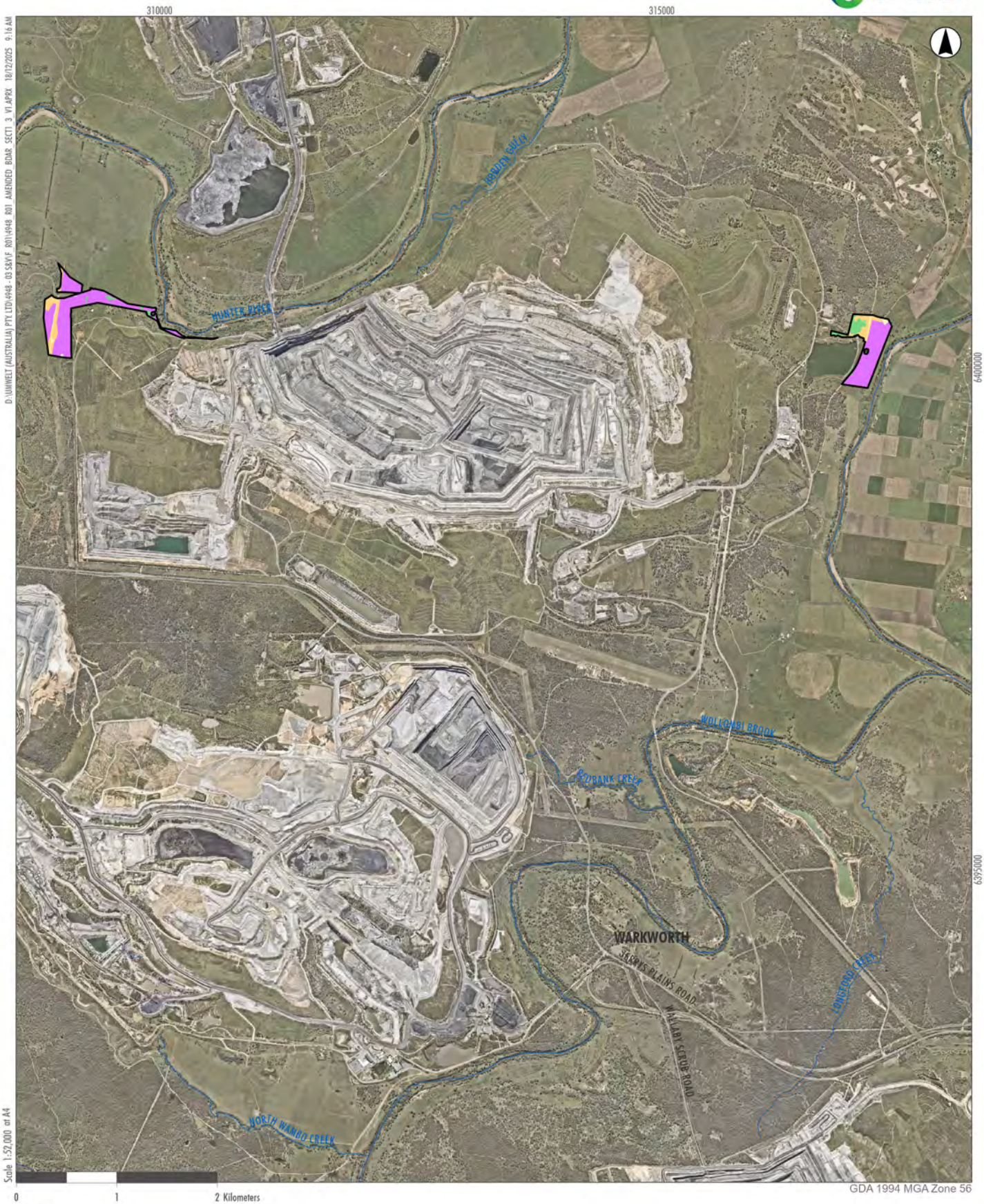


FIGURE 3.2A

HVO North Native Vegetation Extent

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line

Native Vegetation Extent

- Native Vegetation (Woody)
- Native Vegetation (Non-Woody)
- Exotic Vegetation
- Cleared Land

FIGURE 3.2B

HVO South Native Vegetation Extent

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

3.2.2 Plant Community Types and Vegetation Zones

Surveys of the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints identified five PCTs across 17 condition zones as outlined in **Table 3.3** below. These communities were aligned with PCTs in accordance with the Revised East Coast PCT classification as described in the BioNet VCD. The PCTs were then stratified into broad condition states (vegetation zones).

Refer to **Figure 3.3A** and **Figure 3.3B** for PCT and vegetation zone mapping across the Development Footprints. Noting the large size of the Development Footprints, **Annexure C** provides vegetation zone mapping in finer detail. In accordance with the BAM, digital files of PCT and vegetation zone boundaries have been provided at submission.

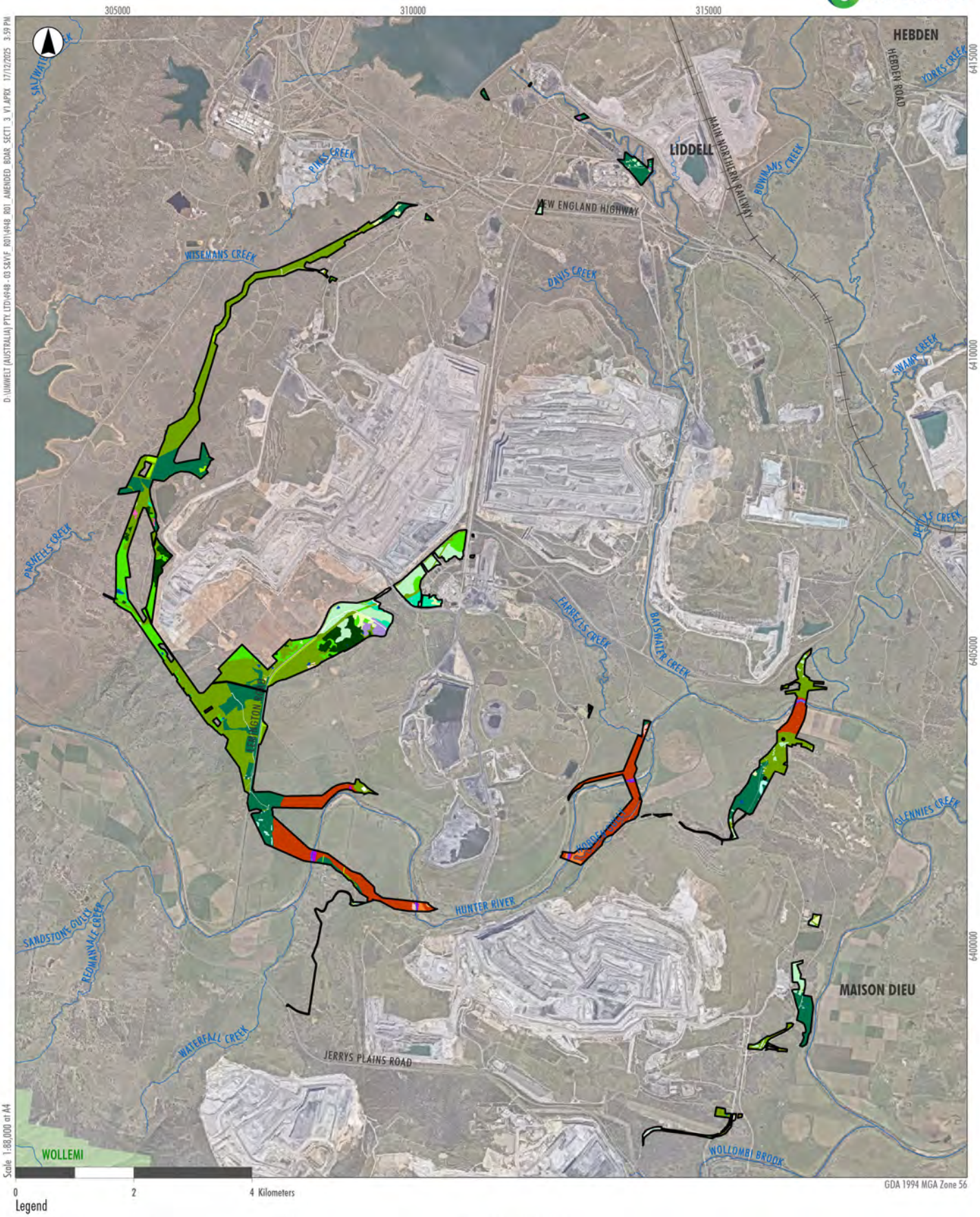
All assessments of PCTs and vegetation zones used in the BAM-C referred to the standard benchmark data provided by the BioNet VCD.

Note that the areas quoted in **Table 3.3** include all vegetation within the Development Footprints. This includes all native woody and non-woody vegetation and exotic vegetation as outlined in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.3 Plant Community Types and Vegetation Zones

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)			Patch Size Class
		HVO North	HVO South	Total	
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	1. *Moderate*	65.2	0.5	65.7	>100 ha
	2. *Thinned Woodland*	11.6	1.9	13.5	>100 ha
	3. *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.4	0.0	3.4	>100 ha
	4. *Plantation*	11.1	0.1	11.2	>100 ha
	5. *Scattered Regeneration*	68.9	0.0	68.9	>100 ha
	6. *Cooba Woodland*	13.2	0.2	4	>100 ha
	7. *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	337.5	7.1	344.6	>100 ha
	8. *Exotic Grassland*	175.6	21.7	197.3	< 5 ha
	9. *Bulloak Variant*	34.7	0.0	34.7	>100 ha
	TOTAL for PCT 3431	**721.2**	**31.5**	**752.7**	
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	10. *Moderate*	7.1	0.0	7.1	>100 ha
	TOTAL for PCT 3485	**7.1**	**0.0**	**7.1**	
4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	11. *Moderate*	3.0	0.0	3.0	>100 ha
	TOTAL for PCT 4015	**3.0**	**0.0**	**3.0**	
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	12. *Moderate*	4.2	0.0	4.2	>100 ha
	TOTAL for PCT 4081	**4.2**	**0.0**	**4.2**	

Plant Community Type	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)			Patch Size Class
		HVO North	HVO South	Total	
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	13. *Moderate*	1.0	0.0	1.0	>100 ha
	14. *Low to Moderate*	1.7	0.0	1.7	>100 ha
	15. *Cooba Woodland*	0.2	0.6	0.8	>100 ha
	16. *Derived Native Grassland*	5.1	0.0	5.1	>100 ha
	17. *Exotic Grassland*	131.2	13.3	144.5	< 5 ha
	TOTAL for PCT 4089	**139.2**	**13.3**	**153.1**	
Total Vegetation		**874.7**	**45.2**	**920.1**	



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3 - 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 10 - 3485 | Moderate
- 11 - 4015 | Moderate
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 13 - 4089 | Moderate
- 14 - 4089 | Low to Moderate
- 15 - 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 16 - 4089 | Derived Native Grassland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland

FIGURE 3.3A

HVO North PCT and Vegetation Zone Mapping

Refer to Appendix C Figure for detailed vegetation mapping

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 15 - 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 16 - 4089 | Derived Native Grassland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland

FIGURE 3.3B

HVO South PCT and Vegetation Zone Mapping

Refer to Appendix C Figure for detailed vegetation mapping

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025)) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

3.2.2.1 PCT 3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	
Legacy PCTs (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	1691: Grey Box – Narrow-leaved ironbark – Grey Box grassy woodland of the central and upper Hunter PCT 1692: Bull Oak grassy woodland of the central Hunter Valley
Vegetation Formation	Dry Sclerophyll Forests (Shrub/grass sub-formation)
Vegetation Class	Hunter-Macleay Dry Sclerophyll Forests
Percent Cleared	86.47%

VCD Description for PCT 3431

A tall sclerophyll open forest or woodland with a sparse cover of dry shrubs and a mid-dense grassy ground layer that occurs mainly on the undulating floor of the central Hunter valley with scattered areas on adjoining ranges. The canopy very frequently includes *Eucalyptus crebra* with a high foliage cover, either exclusively or occasionally in association with *Eucalyptus moluccana* (and or its hybrid with *Eucalyptus albens*). *Allocasuarina luehmannii* is common, either in the mid-stratum or as a member of the canopy where eucalypt species are regenerating. The mid-stratum very frequently includes only a sparse cover, with occasional *Notelaea microcarpa* or *Maireana microphylla* and rarely the lower growing chenopod shrub *Enchylaena tomentosa*. Taller species of Acacia, such as *Acacia salicina* and *Acacia falcata*, are rare. The mid-dense ground layer is mainly comprised of a high diversity of grasses and forbs with some graminoids, twiners, hardy ferns, low-growing shrubs and sedges. The layer very frequently includes *Aristida ramosa, Glycine tabacina, Cymbopogon refractus, Cheilanthes sieberi* subsp. *sieberi, Dichondra repens* and the prostrate shrub *Eremophila debilis*. Other common grasses include *Eragrostis leptostachya, Microlaena stipoides, Austrostipa scabra* and *Bothriochloa decipiens* var. *decipiens*. This PCT is most extensively distributed on low-gradient Permian sediments across the central Hunter valley between the Rothbury, Muswellbrook and Wybong districts, where it primarily occurs in small, often disturbed patches in a landscape dominated by agriculture and coal mining. It is also found in small areas on the low hills that rise north-east from Muswellbrook on Carboniferous sediments but only on exposed slopes and crests below around 400 metres above sea level (asl). Across its range the PCT occupies warm, dry environments with a mean annual rainfall typically below 750 mm. This PCT is related both floristically and spatially to several other grassy forest and woodland PCTs in the central Hunter. PCT 3314 also is widespread on the Permian sediments but is associated with rises and areas of greater relief, is generally shrubbier and only rarely includes *Eucalyptus crebra*. PCT 3485 shares many of the ground cover species in a similar topographic position however differs in that *Eucalyptus dawsonii* is very frequently recorded with a high foliage cover and is almost absent from this PCT. On the Carboniferous sediments it grades into PCT 3525.

PCT Description within the Development Footprints	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone is diffused throughout the Development Footprints.
Overall Description	Across the Subject Land, there are numerous condition zones of PCT 3431, attributed to the history of disturbance across the Subject Land. The moderate condition zone is characterised by an open canopy up to 22 m in height and dominated by narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), with occurrences of grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) and bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*). A range of other shrub/small tree species may also be present at low density. The mid-dense ground stratum supports a variety of native grasses and forbs. Condition zones have been stratified to reflect the variation across this vegetation type, including exotic understorey, natural regeneration and plantings.

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	
Upper stratum species (Characteristic species from the higher condition zones VZ1 and VZ2)	*Eucalyptus crebra, Eucalyptus moluccana, Eucalyptus blakelyi, Angophora floribunda, Allocasuarina luehmannii, Brachychiton populneus*
Mid-stratum species (Characteristic species from the higher condition zones VZ1 and VZ2)	*Acacia salicina, Acacia amblygona, Breynia oblongifolia, Geijera salicifolia, Notelaea microcarpa, Solanum cinereum*
Ground stratum species (Characteristic species from the higher condition zones VZ1 and VZ2)	*Aristida ramosa, Austrostipa verticillata, Bothriochloa decipiens, Brunoniella australis, Cheilanthes sieberi subsp. sieberi, Chrysocephalum apiculatum, Cymbopogon refractus, Cynodon dactylon, Digitaria diffusa, Einadia hastata, Eremophila debilis, Enchylaena tomentosa, Glycine tabacina, Hibbertia linearis, Lomandra multiflora subsp. multiflora, Microlaena stipoides*
Introduced Species	A range of introduced species were recorded throughout the various condition states of this PCT. The most commonly recorded introduced shrubs were African olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*), African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), black-berry nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) and Paddy's lucerne (*Sida rhombifolia*). Common ground cover weeds were galenia (*Galenia pubescens*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*), lamb's tongues (*Plantago lanceolata*) and Coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*).
Alignment with BC Act TECs	The higher condition zones of this PCT were found to be consistent with the *Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland* EEC, however VZ5, VZ6, VZ7 and VZ8 were excluded owing to their disturbed state and therefore absence of key characters of the TEC. VZ9 (Bulloak Variant) does not conform to this TEC due to the high dominance of bulloak. A very small area (0.05 ha) of PCT3431 Poor Condition DNG (VZ7) conforms to *Weeping Myall Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion CEEC* due to patches of *Acacia pendula* occurring within the grassland. This area is not within the area of proposed impact and therefore has not been entered into the BAM-C. Refer to **Section 3.2.4** for further justification.
Justification for PCT selection	This vegetation type was aligned with PCT 3431 as it supports a number of the species and stratum specifics identified for the PCT as listed on the VCD (DCCEEW 2025). Its canopy is dominated by narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) and grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*), being the two key diagnostic canopy species of PCT 3431. PCT 3431 is most extensively distributed on low-gradient Permian sediments across the central Hunter valley between the Rothbury, Muswellbrook and Wybong districts which aligns with the location and geology of the Subject Land. PCT 3431 is widely mapped on the SVTM in and around the Subject Land. This vegetation was originally allocated to PCT 1691 in the legacy classification system, with the lineage history showing that PCT has now been split to 3314 and 3431 which are both closely aligned. Note that VZ9 (Bulloak Variant) was allocated to PCT 1692 in the legacy system, which is now also aligned with PCT 3431 under the new classification. Detailed analysis for the plot data from the PCT 1692 plots was undertaken separately from the PCT 1691 plots to ensure PCT 3431 is the best fit for VZ9. Under the new classification, there is no PCT for a bulloak dominated veg type, and as such this zone is now included with PCT 3431, as a separate condition zone (Bulloak variant).

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

An analysis using the VCD filter tool and the Plot to PCT tool was undertaken to determine the best fit PCT. A total of 42 plots sampled in this vegetation type (using contextual plots undertaken prior to September 2020 and more recently completed plots included in the BAM-C, but not including highly degraded condition zones and DNG) were entered to the Plot to PCT tool, 41 of which were matched with PCT 3431. Of these, 24 plots had 3431 as the top match and 34 plots had a distance to centroid value of <0.695 (indicating a strong relationship).

PCT 3314 was the top match for only four of the 43 plots in this vegetation type.

As a result of a detailed analysis, PCT 3431 was determined the best fit for this vegetation type within the Subject Land. Of the other PCTs matched from the tool, those further considered are listed below, however all were discounted for various reasons as stated.

Other PCTs Considered

3314 Central Hunter Slopes Grey Box Forest

PCT 3314 and 3431 are closely aligned. The key differing factors between the two, as described in the VCD is that PCT 3314 is associated with rises and areas of greater relief (i.e. higher elevation areas off the valley floor), is generally shrubbier and only rarely includes narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*). Where this vegetation type was mapped within the Subject Land, narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) is dominant in the canopy and is very sparsely shrubby (except in some disturbed condition states where colonising shrubs such as cooba (*Acacia salicina*) may be in higher density). The VCD describes PCT 3431 as very frequently including narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) with a high foliage cover, either exclusively or occasionally in association with grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) (and or its hybrid with *Eucalyptus albens*). As stated above, the Plot to PCT tool outputs provide further validation that this vegetation is more closely aligned with PCT 3431 than 3314.

3485 Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest

PCT 3485 is closely aligned with PCT 3431, comprising a number of similar understorey species and sharing the same landscape position somewhat. However, PCT 3485 differs in that slaty box (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) is the characteristic tree species, whereas PCT 3431 is characterised by a dominance of narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), which is consistent with this vegetation. As such, PCT 3431 is considered to be a better fit for this vegetation type.

Vegetation Zone (VZ)	Condition	Area (ha)	Plots Used in BAM-C	VI Score
VZ1	Moderate	HVO North – 65.2 HVO South – 0.5	P47, P50, P59, P69, P70, P71, P72, P74, P75, P76, P77, P78, P83, P84, P88, P92, P114, P129, P132	57.9
VZ2	Thinned Woodland	HVO North - 11.6 HVO South – 1.9	P55, P60, P85, P130, P145	53.8
VZ3	Woodland with Exotic Understorey	HVO North – 3.4 HVO South – 0.0	P116, P117	22.1
VZ4	Plantation	HVO North – 11.1 HVO South – 0.1	P58, P147, P148, P150	47.0

PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland				
VZ5	Scattered Regeneration	HVO North – 68.9 HVO South – 0.0	P56, P120, P133, P141, P153	46.5
VZ6	Cooba Woodland	HVO North – 13.2 HVO South – 0.2	P64, P65, P66, P126, P127	47.8
VZ7	Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland	HVO North – 337.5 HVO South – 7.1	P48, P63, P111, P123, P128, P142, P146, P149, P154	16.2
VZ8	Exotic Grassland	HVO North – 175.6 HVO South – 21.7	P49, P51, P62, P112, P113, P115, P144, P155	12.9
VZ9	Bulloak Variant	HVO North – 34.7 HVO South – 0.0	P57, P73, P82, P89, P90, P125, P151, P152	41.4

VZ1 Moderate

This vegetation zone is in good condition with tree canopy present, mid stratum present but sparse (as is typical for this PCT) and a ground layer dominated by native grasses and a small component of native forbs.



VZ2 Thinned Woodland

This vegetation zone is similar in floristics and structure to VZ1 (Moderate), however has a more open canopy due to previous clearing and disturbance.



PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

VZ3 Woodland with Exotic Understorey

This vegetation zone, similar to VZ2, has a sparse canopy due to previous clearing. This zone differs in that the ground cover is dominated by exotic species such as *Eragrostis curvula*, *Galenia pubescens*, *Sida rhombifolia* and *Senecio madagascariensis*. Occasionally the native *Cynodon dactylon* is in higher abundance. Regenerating Eucalypts may be present.



VZ4 Plantation

This vegetation zone has an open canopy which reaches up to 18 m in height and is comprised of mixed planted eucalypts, including *Corymbia maculata*, *Eucalyptus blakleyii, Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *Eucalyptus saligna* and river red gum x flooded gum hybrid (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis – grandis*).

The mid-storey is generally absent, or occasionally sparse.



VZ5 Scattered Regeneration

This vegetation zone has scattered occurrences of *Acacia salicina* and *Allocasuarina luehmannii* up to 10 m high. The sparse mid-storey reaches up to 4 m in height and is comprised of *Geijera salicifolia*, *Notelaea microcarpa* var. *microcarpa* and regenerating canopy species.

The mid-dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses.



PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland

VZ6 Cooba Woodland

This vegetation zone has a sparse canopy of *Acacia salicina*, generally up to 6 m in height, occasionally taller. Other native shrubs characteristic of PCT 3431 may occasionally present.

The mid-dense to dense ground stratum comprises native grasses and forbs.



VZ7 Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland

A canopy layer is absent from this vegetation zone, however occasional low trees/shrubs may be present.

The dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses and forbs.



VZ8 Exotic Grassland

This zone is largely characterised by a dense grassy layer dominated by exotics such as *Eragrostis curvula*), *Cenchrus clandestinus*, *Chloris gayana* and *Galenia pubescens*. Areas of native couch (*Cynodon dactylon*) and *Imperata cylindrica* are occasionally interspersed within this zone.

Occasional scattered and widely spaced mature paddock trees (characteristic of PCT 3431) occur in this zone.



PCT 3431: Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	
VZ9 Bulloak Variant This vegetation zone has a dense canopy dominated by *Allocasuarina luehmannii* with occurrences of *Eucalyptus crebra*. Occasional native shrubs/low trees may be present. The sparse ground stratum is dominated by native grasses and herbs.	

3.2.2.2 PCT 3485 – Grey Box – Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest

PCT 3485: Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	1655: Grey Box – Slaty Box shrub-grass woodland on sandstone slopes of the upper Hunter and Sydney Basin
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Eastern Riverine Forests
Percent Cleared	89.57%

VCD Description for PCT 3485

A tall to very tall sclerophyll open forest with a sparse shrub layer and a patchy, grassy ground cover occurring on Permian sediments on gentle slopes and rises in a restricted region between Warkworth and Wybong in the central Hunter valley. The canopy very frequently includes a high cover of *Eucalyptus dawsonii*, either exclusively or occasionally in association with *Eucalyptus moluccana*. The sparse mid-stratum very frequently includes scattered chenopods (*Einadia nutans*, *Enchylaena tomentosa* or *Maireana microphylla*) and commonly *Notelaea microcarpa*. One or more Acacia species may also be present, but individual species such as *Acacia salicina* are only occasional to rare. The sparse ground layer is typically comprised of low shrubs, grasses, forbs and a ground fern, and very frequently includes *Eremophila debilis*, Glycine *tabacina*, *Sporobolus creber*, *Aristida ramosa*, *Sida corrugata*, *Austrostipa scabra* and *Dichondra repens*. This PCT occurs in a warm, dry environment with a mean annual rainfall typically below 650 mm. It is related both floristically and spatially to several other grassy forest and woodland PCTs in the central Hunter valley. It shares a strong floristic overlap with both PCT 3314 and PCT 3431 as the ground cover species and shrubs are very similar and both occur on Permian sediments. *Eucalyptus dawsonii* is rarely recorded in these PCTs. However, this eucalypt is a characteristic species of other PCTs in the region (PCT 3497 and PCT 3490) which occur on poorer soils and with a diverse shrub layer with a less diverse assemblage of grasses and forbs.

PCT Description within the Development Footprint	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone occurs in the central part of the Development Footprint at HVO North, on the slopes to the south of the existing Lemington Road.

PCT 3485: Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	
Overall Description	This vegetation zone has an open canopy of up to 20 metres in height, dominated by slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) and grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*). The low tree layer, dominated by bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*), is generally sparse and reaches up to 12 m in height. The sparse ground stratum is dominated by native herbs, rushes and grasses.
Upper stratum species	*Eucalyptus dawsonii, Brachychiton populneus, Eucalyptus moluccana, Allocasuarina luehmannii*
Mid-stratum species	*Acacia salicina, Notelaea microcarpa, Geijera salicifolia, Teucrium junceum*
Ground stratum species	*Bothriochloa decipiens, Aristida ramosa, Enteropogon acicularis, Chloris ventricosa, Paspalidium distans, Cymbopogon refractus, Lomandra filiformis, Arthropodium milleflorum, Brunoniella australis, Glycine tabacina, Rytidosperma monticola, Dichondra repens, Elymus scaber, Oxalis perennans, Austrostipa verticillata, Calotis lappulacea, Phyllanthus virgatus, Sida corrugata*
Introduced Species	Exotic species generally occur in low to moderate abundance. African olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*) occurs sporadically in the mid-storey of this vegetation zone, while the ground stratum contains small amounts of exotic including guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maximus* var. *maximus*).
Justification for PCT selection	Vegetation Zone 10 was aligned with PCT 3485 as it supports a number of the species and structural specifics identified for the PCT as listed on the VCD (DCCEEW 2025). Its canopy is dominated by slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) and grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*), being the two key diagnostic canopy species of PCT 3485. This vegetation was originally allocated to PCT 1655 in the legacy classification system. Under the new classification system, there are two PCTs in the Hunter Valley that have a characteristic dominance of slaty gum (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*), being 3485 and 3490. An analysis using the VCD filter tool and the Plot to PCT tool was undertaken to determine the best fit PCT. Six plots sampled in this vegetation type (contextual plots undertaken prior to September 2020 and plots included in the BAM-C) were entered to the Plot to PCT tool, resulting in 3485 as the top match for five plots and the second match for the remaining plots (at distance to centroid values of 0.5938-0.64, indicating a strong match). PCT 3490 was matched for only two plots, however these were not as strong a match at 0.624 and 0.692. As a result of a detailed analysis, PCT 3485 was determined the best fit for this vegetation type within the Subject Land. Of the other PCTs matched from the tool, those further considered are listed below, however all were discounted for various reasons as stated.

PCT 3485: Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest				
			Other PCTs Considered **3490 Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest** As stated above, PCT 3490 was matched for these plots using the Plot to PCT tool, however the similarity was weaker compared to the outputs for PCT 3485. Furthermore, the landscape position of this vegetation type within the Subject Land aligns more closely with PCT 3485, compared with PCT 3490. The VCD states that PCT 3490 occurs on the footslopes below the Triassic sandstone escarpment in a restricted area from Bulga to Baerami Creek in the central Hunter Valley, which is locational to the Subject Land. The VCD notes that in nearby footslopes on undulating terrain on the floor on the Hunter Valley PCT 3490 grades into PCT 3485, which would explain some of the similarities between the PCTs. The SVTM maps PCT 3490 closer to Wollemi National Park which is approximately 7 km from the Subject Land. Based on the above, PCT 3485 is a better match based on location in the landscape. **3431 Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland** and **3314 Central Hunter Slopes Grey Box Forest** The Plot to PCT tool outputs show PCT 3314 and 3431 as closely aligned PCTs based on the characteristics of the plot data entered. PCT 3431 occurs widely throughout the subject land, often adjacent to this vegetation type, therefore it is expected that there would be a number of species consistently recorded in both PCTs. PCT 3485 however is considered a better fit as it represents the dominance of slaty box (*Eucalyptus dawsonii*) that was recorded here, compared with PCT 3314 which is characterised by a dominance of grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) and 3431 which is characterised by a dominance of narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*).
Alignment with BC Act TECs			This vegetation zone is consistent with the *Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland Vulnerable Ecological Community* (VEC). Refer to **Secttion 3.2.4** for details. It is noted that PCT3485 is not formally associated with the *Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC* in the VCD, and therefore this TEC could not be selected in the BAM-C for this assessment. This limitation will not impact the generation of applicable ecosystem credits as the PCT is >90% cleared and therefore in the highest category of Sensitivity to Loss which dictates the Biodiversity Risk Weighting in the BAM-C.	
Vegetation Zone (VZ)	**Condition**	**Area (ha)**	**Plots**	**VI Score**
VZ10	Moderate	HVO North - 7.1 HVO South – 0.0	P61, P122, P124, P131	88.1

PCT 3485: Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest	
VZ10 Moderate The moderate condition zone is the only zone stratified for this PCT. The vegetation displays the typical structural and floristic characters of this PCT.	

3.2.2.3 PCT 4015 – Central Hunter Riparian Forest

PCT 4015: Central Hunter Riparian Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	1731: Swamp Oak – Weeping Grass grassy riparian forest of the Hunter Valley
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Coastal Floodplain Wetlands
Percent Cleared	87.87%

VCD Description for PCT 4015

A tall Casuarina open forest or occasionally a eucalypt forest or woodland with a mid-stratum with chenopods and acacias and a grassy ground layer that occurs on creek flats in the undulating terrain of the central and upper Hunter valley. The canopy commonly consists of a high cover of *Casuarina glauca* either exclusively or in combination with a sparse cover of eucalypts that commonly include red gums *Eucalyptus blakelyi* or *Eucalyptus tereticornis*. Occasionally *Casuarina glauca* may be absent altogether. The mid-stratum is sparse and almost always includes chenopods such as *Maireana microphylla* and *Enchylaena tomentosa* or occasionally a taller Acacia such as *Acacia salicina*. The mid-dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs with some twiners, hardy ferns and low-growing shrubs, almost always including *Dichondra repens* and *Austrostipa verticillata* with *Glycine tabacina, Microlaena stipoides* and *Cheilanthes sieberi* subsp. *sieberi*. This PCT occurs in a restricted area of the Hunter valley from the Singleton district north to Dartbrook and west toward Sandy Hollow. It occurs in warm, dry environments with a mean annual rainfall typically below 710 mm. The strong association with drainage channels makes this PCT distinguishable from other PCTs. It has only moderate floristic overlap with PCT 3431 which occurs on the gentle hills and rises. *Eucalyptus crebra*, *Eucalyptus moluccana* and a diverse grass and forb ground cover are characteristic of that PCT. However, a related riparian forest occurs immediately to the east in higher rainfall areas of the Hunter valley. Here it grades into PCT 4023 which is also commonly dominated by *Casuarina glauca* however typically lacks the shrubby chenopods that are almost always present in PCT 4015.

PCT 4015: Central Hunter Riparian Forest	
PCT Description within the Development Footprint	
Landscape position	Small patches of the vegetation community occur in the riparian corridor on the far western and far eastern edges of the Development Footprint.
Overall Description	This vegetation zone has a moderately dense canopy which reaches up to 15 m in height and is dominated by swamp oak (*Casuarina glauca*). A sparse mid-storey of native shrubs may be present. The mid-dense ground stratum reaches up to 1 m in height and is dominated native grasses, rushes and herbs.
Upper stratum species	*Casuarina glauca*
Mid-stratum species	*Acacia salicina, Allocasuarina luehmanii, Geijera salicifolia*
Ground stratum species	*Austrostipa verticillata, Eremophila debilis, Brunoniella australis, Glycine tabacina, Microlaena stipoides, Dichondra repens, Solanum cinereum, Lomandra multiflora subsp. multiflora, Bothriochloa decipiens, Cheilanthes distans, Cheilanthes sieberi subsp. sieberi, Aristida ramosa, Chloris ventricosa, Enchylaena tomentosa, Oxalis perennans, Einadia nutans*
Introduced Species	Introduced species occur in very low densities in this vegetation zone, with the most dominant being blue heliotrope (*Heliotropium amplexicaule*) and *Setaria parviflora*.
Alignment with BC Act TECs	This community was compared to the *Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest of the NSW North Coast Sydney Basin and South East Corner Bioregions EEC* listed under the BC Act. The Development Footprint is at an elevation greater than 20 m above sea level and as such this community does not conform to this TEC which is restricted to lower elevations.
Justification for PCT selection	Vegetation Zone 11 was aligned with PCT 4015. This vegetation was originally allocated to PCT 1731 in the legacy classification system, with the lineage history showing that PCT has now been split to 4015 and 4023 which are both closely aligned. PCT4023 occurs on the Cumberland Plain and north to Rothbury, which is south-east of the Subject Land and therefore is not considered appropriate for further consideration. According to the VIS, PCT 4015 occurs in a restricted area of the Hunter Valley from the Singleton district north to Dartbrook and west toward Sandy Hollow. Situated within the Central Hunter Valley between Singleton and Muswellbrook, the Subject Land falls within this range. Four plots from this vegetation zone (contextual plots undertaken prior to September 2020 and plots included in the BAM-C) were entered into the Plot to PCT tool, with the outputs showing the strongest centroid match to PCT 4015 for all (0.556 and 0.678). Two of the four plots also showed a characteristic species match of 100%. As PCT 4015 is the only riparian community in the Hunter Valley characterised by a dominance of swamp oak, and the Plot to PCT tool outputs showed strong alignment, no further PCTs were considered.

Vegetation Zone (VZ)	Condition	Area (ha)	Plots	VI Score
VZ11	Moderate	HVO North – 3.0 HVO South – 0.0	P140, P156	69.8

PCT 4015: Central Hunter Riparian Forest	
VZ11 Moderate There is only one condition zone for this PCT. This zone represents the PCT in moderate condition with a tree canopy present, mid stratum present but sparse (as is typical for this PCT) and a ground layer dominated by native grasses typical of riparian communities.	

3.2.2.4 PCT 4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest

PCT 4081: Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	485: River Oak riparian grassy tall woodland of the western Hunter Valley (Brigalow Belt South Bioregion and Sydney Basin Bioregion)
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Eastern Riverine Forests
Percent Cleared	89.57%

VCD Description for PCT 4081

A tall to very tall Casuarina and sclerophyll open forest with a mid-stratum that is either absent or comprises sparse, soft-leaved small trees and a mid-dense, grassy ground layer that is widespread on river flats between Gulgong and the Queensland border on the North-west Slopes and the upper Hunter River catchment. The canopy very frequently includes river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) with a high cover of rive oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*), and rarely scattered individuals of rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*). Where present, the mid-stratum comprises scattered individuals of velvet mock olive (*Notelaea microcarpa* var. *microcarpa*) and rive bottlebrush (*Callistemon sieberi*). The mid-dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs, very frequently including common couch (*Cynodon dactylon*), slender bamboo grass (*Austrostipa verticillate*) and swamp dock (*Rumex brownii*), commonly *Commelina cyanea*, and occasionally stinging nettle (*Urtica incisa*), weeping grass (*Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides*) and purple wiregrass (*Aristida ramosa*).

This PCT primarily occurs in narrow bands within an agricultural landscape, at medium elevations between 200 and 700 metres asl in locations that receive between 500 and 750 mm mean annual rainfall. This PCT is weakly related floristically to PCT 4088, a riverine forest on the South-west Slopes which also includes *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. Its distribution overlaps with PCT 4080, a riverine forest with a canopy that includes river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*) however lacks river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

PCT 4081: Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	
PCT Description within the Development Footprint	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone occurs sporadically on the banks of the Hunter River.
General Description	This vegetation zone has a moderately dense canopy dominated by river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*) which reaches up to 22 m in height. The sparse mid-storey reaches up to 12 m in height and is dominated by regenerating river oaks. The very sparse ground stratum is dominated by couch (*Cynodon dactylon*).
Upper stratum species	*Casuarina cunninghamiana*
Mid-stratum species	*Acacia salicina*
Ground stratum species	*Cynodon dactylon, Cyperus* sp.
Introduced Species	The mid-storey contains an abundance of balloon vine (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*), while exotics commonly occur in the ground stratum and include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) and panic veldtgrass (*Ehrharta erecta*).
Alignment with BC Act TECs	This vegetation zone is not consistent with any TECs listed under the BC Act.
Justification for PCT selection	Within the Development Footprint, this vegetation occurs on the alluvial channel and floodplains of the Hunter River. It is characterised by a closed canopy of river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*), an absence of Eucalypts and a very sparse grassy understorey the most abundant native being couch (*Cynodon dactylon*). This vegetation was originally allocated to PCT 485 in the legacy classification system, for which the VCD notes a very strong split to 4081. An analysis using the VCD filter tool and the Plot to PCT tool was undertaken to determine the best fit PCT. Three plots sampled in this vegetation type (contextual plots undertaken prior to September 2020 and plots included in the BAM-C) were entered into the Plot to PCT tool, resulting in a range of matched PCTs, most of which were not at or below the distance to centroid threshold of 0.695. PCT 4081 was consistently matched for all plots entered (although at relatively weak values of 0.742 and 0.804). The lack of strong matches likely reflects the history of disturbance across the Subject Land and consequently deviation from the relatively better condition examples used for the SVTM classification. Of the other PCTs matched from the tool, those further considered (due to being riparian/floodplain communities occurring in the Hunter region) are listed below, however all were discounted for various reasons as stated. PCT 4081 is described in the VCD as containing a high cover of river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*) with very frequent *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. While plots in this vegetation zone contain river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*) but not river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), the latter is known in the immediate locality on associated waterways. While the two plots sampled in this zone had a very sparse ground cover, the most abundant native ground cover was common couch (*Cynodon dactylon*), which is consistent with the PCT 4081 description.

PCT 4081: Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest

Other PCTs Considered

4015 Central Hunter Riparian Forest

PCT 4015 is characterised by a dominance of *Casuarina glauca* and Eucalypts are relatively infrequent, but if present may include *Eucalyptus blakelyi* and *E. teretecornis*. This PCT is not the best fit for this vegetation, however has been allocated to VZ11, where *Casuarina glauca* is dominant.

4072 Hunter River Oak Mesic Forest

This PCT is almost always characterised by a canopy of *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, with a range of mesic species such as white cedar (*Melia azedarach*), (*Clerodendrum tomentosum*), (*Backhousia myrtifolia*), (*Breynia oblongifolia*) and (*Phyllanthus gunnii*). These mesic species were not recorded in plots sampled within this vegetation type, and therefore this PCT is not considered appropriate.

4073 Lower North Hinterland River Oak Forest

This PCT was returned in the centroid matches for one of the two plots in this vegetation type, however with relatively weak values of 0.769-0.789 (noting matches with PCT 4081 were also weak). River red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) is not listed for PCT 4073, however this species was recorded in this vegetation type. PCT 4073 typically includes rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*) which was not recorded in this vegetation zone. PCT 4081 is considered a better fit to capture the presence of the river red gum in the canopy.

Alignment with BC Act TECs	This vegetation zone is not consistent with any TECs listed under the BC Act and Commonwealth *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Vegetation Zone (VZ)	Condition	Area (ha)	Plots	VI Score
VZ12	Moderate	HVO North - 4.2 HVO South – 0.0	P45, P134	34.6

VZ12 Moderate

The moderate condition zone is the only zone stratified for this PCT. The vegetation displays the typical structural and floristic characters of this PCT.



3.2.2.5 PCT4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	
Legacy PCT (as per allocations in Umwelt 2023)	42: River Red Gum/River Oak riparian woodland wetland in the Hunter Valley
Vegetation Formation	Forested Wetlands
Vegetation Class	Inland Riverine Forests
Percent Cleared	94.33%

VCD Description for PCT 4089

PCT 4089 is a very tall sclerophyll and Casuarina forest to open forest or woodland with a mid-stratum that is absent or sparse and a grassy ground layer, found on alluvial floodplains of the upper Hunter and Namoi river catchments. The canopy almost always includes Eucalyptus camaldulensis, rarely with *Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana*. There is usually no mid-stratum in this PCT. The dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs, almost always including *Cynodon dactylon* with high cover, and occasionally *Rumex brownii, Alternanthera denticulata, Austrostipa verticillata, Urtica incisa* and *Paspalidium constrictum*. This PCT primarily occurs along the Hunter River and its tributaries between Singleton and Scone, and tributaries of the Namoi River around Gunnedah and Tamworth including the Peel and Mooki rivers.

This PCT occurs in hot, dry climates receiving less than 650 mm mean annual rainfall. The riverine forests in this region have been extensively cleared and this PCT occurs in small patches in an agricultural landscape. Surviving patches are frequently disturbed and subject to ongoing weed invasion and grazing pressure. The median native species richness of the plots comprising this PCT is less than ten species, which is lower than comparable riverine PCTs. In the Hunter catchment, the riverine forest PCT 4073 which includes *Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana* however lacks *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is present in reasonably close proximity to this PCT. In the Namoi catchment, riverine forests that also include *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, however lack *Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana* generally occur downstream of this PCT.

PCT Description within the Development Footprint	
Landscape position	This vegetation zone occurs on the banks and floodplain of the Hunter River (and in some cases minor its tributaries), and a small patch along the Wollombi Brook. Disturbed condition zones of this PCT have been allocated where occurring in the same landscape position as the moderate condition zones, and where present evidence of the pre-disturbance vegetation type, such as stags.
General Description	In the moderate condition state, PCT 4089 on the Subject Land has an open canopy up to 25 m in height dominated by yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), with grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) around the upslope edge of the zone. A mid-storey is generally absent from the vegetation zone, however when present it is dominated by cooba (*Acacia salicina*). The dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses and forbs.
Upper stratum species (Characteristic species from the higher condition zones VZ13 and VZ14)	*Eucalyptus melliodora, Eucalyptus moluccana, Eucalyptus camaldulensis*
Mid-stratum species (Characteristic species from the higher condition zones VZ13 and VZ14)	*Acacia salicina*

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	
Ground stratum species (Characteristic species from the higher condition zones VZ13 and VZ14)	*Cynodon dactylon, Eucalyptus melliodora, Enchylaena tomentosa, Galenia pubescens, Enteropogon acicularis, Maireana microphylla, Paspalidium distans, Bothriochloa decipiens, Einadia nutans, Sida corrugata, Eriochloa pseudoacrotricha, Atriplex semibaccata, Digitaria divaricatissima, Austrostipa verticillata, Oxalis perennans*.
Introduced Species	The better condition zones of this PCT have a relatively low abundance of introduced species, commonly recorded species including galenia (*Galenia pubescens*), fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*), Paddy's lucerne (*Sida rhombifolia*), creeping pear (*Opuntia humifusa*) and lambs tongues (*Plantago lanceolata*). In the more disturbed condition states, introduced species were also observed in the mid-stratum, in particular African olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *cuspidata*) and castor oil plant (*Ricinnus communis*). Ground stratum weeds recorded in the disturbed condition zones included guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maximus* var. *maximus*), kikuyu (*Cenchrus clandestinus*), balloon vine (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*), cobblers pegs (*Bidens pilosa*), black-berry nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) and common vetch (*Vicia sativa*).
Alignment with BC Act TECs	The Moderate and Low to Moderate condition zones of this PCT were found to be consistent with the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions* EEC, however VZ15, VZ16 and VZ17 were excluded owing to their disturbed state and absence of key characteristic features of the TEC. Refer to **Section 3.2.4** for further justification.
Justification for PCT selection	Within the Development Footprint, this vegetation occurs on the alluvial channel and floodplains of the Hunter River and its tributaries. In the more intact condition zones, it is characterised by an open canopy of yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and/or river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). This vegetation was originally allocated to PCT 42 in the legacy classification system, for which the VCD notes a very strong split to either 3397 or 4089. Justifications for discounting PCT 3397 (and other PCTs considered) and selecting 4089 as the best fit for this vegetation are below. An analysis using the VCD filter tool and the Plot to PCT tool was undertaken to determine the "best fit PCT". Five plots sampled in the better condition zones of this vegetation type (including contextual plots undertaken prior to September 2020 and more recently completed plots included in the BAM-C) were entered to the Plot to PCT tool, resulting in two of the five with a first match of PCT 4089 (at distance to centroid values of 0.47 and 0.567). For the other three of five plots sampled, range of matched PCTs was returned, most of which were not at or below the distance to centroid threshold of 0.659. The lack of strong matches likely reflects the history of disturbance across the Subject Land and consequently deviation from the relatively better condition examples used for the SVTM classification. PCT 4089 consistently matched for all plots entered, with two plots returning a 100% character match and a distance to centroid match of 0.567 and 0.47 respectively. Of the other PCTs matched from the tool, those further considered (due to being riparian/floodplain communities occurring in the Hunter region) are listed below, however all were discounted for various reasons as stated. PCT 4089 is described as occurring along the Hunter River and its tributaries between Singleton and Scone, with an absent or sparse mid-storey (which is consistent with the Development Footprint) and almost always containing

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

Eucalyptus camaldulensis. The dense ground layer is mainly comprised of grasses and forbs, almost always including *Cynodon dactylon* with high cover, consistent with this vegetation on the Subject Land. PCT 4089 is associated with the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* (and is the only PCT associated with this TEC). The SVTM shows PCT 4089 along the Hunter River surrounding the Subject Land.

Other PCTs Considered

3397 Northwest Yellow Box Grassy Woodland

PCT 3397 is described as occurring on the lower slopes and flats in undulating to hilly landscapes of the upper Hunter valley and is not associated with Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC. While the description states that the canopy for 3397 almost always contains *Eucalytpus melliodora* it also includes a defined mid-storey which is generally absent within these vegetation zones. Furthermore, the understorey of PCT 3397 does not have a characteristically high cover of *Cynodon dactylon* in the ground stratum. While some characters of PCT 3397 fit with this vegetation type, it is not considered to be as closely aligned as PCT 4089.

4015 Central Hunter Riparian Forest

PCT 4015 is characterised by a dominance of *Casuarina glauca* and Eucalypts are relatively infrequent, but if present may include *Eucalyptus blakelyi* and *E. teretecornis*. This PCT has been allocated to VZ11, where *Casuarina glauca* is dominant.

4081 Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest

PCT 4081 frequently includes a high cover of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, a high cover of *Casuarina cunninghamiana* and occasionally *Angophora floribunda*.

While *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* was recorded in some locations of this vegetation type on the Subject Land, *Casuarina* or *Angophora* were never recorded. PCT 4081 also does not reflect the strong presence of *Eucalyptus melliodora* in this vegetation type. The characteristic species match for the plots sampled in this vegetation type was 40-60% for PCT 4081, slightly lower than that for PCT 4089 which was 50-100%. The analysis revealed that while there are some similarities in landscape and floristic characteristics with PCT 4081 and this vegetation type, PCT 4089 is a stronger match and more closely reflects the floristics recorded across the Subject Land.

Vegetation Zone (VZ)	Condition	Area (ha)	Plots	VI Score
VZ13	Moderate	HVO North - 1.0 HVO South – 0.0	P121	65.0
VZ14	Low to Moderate	HVO North – 1.7 HVO South – 0.0	P137	29.4
VZ15	Cooba Woodland	HVO North - 0.2 HVO South – 0.6	P138	54.5
VZ16	Derived Native Grassland	HVO North - 5.1 HVO South - 0.0	P43, P46, P119, P135	21.8
VZ17	Exotic Grassland	HVO North – 131.2 HVO South – 13.3	P44, P53, P54, P118, P136, P139	9.3

PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

VZ13 Moderate

This vegetation zone is in good condition with tree canopy present, mid stratum absent (as is typical for this PCT) and a ground layer dominated by native grasses and a small component of native forbs.



VZ14 Low to Moderate

This zone is similar in floristic composition to VZ1, however is highly modified from weed invasion and native species occur infrequently in the understorey.



VZ15 Cooba Woodland

This vegetation zone is characterised by a dominance of the tall shrub cooba (*Acacia salicina*), while a tree canopy is absent. This zone features stags considered likely to have been river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) trees based on landscape position and proximity to the Hunter River and remnant river red gums.



PCT 4089: Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	
VZ16 Derived Native Grassland The canopy is absent from this zone, however a sporadic low tree layer of cooba (*Acacia salicina*) is present. The moderately dense ground stratum is dominated by native grasses.	
VZ17 Exotic Grassland This vegetation zone is dominated by introduced species (mostly grasses and annual weeds) and lacks any tree or shrub species. Native species occur in low abundance in this zone.	

3.2.3 Patch Size

A patch is an area of native vegetation that occurs in the Development Footprint that has a gap of less than 100 m from the next area of native vegetation (or ≤ 30 m for non-woody ecosystems). A patch may extend onto adjoining land. The patch size class for each vegetation zone is used in the BAM-C to assess habitat suitability on the subject land for threatened species.

Table 3.3 outlines the patch size class for each vegetation zone. **Figure 3.4** shows the patch size mapping across the Development Footprints.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line
- National Parks

Patch Size

- >100 Ha

FIGURE 3.4

Patch Size Map

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

3.2.4 Threatened Ecological Communities

Eight of the vegetation zones described above and mapped within the Development Footprints conform to TECs under the BC Act. Four TECs occur within the HVO North Development Footprint and one BC Act-listed TECs occurring in the HVO South Development Footprint.

A summary of the TECs recorded in the Development Footprints is provided in **Table 3.4**. An analysis of consistency with the Final Determination for each TEC was undertaken, with consideration of the advice provided by the NSW Scientific Committee guidelines for interpreting listed ecological communities. This assessment is provided in **Table 3.5**.

BC Act listed TECs occurring in the Development Footprints are shown on **Figure 3.5A** and **Figure** 3.5B**.**

Table 3.4 Summary of TECs listed under the NSW BC Act

Threatened Ecological Community listed under the NSW BC Act	Vegetation Zone	Area (ha) in Development Footprint	
		HVO North	HVO South
Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	1. PCT 3431 – *Moderate*	65.2	0.5
	2. PCT 3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	11.6	1.9
	3. PCT 3431 – *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.4	0.0
	4. PCT 3431 – *Plantation*	5.5	0.0
	TOTAL EEC	**85.7**	**2.4**
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion VEC	10. PCT 3485 – *Moderate*	7.1	0.0
	TOTAL VEC	**7.1**	**0.0**
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	13. PCT 4089 – *Moderate*	1.0	0.0
	14. PCT 4089 – *Low to Moderate*	1.7	0.0
	TOTAL EEC	**2.7**	**0.0**
Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion CEEC	7. PCT3431 – *Poor Condition DNG*	0.05	0.0
	Total CEEC	**0.05**	**0.0**

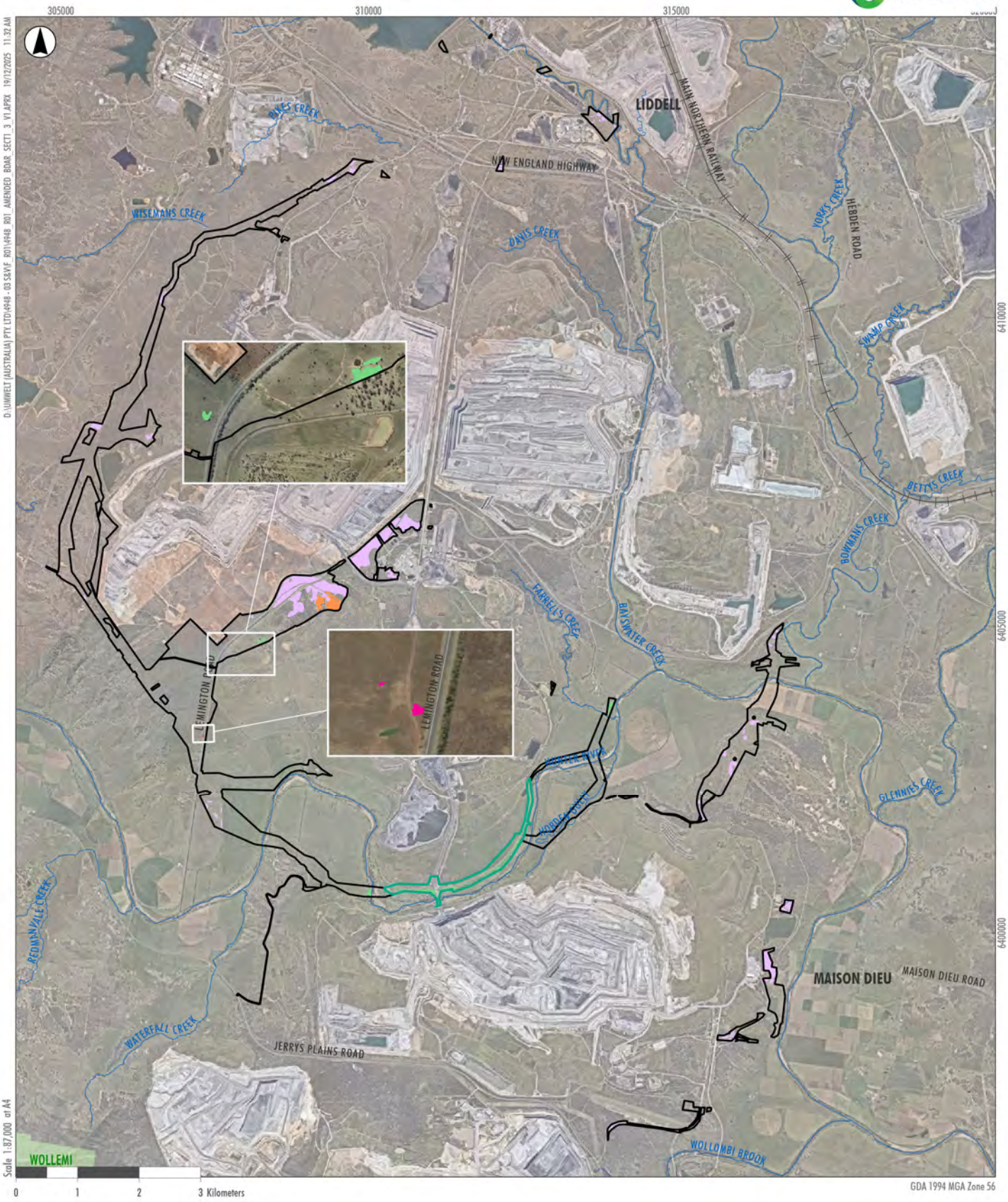
Table 3.5 Threatened Ecological Communities listed under the NSW BC Act within the Development Footprints

Threatened Ecological Community	Vegetation Zone	Area (ha) in Development Footprint		Assessment of Similarity – Proportion of Species in the list of Characteristic species for the TEC	TEC Diagnostic Characteristics as per Final Determination
		HVO North	HVO South		
Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	1. PCT3431 – *Moderate*	65.2	0.5	• contains both characteristic canopy species • contains 69% of the characteristic species for the EEC.	The vegetation zones are consistent with the Final Determination of the EEC (NSW Scientific Committee 2010a) with regard to the following attributes: • occurs on Permian sediments within the NSW Sydney Basin Bioregion • occurs in the Singleton LGA where the EEC has previously been recorded • dominated by the characteristic canopy species narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) and grey box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) • supports a reasonable proportion of species that are in the list of characteristic species for the EEC. It should be noted that Vegetation zones 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (scattered regeneration, cooba woodland, derived native grassland, exotic grassland and bulloak forms of PCT 3431) do not form part of the *Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions* EEC as they lack a eucalypt-dominated woodland structure which is characteristic of the TEC. The final determination does not list modified versions such as derived native grassland as conforming to the TEC. VZ9 is characterised by a bulloak-dominated canopy with sporadic occurrences of *Eucalyptus crebra*.
	2. PCT3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	11.6	1.9	• contains both characteristic canopy species • contains 59% of the characteristic species for the EEC.	
	3. PCT3431 – *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.4	0.0	• dominated by characteristic canopy species *Eucalyptus crebra* • contains two of the characteristic species for the EEC • considered a low condition representation of the EEC due to the low number of native species in the understorey.	
	4. PCT3431 – *Plantation*	5.5	0.0	• does not contain characteristic canopy species but is dominated in portions by spotted gum (*Corymbia maculata*) Blakely's red gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyi*) which is known to occasionally occur in the community	

Threatened Ecological Community	Vegetation Zone	Area (ha) in Development Footprint		Assessment of Similarity – Proportion of Species in the list of Characteristic species for the TEC	TEC Diagnostic Characteristics as per Final Determination
		HVO North	HVO South		
				• contains 45% of the characteristic species for the EEC • considered a low condition representation of the EEC due to lack of characteristic canopy species.	
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion VEC	10. PCT3485 – *Moderate*	7.1	0.0	• contains both characteristic canopy species • contains 55% of the characteristic species for the VEC.	The vegetation zones are consistent with the Final Determination of the VEC (NSW Scientific Committee 2010c) with regard to the following attributes: • Generally occurs at the interface of Narrabeen Sandstone and Permian sediments in the Hunter Valley. Noting the location of the TEC within the Subject Land being on the valley floor rather than the interface between the Triassic and Permian geology. • Typically forms a low to mid-high woodland. • Tree canopy is typically dominated by *Eucalyptus dawsonii* (slaty gum) and/or *Eucalyptus moluccana* (grey box). • Supports a reasonable proportion of species that are in the list of characteristic species for the VEC.
Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion CEEC	7. PCT3431 – *Poor Condition DNG*	0.05	0.0	• Contains the characteristic canopy species *Acacia pendula* (Weeping Myall) • Contains 12% of the characteristic species for the CEEC.	The minor patch of vegetation is consistent with the Final Determination of the CEEC (NSW Scientific Committee 2016) With regards to the following attributes: • Occurs within the Sydney Basin Bioregion. • Occurs on soils derived from Quaternary alluvium and sedimentary rocks of Permian age, including lithic sandstone, shale, siltstone, mudstone, conglomerate and coal bearing seams.

Threatened Ecological Community	Vegetation Zone	Area (ha) in Development Footprint		Assessment of Similarity – Proportion of Species in the list of Characteristic species for the TEC	TEC Diagnostic Characteristics as per Final Determination
		HVO North	HVO South		
					The location of the vegetation is within the Hunter Valley floor on Permian sediments. • Typically a mid-high (to 15 m) open forest or woodland with a dense to mid-dense canopy dominated by Weeping Myall (*Acacia pendula*) depending on disturbance and regrowth history. The vegetation has undergone significant modification which has resulted in the weeping myall being a short, stunted patch of trees that have been impacted by agricultural resulting in a lower growing patch off grazed trees. All tree species in the patch were identified as Weeping myall with an estimate of 136 living stems counted in one patch and 60 in the other. • Supports a small proportion of characteristic species listed in the Final Determination.
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	13. PCT4089 – *Moderate*	1.0	0.0	• contains 10% of the characteristic species for the EEC.	The vegetation zones are consistent with the Final Determination of the EEC (NSW Scientific Committee 2010b) with regard to the following attributes: • occurs within the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions • occurs on floodplains and associated floodplain rises along the Hunter River and tributaries • generally dominated by *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (river red gum) in combination with *Eucalyptus tereticornis* (forest red gum), *Eucalyptus melliodora* (yellow box) and *Angophora floribunda* (rough-barked apple)
	14. PCT4089 – *Low to Moderate*	1.7	0.0	• contains characteristic canopy species *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* • contains 10% of the characteristic species for the EEC.	

Threatened Ecological Community	Vegetation Zone	Area (ha) in Development Footprint		Assessment of Similarity – Proportion of Species in the list of Characteristic species for the TEC	TEC Diagnostic Characteristics as per Final Determination
		HVO North	HVO South		
					• supports a reasonable proportion of species that are in the list of characteristic species for the EEC. It should be noted that the cooba woodland, derived native grassland and exotic grassland forms of PCT 4089 (VZ15, VZ16 and VZ17, respectively) do not form part of the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions* EEC given the absence of characteristic canopy species. The final determination does not list modified versions such as derived native grassland as conforming to the TEC.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks

BC Act

- Central Hunter Grey Box - Ironbark Woodland EEC
- Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC
- Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC
- Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland CEEC

FIGURE 3.5A

HVO North - Threatened Ecological Communities under the NSW BC Act

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line

BC Act

- Central Hunter Grey Box - Ironbark Woodland EEC

FIGURE 3.5B

HVO South - Threatened Ecological Communities under the NSW BC Act

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

3.2.4.1 Summary of TECs within the Development Footprints

Table 3.6 provides a summary of the TECs and the area they occupy within the Development Footprints.

Table 3.6 Summary of TECs within the Development Footprint

Threatened Ecological Community	Listing Status	Area (ha) in Development Footprint	
		HVO North	HVO South
Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	EEC	85.2	2.4
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	EEC	2.7	0.0
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion	VEC	7.1	0.0
Hunter Valley Weeping Myall Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion	CEEC	0.05	0.0

3.2.5 Vegetation Integrity Score

The VI data for each of the vegetation zones is provided in **Table 3.7**.

Table 3.7 Vegetation Integrity Scores

Vegetation Zone	Composition	Structure	Function	VI Score	Hollow-bearing Trees?
1. PCT3431 – *Moderate*	67.1	43.6	66.4	**57.9**	Yes
2. PCT3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	72.8	37.7	56.9	**53.8**	Yes
3. PCT3431 – *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	15.2	14.7	48.5	**22.1**	Yes
4. PCT3431 – *Plantation*	71.2	34.1	42.9	**47.0**	No
5. PCT3431 – *Scattered Regeneration*	63.7	44.8	35.4	**46.5**	No
6. PCT3431 – *Cooba Woodland*	65.0	44.2	38.0	**47.8**	No
7. PCT3431 – *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	37.3	40.6	2.8	**16.2**	No
8. PCT3431 – *Exotic Grassland*	21.0	13.7	7.5	**12.9**	No
9. PCT3431 – *Bulloak Variant*	55.1	26.2	49.2	**41.4**	Yes
10. PCT3485 – *Moderate*	93.3	73.3	100.0	**88.1**	Yes
11. PCT4015 – *Moderate*	68.3	81.0	61.5	**69.8**	No
12. PCT4081 – *Moderate*	16.5	42.5	58.9	**34.6**	No
13. PCT4089 – *Moderate*	95.7	66.5	43.3	**65.0**	No
14. PCT4089 – *Low to Moderate*	19.2	27.2	48.5	**29.4**	No
15. PCT4089 – *Cooba Woodland*	48.8	60.2	55.2	**54.5**	Yes
16. PCT4089 – *Derived Native Grassland*	27.6	39.0	9.7	**21.8**	No
17. PCT4089 – *Exotic Grassland*	9.5	7.3	11.5	**9.3**	No

4.0 Threatened Species

4.1 Methods

4.1.1 Identification of Threatened Species for Assessment

The identification of threatened species that are likely to occur on or use the Development Footprints was undertaken primarily using the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) and the BAM-C using the following information relevant to the predicted species:

- IBRA subregion
- Geographic limitations
- PCT associations
- Patch size classes
- Native vegetation cover.

Furthermore, a review of previous documents and reports relevant to the Project was undertaken. This included previous surveys undertaken within and in the vicinity of the Development Footprints and other relevant ecological database searches. Relevant resources included:

- Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 and BAM-C (Version 1.3.0.00).
- DPHI BioNet Atlas of NSW Wildlife (DPHI 2025) search, accessed April 2025.
- Protected Matters Search Tool (DCCEEW 2025) for known/predicted EPBC Act-listed species, accessed April 2025.
- National Flying Fox Monitoring Viewer – https://www.environment.gov.au/webgis-framework/apps/ffc-wide/ffc-wide.jsf accessed April 2025.
- River Red Gum Monitoring Report 2020 – Carrington Billabong and a reference site (Ecoplanning 2021).
- Bird Assemblage Monitoring – Wandewoi, Mitchell hill and Hook Biodiversity Areas (Ecoplanning 2019).
- Hunter Valley Operations Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (EMM 2018).
- Ten Year Monitoring of River Red Gums at Carrington Billabong and Hunter Valley Operations (Umwelt 2018).
- United Wambo Open Cut Coal Mine Biodiversity Assessment Report (Umwelt 2017).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – Hunter Valley Operations Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Niche 2015).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – Greater Ravensworth Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Umwelt 2015a).
- Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment – United Collieries Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report (Umwelt 2015b).

- Review of Ecological Assessments for Warkworth Extension EA and HVO South Modification Projects (Umwelt 2011).
- HVO North Modification 3, Carrington West Wing Ecology Assessment (Biosis Research Pty Ltd 2010).

Based on the above resources, a candidate species list was developed for threatened species with the potential to use the habitats within the Development Footprint.

4.1.2 Assessment of Habitat Constraints, Limitations and Vagrant Species

A review of the candidate species list was undertaken to determine whether any species were unlikely to be impacted by the Project due to habitat constraints, geographic limitations or the presence of vagrant records of threatened species. The species list was then refined to ecosystem credit species predicted to occur on the site and species-credit species that required further assessment (survey or expert report, refer to **Section 4.1.3** below).

This constraints assessment is provided in Table D.1 in **Annexure D.**

4.1.3 Species-Credit Species Surveys

Following the refinement of the species list (refer to **Section 4.1.2**), targeted field surveys and opportunistic searches were undertaken for those species-credit species considered to have the potential to occur within the Development Footprints. Species-credit species surveys were undertaken over multiple years and seasons, as summarised in **Table 4.1** and **Table 4.2** and shown on **Figure 4.1** and **Figure 4.2.**

Specific details of these surveys are provided in Table D.2 in **Annexure D.**

4.1.3.1 Threatened Flora Transect Surveys

Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach was undertaken across all suitable habitat areas within the Development Footprints as outlined in section 4.4.1 of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Due to the size of the impact area and varying condition of PCTs (i.e. mosaic of vegetation zones) across the Development Footprints, it was determined that undertaking the two-phase grid method across all suitable habitat for all predicted species was the most effective way to cover the site (rather than assess habitat discretely by vegetation zone). The NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e) does not specify a requirement to undertake the two-phase grid-based approach by a vegetation zone-basis.

The guide states that "*Large areas of suitable habitat can be assessed using a two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach. The approach provides a practical method for designating survey locations and ensures uniform, consistent coverage of the suitable habitat for a target species on the subject land*" and "*Surveys are undertaken where the 100-square-metre gridlines intersect within suitable habitat for a target species.*" The guide defines suitable habitat as "*an area(s) of the subject land that support PCT(s) where the species is expected to occur or periodically use. To be classified as suitable at least one habitat constraint, where these are listed for the species in the TBDC, is present and constraint(s) or any particular microhabitats are not significantly degraded*".

Exotic condition zones within the Development Footprints are dominated by exotic vegetation (i.e. on average greater than 50% exotic cover and less than 15% native cover) and VI scores are below the minimum offsetting threshold. While some survey effort was undertaken in these areas, they were determined to be substantially degraded and highly unlikely to contain threatened flora species. Furthermore, if threatened flora species were identified in other (higher) condition vegetation condition zones, further investigation into these areas may have been warranted, however this was not required.

For all remaining predicted PCTs and subsequent condition zones, a grid spaced at 100 square metres (m^2) was overlayed onto the Development Footprints using GIS. Walking transect surveys were undertaken where the 100 m2 gridlines intersect within potentially suitable habitat. At each survey location (grid intersect), an estimated 40-m diameter area (1256-m^2 circular area) were surveyed for the target species and an estimate of a 5 m buffer from walking transect lines (as indicated in Table 1 of DPIE 2020e in relation to the maximum distance between traverses for herbs and forbs). Survey locations were pre-loaded onto a GPS or tablet/phone application.

If a target species is located, finer-scale grid surveys are required to locate population extent, which assists to define species polygons. This phase was not required during this assessment as surveys did not record any threatened flora species as per DPIE (2020e) "*If the initial 100 m grid survey (nested within a one-square-kilometre topographic map grid) fails to detect the target species, no further surveys are required in that location.*"

The grid-based approach resulted in an estimated survey coverage of 258.2 ha and 1151 individual grid locations across the Development Footprints and a further 85.6 ha and 46 individual grid locations within the immediate locality. This area assumes a conservative estimate of a 5 m visual extent from transect lines, however it is likely to be greater than this in open and sparse vegetation zones.

These surveys were undertaken over multiple years and seasons as the Development Footprint as evolved for the Project. Targeted threatened flora surveys were undertaken during the following survey periods:

- 12–16 October 2020
- 19–23 October 2020
- 14 October 2021
- 11 August 2022
- 18 September 2023
- 1 November 2023
- 22–24 October 2025
- 30–31 October 2025.

Table 4.1 below outlines the number of grid centre points by vegetation zone resulting from the two-phase grid method and the approximate area of survey of the two-phase grid and parallel transects.

Table 4.1 Species-credit Species Flora Surveys

Associated Threatened Flora Species	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)	Count of Grid Centre Points	Approximate Area of Survey (ha) (assuming 5 m buffer)
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland				
Acacia pendula – endangered population *Cymbidium canaliculatum* – endangered population *Diuris tricolor* *Diuris tricolor* – endangered population *Eucalyptus glaucina* *Ozothamnus tesselatus* *Persoonia pauciflora* *Pomaderris queenslandica* *Prasophyllum petilum* *Prasophyllum* sp. *Wybong* *Pterostylis chaetophora*	1. *Moderate*	65.6	76	14.9
	2. *Thinned Woodland*	13.5	22	4.2
	3. *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.4	11	0.8
	4. *Plantation*	11.2	15	2.5
	5. *Scattered Regeneration*	68.9	83	21.4
	6. *Cooba Woodland*	13.5	24	3.5
	7. *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	344.6	368	82.4
	8. *Exotic Grassland*	197.4	214	41.8
	9. *Bulloak Variant*	34.7	38	10.6
	TOTAL for PCT 3431	**752.8**	**851**	**182.1**
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest				
Acacia pendula – endangered population *Cymbidium canaliculatum* – endangered population *Diuris tricolor* *Diuris tricolor* – endangered population *Eucalyptus pumila* *Prasophyllum petilum* *Prasophyllum* sp. *Wybong* *Pterostylis chaetophora*	10. *Moderate*	7.1	4	6.9
	TOTAL for PCT 3485	**7.1**	**4**	**6.9**
4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest				
Persoonia pauciflora	11. *Moderate*	3.0	5	0.7
	TOTAL for PCT 4015	**3.0**	**5**	**0.7**
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest				
Cymbidium canaliculatum – endangered population	12. *Moderate*	4.2	5	0.1
	TOTAL for PCT 4081	**4.2**	**5**	**0.1**
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest				
Cymbidium canaliculatum – endangered population	13. *Moderate*	1.0	1	1.0
	14. *Low to Moderate*	1.7	4	1.0

Associated Threatened Flora Species	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Area (ha)	Count of Grid Centre Points	Approximate Area of Survey (ha) (assuming 5 m buffer)
	15. *Cooba Woodland*	0.8	1	0.7
	16. *Derived Native Grassland*	5.1	4	4.8
	17. *Exotic Grassland*	144.4	136	24.2
	TOTAL for PCT 4089	**153.1**	**146**	**31.6**
TOTAL for all PCTs		**920.1**	**1081**	
Other (exotic vegetation, mine rehabilitation or cleared land)		**30.2**	**70**	**9.5**
Areas outside/removed from the Development Footprint		**548.1**	**46**	**15.1**
Total		**951.3**	**1197**	**249.3**

4.1.3.2 Threatened Fauna Species Surveys

Table 4.2 outlines the targeted threatened fauna species survey effort undertaken for this assessment. It is noted that some of the survey effort was undertaken more than five years ago. While these surveys cannot be relied on for the purposes of a BAM assessment, they provide important context in relation to habitat suitability and for any notable species records.

Further detail for individual species is included in Section D.2 of **Annexure D.**

Table 4.2 Species-credit Species Fauna Surveys

Survey Methods	Species Targeted	Survey Dates
Diurnal bird surveys Undertaken during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded.	• gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*) • glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) • white-bellied sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) • little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*) • square-tailed kite (*Lophoictinia isura*) • eastern osprey (*Pandion cristatus*) • bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*).	3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 6–10 July 2020 14–18, 29 August 2023 14–15, 18–19, 26–27 August 2025
Searches for hollow-bearing trees and nesting/roosting habitat constraints Searches were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests.	• gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*) • glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) • white-bellied sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) • little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*) • square-tailed kite (*Lophoictinia isura*) • barking owl (*Ninox connivens*) • powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) • masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) • eastern osprey (*Pandion cristatus*) • southern greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) • squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) • eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*) • southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*).	23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18, 29 August 2023 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 4–6 November 2025

Survey Methods	Species Targeted	Survey Dates
Nocturnal spotlighting surveys Undertaken at sites located in suitable habitat between 10–30 minutes and involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition.	• green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*).	23–26 March 2020 3–6, 10–13, 24–27 March 2025
	• eastern pygmy-possum (*Cercartetus nanus*) • barking owl (Ninox connivens) • powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) • masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) • greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) • squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) • brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) • koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) • common planigale (*Planigale maculata*).	23–26 March 2020 6–9 July 2020 23–26 October 2023 27 November 2023 5, 11 December 2023
Nocturnal call playback surveys Conducted with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. Species calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes.	• green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*).	23–26 March 2020 23-28 October 2023 24-28 February 2025 3–6, 10–13, 24–27 March 2025
	• barking owl (Ninox connivens) • powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) • masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) • squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) • koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*).	6–9 July 2020
**Dip netting for tadpoles/*Gambusia* Diurnal dip netting for tadpoles and presence of Gambusia holbrooki as per targeted survey requirements in the NSW survey guidelines for frogs (DPIE 2020d).	• green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*).	3–6, 10–13, 24–27 March 2025

Survey Methods	Species Targeted	Survey Dates
Acoustic Recorder Surveys A minimum detector spacing of 800 m covering all associated vegetation zones containing living or dead trees with a hollow >20 cm diameter that occurs >4 metres above the ground, reflecting a 400 m recording radius per detector. Detectors will be set to record from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes after sunrise, every night while deployed.	• barking owl (*Ninox connivens*) • powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*) • masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*).	Acoustic recorders deployed 11–13 June 2025, collected 17–18 August 2025 20 January 2026 – 10 February 2026.
Anabat echolocation A Titley Scientific Anabat Express was positioned at an approximate 30 degree angle one metre above the ground in waterproof housing. Each detector was positioned towards potential micro-bat flyaways along areas of suitable habitat. The Anabat detector was programmed to start recording from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise.	• southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*).	23–27 March 2020 22–24 October 2023
Remote camera surveys At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected.	• eastern pygmy-possum (*Cercartetus nanus*) • southern greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) • squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) • brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) • common planigale (*Planigale maculata*).	24 March–8 July 2020 14 August–30 October 2023 22 October – 17 December 2025. 16 December 2025 – 3 February 2026
Koala Spot Assessment Technique (SAT) Koala SATs were undertaken on and around the base of 30 trees at each survey site. The searches focused on signs of presence including scats at the base of trees and characteristic scratches on tree trunks. Surveys focused on areas containing koala feed trees according to the Approved Recovery Plan for the Koala (DECC 2008).	• koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*).	6–10 July 2020 29 May – 2 June 2023 5–9 June 2023 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 11–13 June 2025

Survey Methods	Species Targeted	Survey Dates
Thermal drone surveys Thermal drone flight paths were undertaken in areas of suitable koala habitat in accordance with the BAM (2020). Detection methods included hot spot alert, shape detection, characteristic trait, drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight. Survey times were between 21:00–06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures. Over 900 km of drone transects were undertaken across the HVO site.	• koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) • southern greater glider (*Petauroides volans*) • squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) • brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*).	12–20 July 2023
Pitfall trap arrays 64 pitfall trap arrays were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of 10 m of drift-fence with a 20 L bucket with a lid at either end. The lid was elevated 2 to 3 cm (using sticks) above the lip of the bucket. Leaf litter and small twigs were placed in the bottom of each bucket to provide shelter for trapped animals. Traps were checked and reset daily over 4 consecutive days. **Funnel traps** 17 collapsible funnel trap arrays were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of a 10 m drift fence with 10 collapsible funnel traps positioned equidistantly along each side of the drift fence. Collapsible funnels were positioned so that they were flush with the ground.	• common planigale (*Planigale maculata*).	29 May – 2 June 2023 5–9 June 2023 10–14 July 2023 17–21 July 2023 24–28 July 2023 7–11 August 2023
***Delma* sp. artificial habitat surveys** Tile grids consisted of 50 tiles, at 5 m spacing between tiles, arranged in a grid of 10 tiles by five. This survey was undertaken in consideration of the methods outlined in the *EPBC Act Referral Guidelines for the vulnerable striped legless lizard Delma impar* (DSWPC 2011).	• Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*).	**2020 Survey** 10 tile grids installed in August 2020. Six of these tile grids were relocated in November 2020. 4 additional tile grids were also installed in November 2020. **2021 Survey** 4 tile grids installed in July 2021. Refer to **Annexure D** for further details.

Survey Methods	Species Targeted	Survey Dates
Daytime searches for grey-headed flying-fox breeding camps Conducted concurrently with threatened flora surveys undertaken comprehensively across the Development Footprint.	• Grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*).	12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 9–11, 14–15 April 2025 14–15, 18–19, 26–27 August 2025 4–6 November 2025

4.1.3.3 Key Resources

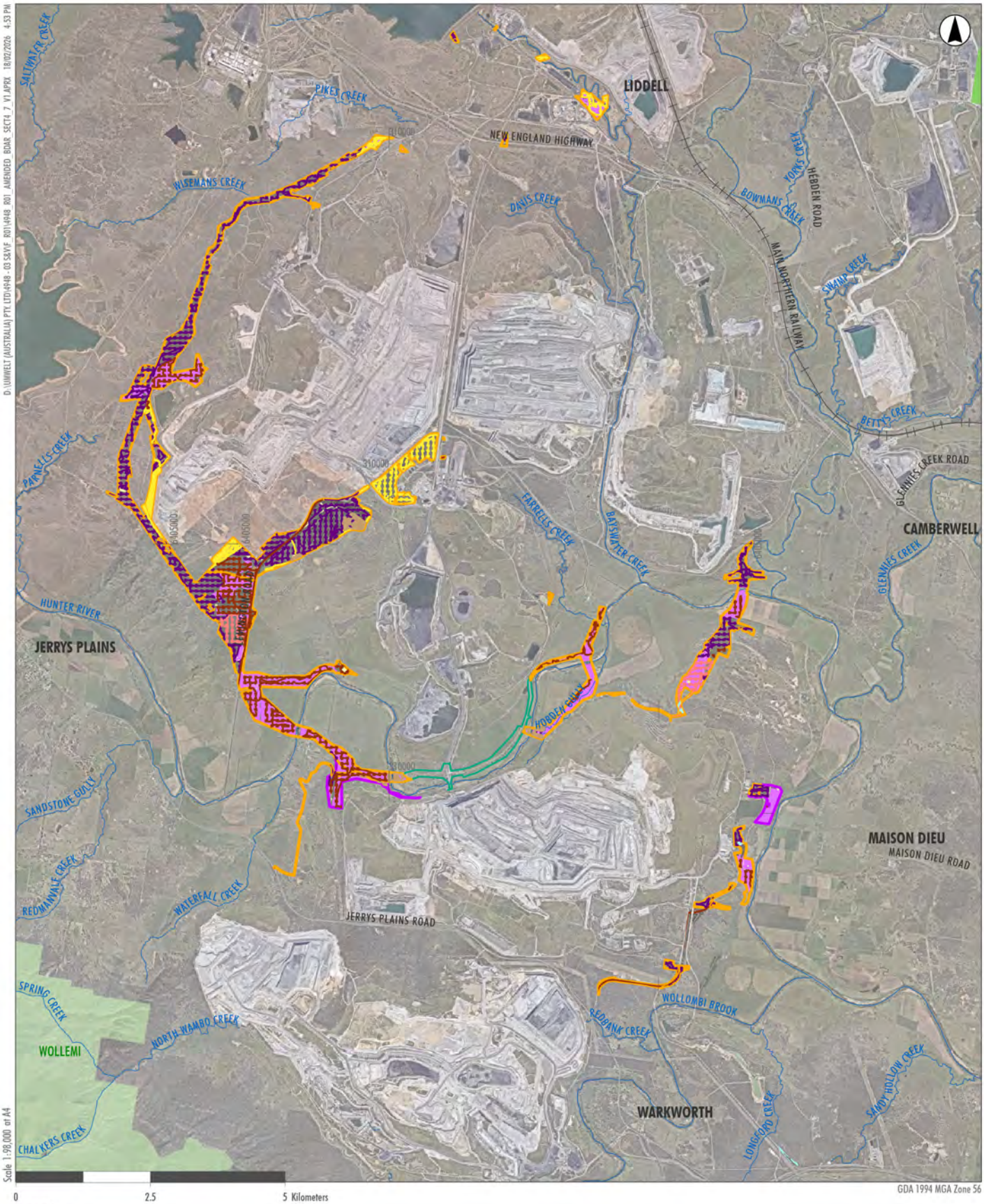
The following key threatened species survey guidelines and resources were considered when undertaking species-credit species surveys for this assessment:

- Species-specific survey information in the TBDC (DPHI 2025).
- NSW Survey Guide for Threatened Frogs (DPIE 2020d).
- 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats (DPHI 2021).
- Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method (DPIE 2020e).
- Important habitat mapping for the regent honeyeater, swift parrot and migratory shorebirds available on the Biodiversity Offsets and Agreement Management System (BOAMS).
- EPBC Act Referral Guidelines for the vulnerable striped legless lizard *Delma impar* (DSEWPC 2011b).
- Phillips, S., and Callaghan, J. 2011. The Spot Assessment Technique: a tool for determining localised levels of habitat use by Koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus*. Australian Zoologist 35(3): 774–780.
- Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide (DPE 2022b).
- Threatened reptiles Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide (DPE 2022c).

Where appropriate, Commonwealth species survey guidelines were also considered.

4.1.3.4 Weather Conditions and Survey Limitations

Weather conditions and survey limitations for all survey periods are provided in **Annexure D.**



Legend

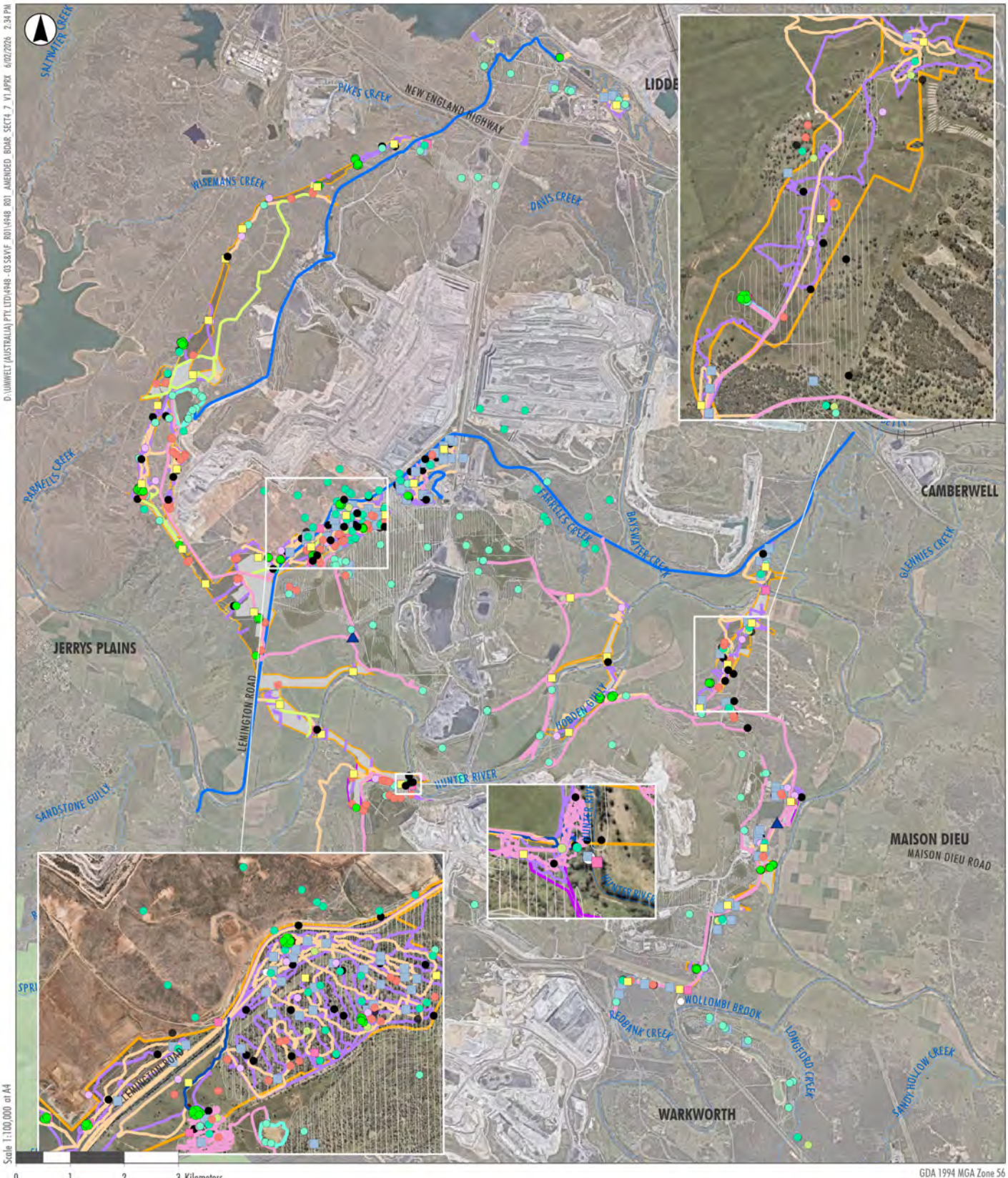
- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (February 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (September 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)
- Cleared Land
- Exotic Vegetation
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- State Forest

FIGURE 4.1

Species-credit Flora Species Survey Effort

Refer to Appendix C Figure for finer detail

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025)) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May-June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019-2020; August - October 2023, August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023, October-December 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020-2021)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Search for Microbat Roosting in Culverts (October 2023)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March-April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Green and golden bell frog call playback and spotlighting surveys for Commonwealth Assessment
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

FIGURE 4.2

Species-Credit Fauna Species Survey Effort

Refer to Appendix C Figure for finer detail

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

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4.1.4 Use of Experts Accredited under the BAM

Dr David Sharpe (approved expert in the squirrel glider under the BAM) was engaged to provide advice on the likely suitable habitat for the squirrel glider and eastern pygmy possum and (in the absence of formal guidance in BAM documents or the TBDC) proposed suitable survey methods for the species.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Ecosystem-Credit Species

A range of ecosystem-credit species were recorded during the surveys undertaken for this assessment, including:

- woodland birds – speckled warbler (*Chthonicola sagittata*), varied sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*), scarlet robin (*Petroica boodang*), grey-crowned babbler (*Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*), dusky woodswallow (*Artamus cyanopterus cyanopterus*), Lathams snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*), white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) and swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- bat species – eastern freetail bat (*Micronomus norfolkensis*), little bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus australis*), yellow-bellied sheathtail-bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*) and grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- ground-dwelling mammals – spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*)
- birds of prey – spotted harrier (*Circus assimilis*) and white-bellied sea eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*).

A list of the ecosystem-credit species predicted to occur by the BAM-C and included in the BAM-C assessment for the Project is provided in **Table 4.3**. Note: no predicted ecosystem-credit species were excluded from the BAM-C on the basis of habitat constraints for this assessment (refer to **Annexure D**) Where woodland dependant species were predicted, derived native grassland and exotic grassland vegetation zones were de-selected.

Ecosystem species records from the surveys undertaken for this assessment are shown in **Figure 4.3**.

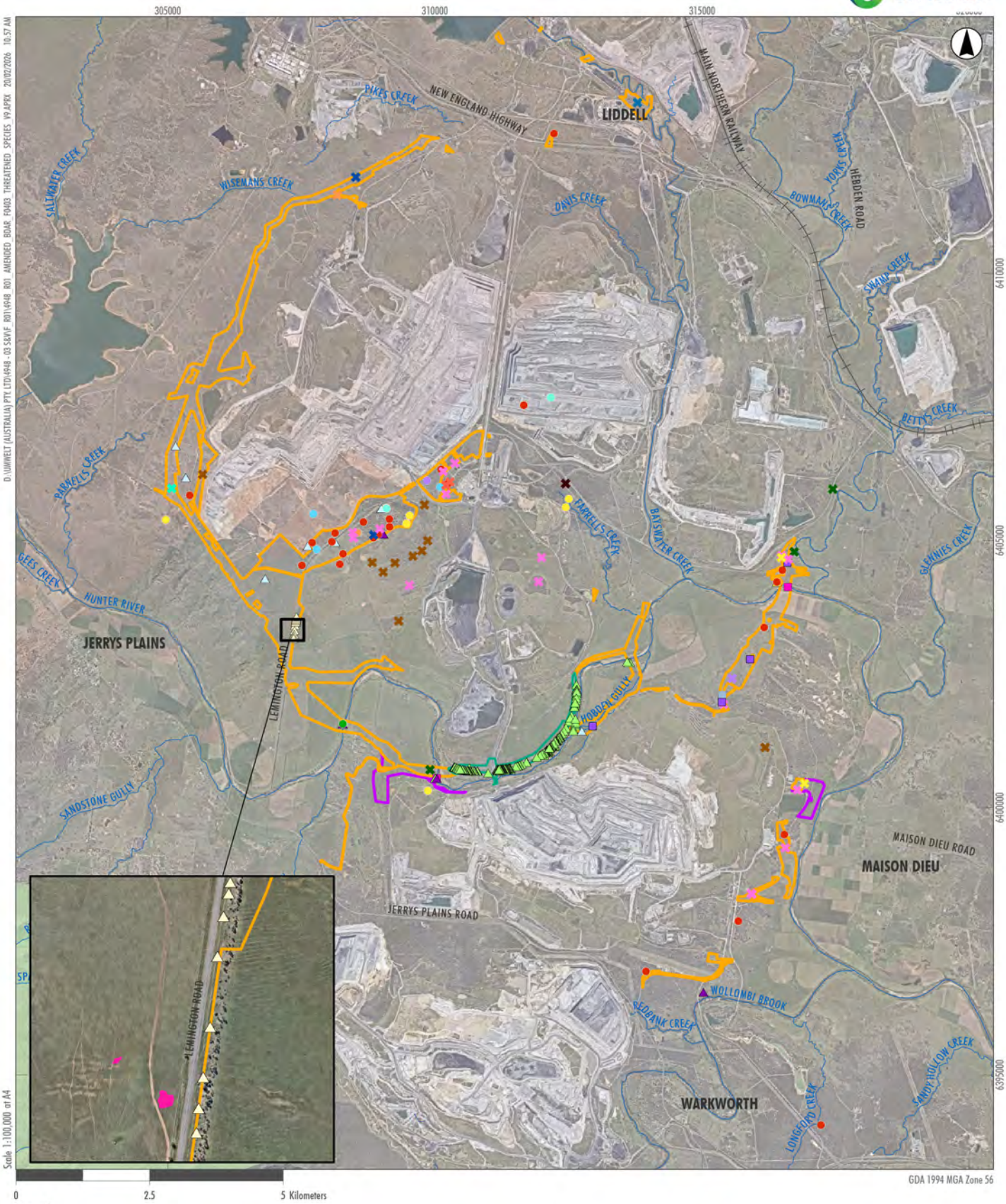
Table 4.3 Ecosystem-credit Species Predicted to Occur in the Development Footprints

Species Name	Sensitivity to Gain	Predicted Occurrence in PCTs by BAM-C	Predicted by BAM-C Assessment	
			HVO North	HVO South
Australasian bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*	Moderate	4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
Australian painted snipe *Rostratula australis*	Moderate	4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
black bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
black falcon *Falco subniger*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
black-chinned honeyeater	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4081, 4089	✓	✓

Species Name	Sensitivity to Gain	Predicted Occurrence in PCTs by BAM-C	Predicted by BAM-C Assessment	
			HVO North	HVO South
Melithreptus gularis gularis				
black-necked stock *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
broad-billed sandpiper^ *Limicola falcinellus*	High	3431	✓	✓
brown treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus victoriae*	High	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
diamond firetail *Stagonopleura guttata*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4089, 4089	✓	✓
dusky woodswallow *Artamus cyanopterus cyanopterus*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
eastern coastal free-tailed bat *Micronomus norfolkensis*	High	3431, 3485, 4015	✓	✓
eastern false pipistrelle *Falsistrellus tasmaniensis*	High	3431	✓	✓
eastern grass owl *Tyto longimembris*	Moderate	4015	✓	-
eastern osprey *Pandion cristatus*	Moderate	3431, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
flame robin *Petroica phoenicea*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4089, 4089	✓	✓
gang-gang cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
greater broad-nosed bat *Scoteanax rueppellii*	High	3431	✓	✓
grey-crowned babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*	Moderate	3431, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*	High	3431, 3485, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
large bent-winged bat *Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*	High	3431, 3485, 4015	✓	✓
little bent-winged bat *Miniopterus australis*	High	3431	✓	✓
little eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
little lorikeet *Glossopsitta pusilla*	High	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
magpie goose *Anseranas semipalmata*	Moderate	4089	✓	-

Species Name	Sensitivity to Gain	Predicted Occurrence in PCTs by BAM-C	Predicted by BAM-C Assessment	
			HVO North	HVO South
painted honeyeater *Grantiella picta*	Moderate	3485, 4015	✓	-
regent honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia*	High	3431, 3485, 4089, 4089	✓	✓
scarlet robin *Petroica boodang*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4089, 4089	✓	✓
south-eastern glossy black-cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*	High	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
south-eastern hooded robin *Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*	Moderate	3485, 4015	✓	-
speckled warbler *Chthonicola sagittata*	High	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
spotted harrier *Circus assimilis*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus*	High	3431, 3485, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
square-tailed kite *Lophoictinia isura*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
swift parrot *Lathamus discolor*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
turquoise parrot *Neophema pulchella*	High	3431, 3485	✓	✓
varied sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*	Moderate	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
white-bellied sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*	High	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
white-throated needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*	High	3431, 3485, 4015, 4081, 4089	✓	✓
yellow-bellied sheathtail-bat *Saccolaimus flaviventris*	High	3431, 3485	✓	✓

^The broad-billed sandpiper has been retained in the BAM-C assessment as a predicted ecosystem credit species as it makes no material difference to the assessment outcome. However, we strongly question its inclusion as a coastal wetland specialist species being associated with a Central Hunter box-ironbark woodland community.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- Accoustic Recorder Locations
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2025-2026)

- *Acacia pendula* Endangered Population

Ecosystem-credit species

- Dusky Woodswallow
- Grey Crowned Babbler
- GH Flying Fox
- Lathams Snipe
- Speckled Warbler
- Swift Parrot
- Varied sitella
- White-bellied sea-eagle
- White-throated Needletail

Species-credit species

- Southern Myotis
- Brush-tailed Phascogale

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2019-2023)

Ecosystem-credit species

- Eastern Freetail-bat
- Grey-crowned Babbler
- Scarlet Robin
- Speckled Warbler
- Spotted Harrier
- Spotted-tailed Quoll
- Varied Sittella
- Yellow-bellied Sheathtail-bat
- Little Bent-winged Bat
- Dusky woodswallow

Species-credit species

- *Acacia pendula*
- *Eucalyptus camuldulensis*
- Brush-tailed Phascogale
- Hunter Valley *Delma*
- Large-eared Pied Bat

FIGURE 4.3

Threatened Species Records

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025)) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

4.2.2 Species-Credit Species

Targeted species-credit surveys were undertaken across the Development Footprints as outlined in **Section 4.1.3** and detailed in Section D.2 of **Annexure D**. Five species-credit species that will generate credits as part of the Project were recorded in the Development Footprints, and one species has been assumed present for this assessment based on the prevalence of records in the local area and region.

Assumed Present:

- southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*)

Recorded:

- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* – River Red Gum endangered population in the Hunter catchment
- *Acacia pendula* – population in the Hunter catchment
- Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)
- brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)
- masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*).

Large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*) and little bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus australis*) were also positively recorded during Anabat surveys, however no areas containing breeding habitat occur in or within 2 km of the Development Footprints and therefore habitat polygons are not required for these species (refer to **Section 6.4.2** for further discussion). Offsetting for these species is captured for foraging habitat as part of the ecosystem credit requirement.

A flock of up to five swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) individuals were recorded foraging in flowering eucalypts around the HVO offices car park in August 2025. Despite extensive searches in remnant woodland in the Development Footprints and surrounds, the species was not recorded utilising other habitats in the locality. This species generates a species credit obligation for areas mapped as Important Habitat. No important habitat for the species has been identified within the Development Footprint. Offsetting for these species is captured as part of the ecosystem credit requirement.

No expert reports were sourced for this assessment, however Dr David Sharpe (squirrel glider approved expert) was consulted on the preliminary species polygon and proposed additional survey requirements for squirrel glider and eastern pygmy possum.

The sections below provide a discussion of the six species generating credits for this assessment. Species polygons have been prepared for these species as outlined in **Table 4.7** and shown in **Figure** 4.4 to **Figure 4.9.**

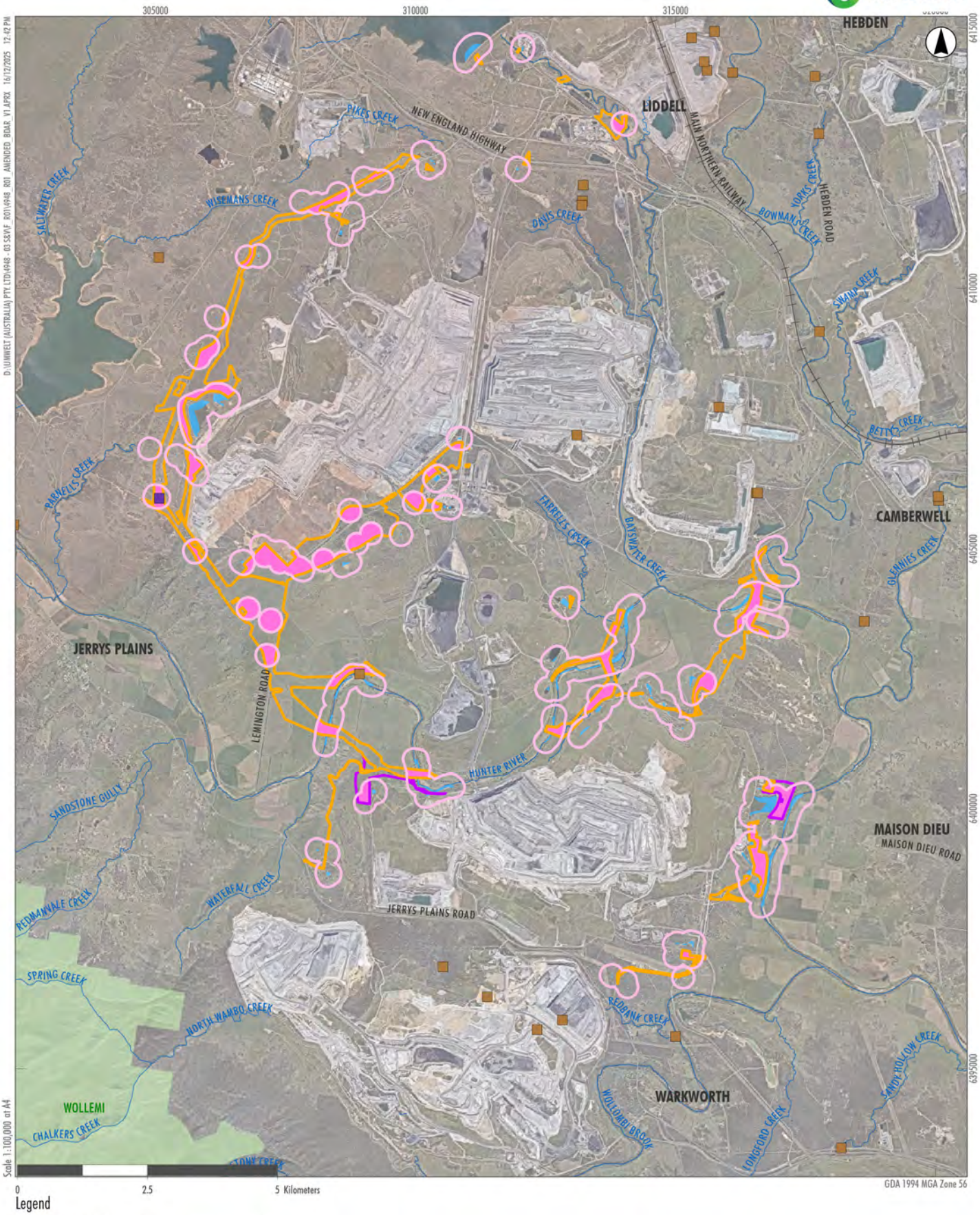
4.2.2.1 Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*)

The southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*) has been assumed present based on the prevalence of records in the local area and region. In particular, the species was recorded near Ravensworth West Mine in 2008 (DPE 2022a). The species has been regularly recorded along waterbodies in the locality including along Glennies Creek in 2009 and 2018, Bowmans Creek in 2008 and 2014 and adjacent to the Hunter River near the Carrington West Wing Extension in 2009 (DPE 2022a). A record from 2009 also occurs at the Wollombi Brook and Redbank Creek junction near HVO South (DPE 2022a). A likely southern myotis was recorded in March 2025 during the nocturnal green and golden bell frog surveys, swooping and fishing over a dam in the western section of the HVO North Development Footprint.

The species is known to roost in intact vegetation close to water, where they forage for insects and small fish by raking their feet across the water surface. Habitat for this species that generates credits includes associated PCTs within 200 m of a waterbody with pools/stretches 3 m or wider including rivers, creeks, billabongs, lagoons, or dams. For the purposes of this assessment all areas of woody native vegetation (PCTs where the species is predicted to occur by the TBDC) surrounding major waterbodies and large dams have been mapped for the southern myotis habitat polygon (refer to **Figure 4.4**).

This includes:

- PCT3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland (Moderate, Thinned Woodland, Plantation, Scattered Regeneration, Cooba Woodland and Bulloak Variant conditions)
- PCT3485 – Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest (Moderate condition)
- PCT4015 – Central Hunter Riparian Forest (Moderate condition)
- PCT4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest (Moderate condition)
- PCT4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest (Moderate, Low to Moderate and Cooba Woodland conditions).



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- 200m Buffer (around water)
- Southern Myotis Species Polygon
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Waterbodies
- National Parks

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2023)

- Southern Myotis

Umwelt Threatened Species Record (2025)

- Southern Myotis

FIGURE 4.4

Southern myotis (Myotis macropus) Records and Habitat Polygon

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024), NSW Bionet Atlas TS Records (2025)

4.2.2.2 *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* – River Red Gum Endangered Population in the Hunter Catchment

A population of river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) is known to occur along the Hunter River around HVO and Carrington Billabong, to the east near the confluence of Glennies Creek and further south along Wollombi Brook. Where the HVO North Development Footprint intersects the Hunter River east of the Carrington Billabong and north of Cheshunt Pit, individuals of river red gum were recorded on the banks of the Hunter River in association with PCT4089 Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest and PCT4081 Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest. A large number of river red gums were recorded within the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area (refer to **Figure 4.5**).

At the time of survey, the stands of river red gum within the Development Footprint and River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area contained mature trees and signs of recruitment. Noting the strong link between flood water retention and natural recruitment of river red gum, this recruitment is likely in response to substantial rainfall events that occurred in the region from early 2020. Despite these signs of recruitment, the remnants along the Hunter River are generally highly degraded due to historic agricultural practices, vegetation clearance, weed invasion and subsequent fragmentation and isolation.

The location of the river red gum endangered population and habitat polygon mapping in relation to the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints (and the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area) is shown in **Figure 4.5**. This was calculated on the direct impacts to the population by buffering all recorded individuals by 30 m (except where the buffer extended to onto the artificial bund). Direct impacts to the population are expected at the locations where the proposed realignment of the transmission line crosses the Hunter River. Where possible, river red gum individuals will be avoided through careful placement of poles and access tracks, however it is acknowledged that necessary maintenance of the transmission line easement will require trimming of canopy species.

A comprehensive River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy (RRGRRS) for the nearby Carrington Billabong and its river red gum population was prepared to address the conditions of consent to extend open-cut mining in the Carrington Pit, located in HVO North (Development Consent No. DA 450-10 2003). The RRGRRS set up a monitoring program of river red gum subpopulations and vegetation communities in Carrington Billabong and priority sites on the Hunter River and Wollombi Brook in HVO North and South. The program prescribed six monitoring events over a ten year period between 2007 to 2017. The key results of this monitoring indicated that recruitment was limited to areas on the floodplain where water is retained for several weeks following flooding events. Furthermore, the areas containing river red gums are low in native flora species diversity with high herbaceous weeds species present, with native species typically comprising 30% or less of total species recorded. These results are consistent with the conditions recorded during the surveys undertaken for this assessment.

A revision of the RRGRRS was required as part of the HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) to include stands of river red gums on the Hunter River and Wollombi Brook, which occurred within the approval boundary. The revised RRGRRS was prepared in 2017 addressed requirements to restore and rehabilitate the Carrington Billabong and to manage stands of river red gums occurring along the Hunter River and Wollombi Brook at HVO South. The RRGRRS was updated in 2025 (HVO 2025) to reflect the findings of monitoring and recommended additional measures to ensure that the set completion criteria and long-term closure objectives are met.

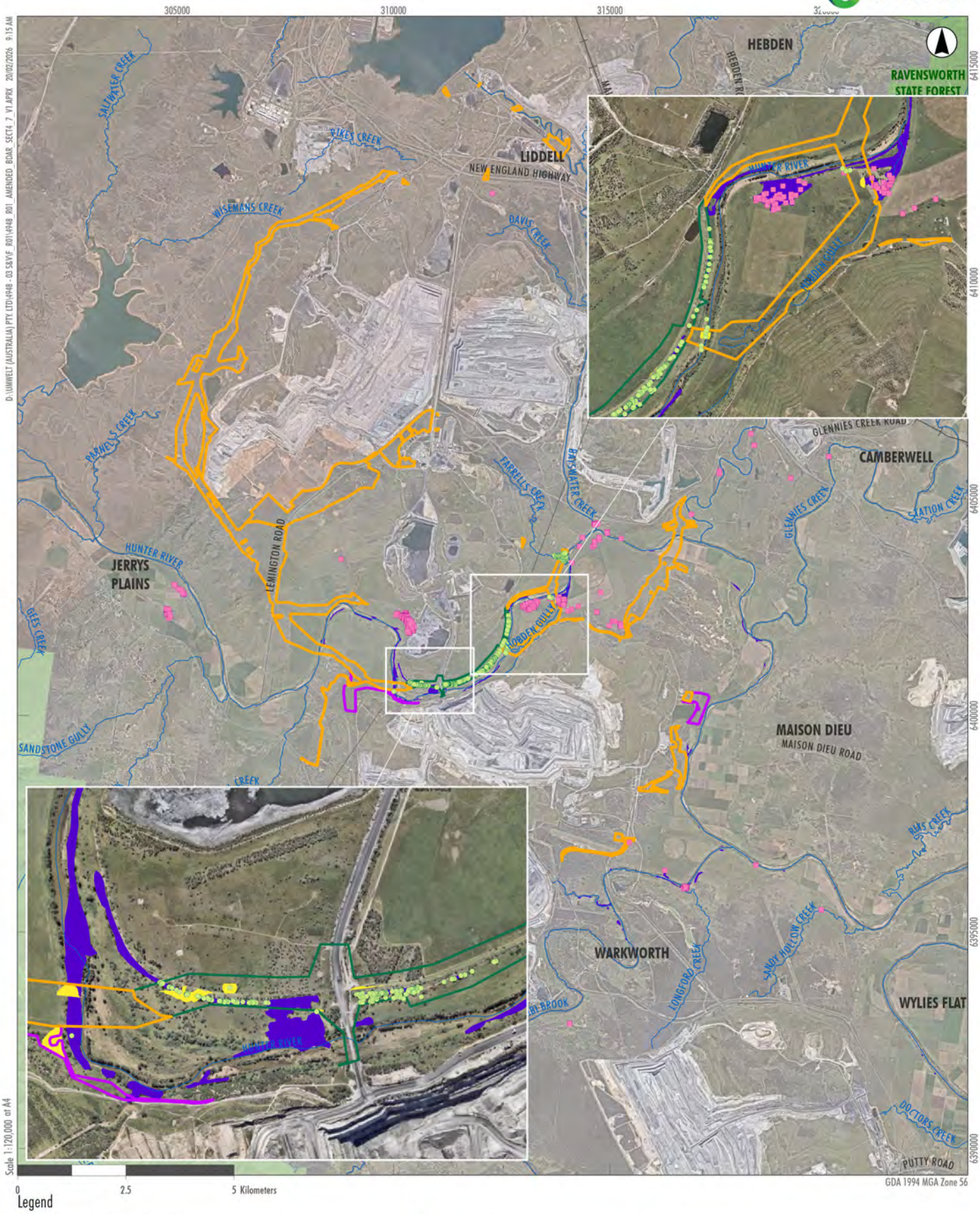
The potential for indirect impacts to the population due to groundwater and surface water changes as a result of the Project are further discussed in **Section 6.2** and **Section 6.3**. Key findings from the

groundwater assessment undertaken by ERM for the Carrington Pit Extension Statement of Environmental Effects (ERM 2005), shows that connectivity between Carrington Billabong and the groundwater aquifer was confirmed. These findings also indicated that reductions to water table levels were at least partially attributable to both drought and mining activities. Consequently, it is likely that local mining activities have interfered with the water usage regime of the river red gums at Carrington Billabong.

The GDE assessment undertaken for the Project (Eco Logical 2022) does not predict significant impacts on the river red gum population (refer to Appendix L of the EIS). EcoLogical (2022) states that "*Modelling predicts some drawdown in the Quaternary alluvium of the Hunter River near the riparian river red gum sites, however, the incremental drawdown is predicted to be less than 0.5 m and no widespread dewatering will occur. Minor drawdown of 0.2–0.5 m is modelled for below Carrington Billabong (AGE 2022). Any decline in the water table due to mining activities in other parts of the aquifer is likely to be replaced by the leakage of surface water through the bed of the Hunter River (AGE 2022). River red gum populations close to the Hunter River will continue to have access to groundwater due to drainage from the Hunter River, and no significant impact is expected.*"



Photo 4.1 River red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) Endangered Population (September 2020 near the Hunter River)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- River Red Gum Species Polygon
- River Red Gum Areas in the 'HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy'
- Road
- Railway Line
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- State Forest

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2022)

- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum)

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2020 - 2025)

- *Eucalyptus camuldulensis* (River Red Gum)

FIGURE 4.5

River Red Gum Endangered Population Records and Habitat Polygons

Image Source: Nearmap (September 2020), Data source: NSW DFSI (2024), NSW Bionet Atlas TS Records (2025)

4.2.2.3 *Acacia pendula* – population in the Hunter Catchment

Acacia pendula individuals were recorded near an access track adjacent to Lemington Road, within the Development Footprint. Samples were collected and confirmed as *Acacia pendula* by the NSW Royal Botanic Gardens (refer to **Annexure I**). The recorded individuals are naturally regenerating in a grassy paddock within proximity of known mature planted individuals occurring along the edge of Lemington Road (refer to **Photo 4.2**). It is expected the individuals in the Development Footprint have propagated from these plantings. The plants are small and under-developed, potentially as a result of cattle grazing.

Acacia pendula is an endangered population in the Hunter Catchment. Successful fruiting has never been observed in the Hunter population, and all populations appear sterile (Bell and Driscoll 2014). According to Bell and Driscoll (2014) it is reasonable to assume that many of the plants found in the Hunter originate from plantings. The species has commonly been used throughout the region in avenue and screen plantings. Within the Hunter Valley, examples include areas along the New England Highway at Ravensworth and within planted screens on Glencore mine sites.

The individuals recorded in the Development Footprint occur outside the impact areas of the proposed realigned easement (i.e. the Wider Easement Area) and are proposed to be avoided (refer to **Figure 4.6**).



Photo 4.2 *Acacia pendula* Individuals Recorded within the Development Footprint (Wider Easement Area) Adjacent to Lemington Road

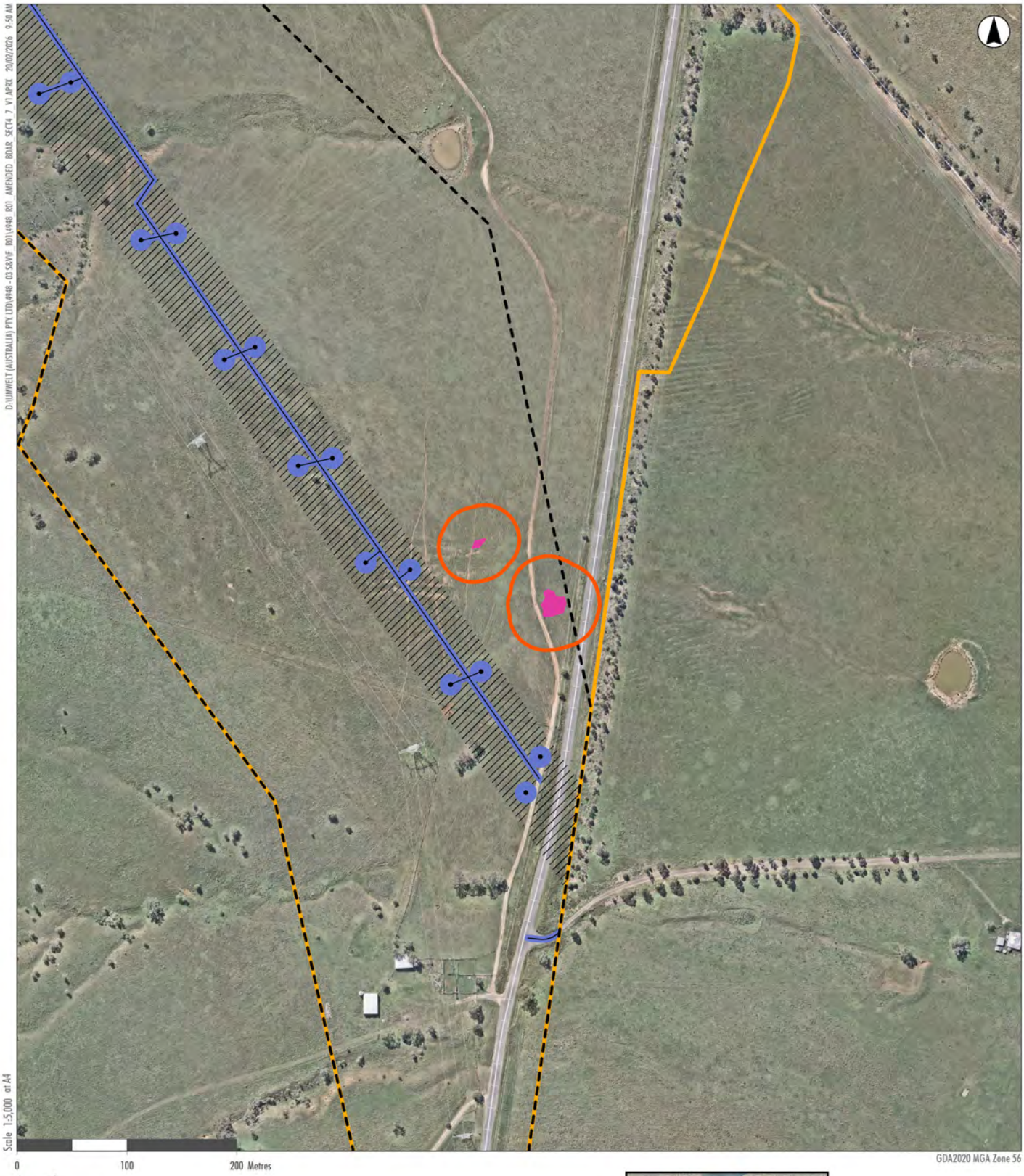


FIGURE 4.6

Acacia pendula Records and 30m Buffers

Image Source: Nearmap (2025)Data source: DFSI (2024)

4.2.2.4 Hunter Valley Delma (*Delma vescolineata*)

The BAM-C predicted the potential occurrence of striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*), which is better known for its populations in the southern tablelands and south west slopes of NSW and listed as vulnerable under the BC and EPBC Acts. Records of a legless lizard attributed to *Delma impar* have been previously recorded in the Hunter Valley at the Maxwell and Mt Pleasant mine sites and Bayswater Power Station, north and northwest of the HVO Complex. It has been recently determined that a newly-described species of legless lizard occurs in the Hunter, being the Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) (Mahony et al. 2022). Mahony et al. (2022) states that the new species is divergent from *Delma impar* in both nuclear and mitochondrial analysis and differing facial scalation and colour patterning. The species appears to be a grassland specialist, similar to *Delma impar*, but has also been recorded on the edge and within open and sparse grassy woodlands.

On 11 October 2024, the Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) was listed as endangered under the BC Act. The final determination states:

"*Delma vescolineata has been recorded in secondary native grassland remaining after the removal or dieback of previous woody canopy vegetation (Benson 1996) in association with sparse box-gum or ironbark woodland (Mahony et al. 2022). The primary canopy species consists of Eucalyptus melliodora and E. crebra, with a diverse ground cover layer containing multiple grasses including Austrostipa spp., Bothriochloa spp., and Chloris spp. (Mahony et al. 2022).*"

As surveys were undertaken prior to the identification of the new species, Umwelt undertook a comparison of the photos of legless lizards that were recorded at HVO to identify if they demonstrated the morphological features of the newly described Hunter Valley delma and compared these with features of striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*). This assessment focused on photos that clearly showed the scalation of the head due to the main distinguishing morphological features of *Delma vescolineata* compared with other *Delma* sp. is that the third labial scale occurs directly under the eye opposed to occurring before the eye towards the snout. Of the images of legless lizards taken at HVO, the photos that showed the side profile of the individuals head were confirmed to be *Delma vescolineata*. Using the precautionary principle, it is assumed that the legless lizards attributed to striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*) at HVO prior to identification of the newly-described Hunter Valley delma, will be considered as *Delma vescolineata*.

Targeted artificial shelter surveys were undertaken for this assessment in consideration of the survey guidance in the Survey Guidelines for Australia's Threatened Reptiles (DSEWPC 2011a), EPBC Act Referral Guidelines for the Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*) (DSEWPC 2011b) and the SPRAT Profile for the species (DAWE 2021). Surveys identified the species in seven locations across grassland and thinned grassy woodland habitats. The location of the Hunter Valley delma records and habitat polygon mapping in relation to the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints is shown in **Figure 4.7**. Despite extensive survey, the species was not recorded in highly degraded, exotic grasslands or areas of intact woodlands. While the species was only recorded in and adjacent to the HVO North Development Footprint, it has been assumed that it also occurs in the similar habitats in the HVO South Development Footprint despite not being confirmed to occur there. **Table** 4.4 below outlines the records of the species for this assessment.

The Hunter Valley delma habitat polygon includes all vegetation zones across the Development Footprint where the species was recorded, being:

- PCT3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland (Derived Native Grassland, Thinned Woodland, Scattered Regeneration condition)
- PCT4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest (Derived Native Grassland condition).

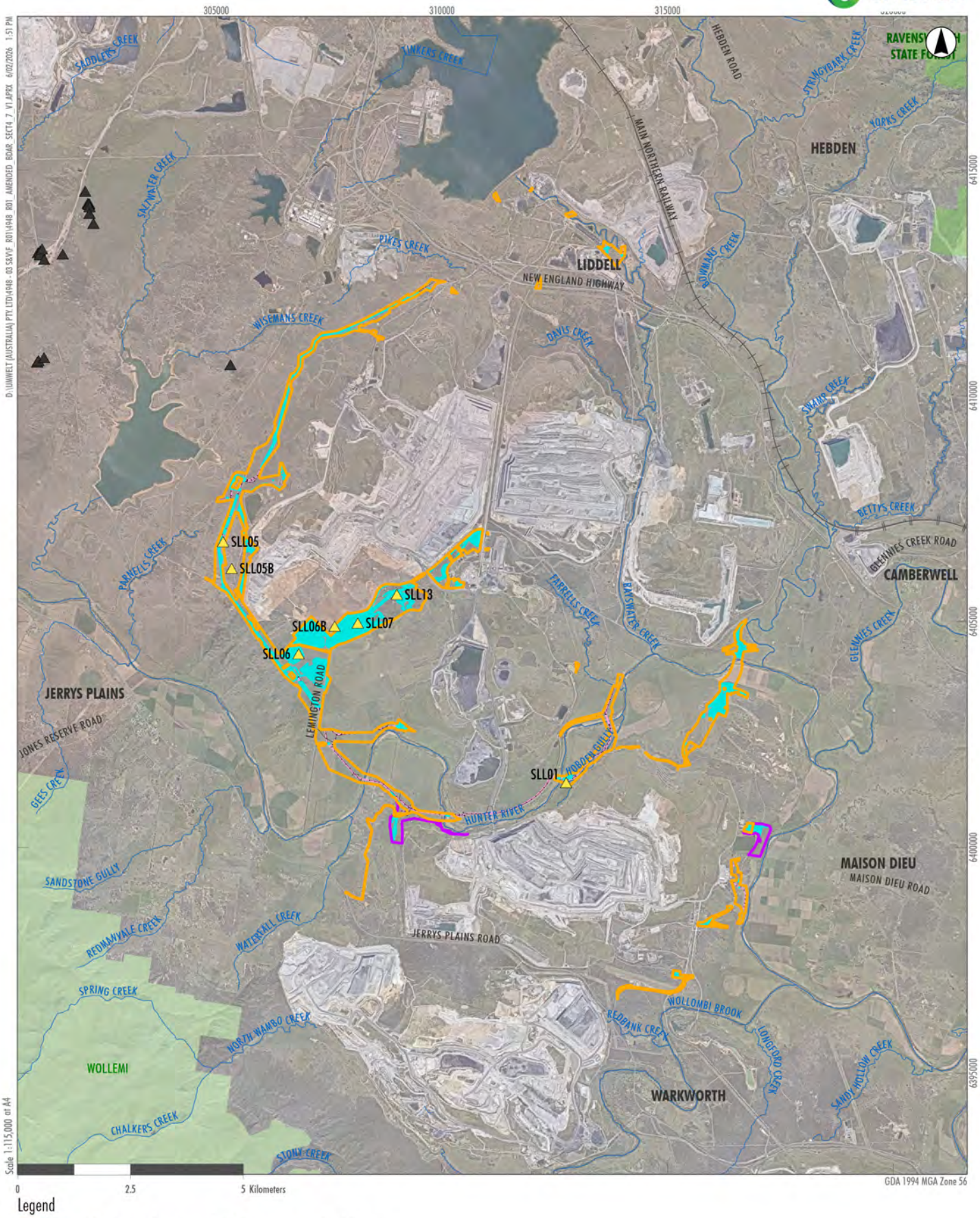
No impact to the Hunter Valley delma was assessed for Management Zone (MZ) 2 (New transmission line Easement) for the purposes of the BAM assessment (refer to **Section 6.1** for MZ descriptions). Areas outside the proposed installation disturbance (restricted to tracks and pole pads) for the proposed new easement (MZ2) will be managed in accordance with *ISSC 20 Guideline for the Management of Activities within Electricity Easements and Close to Electricity Infrastructure* (ISSC 2012) and will remain in grassland condition.

Table 4.4 Hunter Valley Delma Records

Tile Grid Reference	Vegetation Zone	Relevant Development Footprint	Number Recorded	Date Recorded
SLL01	PCT4089 *DNG*	HVO North	2	9/10/2020
SLL05	PCT3431 *DNG*	HVO North	3	30/09/2020
			2	8/10/2020
			2	15/10/2020
SLL05B	PCT3431 *Scattered Regeneration*	HVO North	1	11/11/2020
SLL06	PCT3431 *DNG*	HVO North	6	30/09/2020
			3	8/10/2020
			1	15/10/2020
SLL06B	PCT3431 *Scattered Regeneration*	HVO North	1	11/11/2020
SLL07	PCT3431 *DNG*	HVO North	1	22/09/2020
			15	30/09/2020
			3	9/10/2020
			3	15/10/2020
			4	5/11/2020
SLL13	PCT3431 *Thinned Woodland*	HVO North	1	17/11/2020



Photo 4.3 Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) Recorded During Tile Grid Surveys (30 September 2020 in PCT3431 DNG Habitat)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Hunter Valley *Delma* Species Polygon
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- State Forest
- Management zone 1 – full impact
- Management zone 2 – partial impacts

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2022)

- ▲ Striped Legless Lizard (likely Hunter Valley *Delma*)

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2022)

- △ Hunter Valley *Delma*

FIGURE 4.7

Hunter Valley Delma (Delma vescolineata) Records and Habitat Polygons

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024), NSW Bionet Atlas TS Records (2025)

4.2.2.5 Brush-tailed Phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)

The brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) is known to occupy dry sclerophyll open forests with a sparse groundcover of herbs, grasses, shrubs or leaf litter. This generally cryptic species has been recently recorded regularly in the woodlands of the Hunter Valley with the use of baited remote camera surveys. The species has been recorded annually at the Ashton Coal Mine offset site between 2015 and 2019 located approximately 1.8 km from the eastern extent of the HVO North Development Footprint.

The species was recorded in three locations in and around the HVO North Development Footprint near the Hunter River and Bowmans Creek in moderate condition PCT1691 Narrow-leaved Ironbark – Grey Box grassy woodland of the central and upper Hunter during the surveys undertaken for this assessment. Noting the species populations are known to fluctuate and the species' ability to occupy a range of PCTs, for the purposes of this assessment all associated PCTs (in accordance with the TBDC) in woody condition have been included in the species polygon (refer to **Figure 4.8**).

This includes:

- PCT3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland (*Moderate, Thinned Woodland, Woodland with Exotic Understorey* and *Plantation* condition).
- PCT3485 – Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest (*Moderate* condition)
- PCT4015 – Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest Valley (*Moderate* condition).
- PCT4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest (*Moderate* and *Low to Moderate* condition).

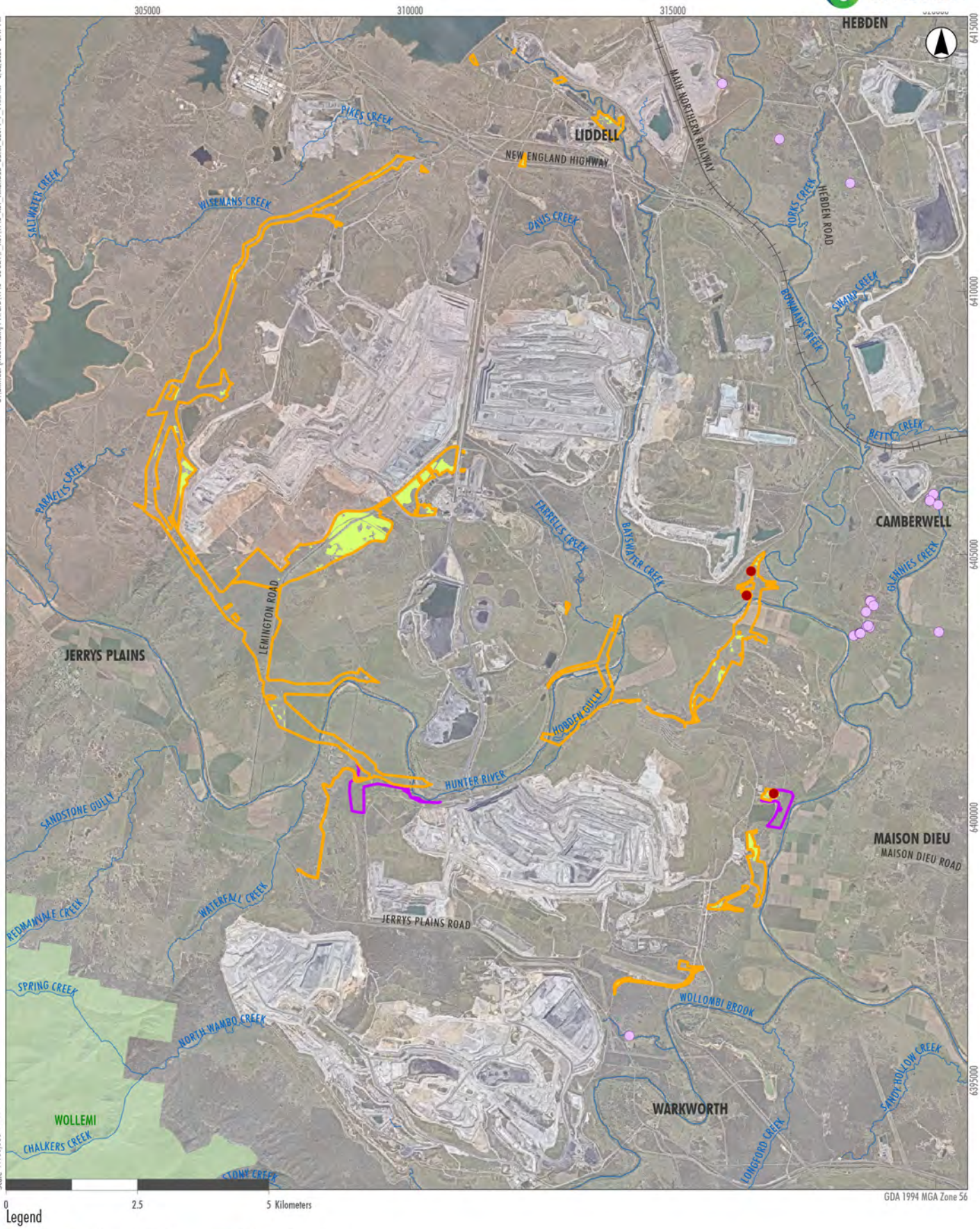
Table 4.5 below outlines the records of the species for this assessment.

Table 4.5 Brush-Tailed Phascogale Records

Remote Camera Reference	Number Recorded	Date Recorded	Vegetation Zone	Relevant Development Footprint
CAM23	1	8/5/2020	PCT3431 *Moderate*	HVO North
	1	26/5/2020		
	1	14/6/2020		
	1	19/6/2020		
C198	1		PCT3431 *Thinned Woodland*	HVO North
C198	1		PCT3431 *Moderate*	HVO North



Photo 4.4 Brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*) Recorded on Remote Cameras (8 May 2020, CAM23 Location Refer to Figure 4.8)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Brush-tailed Phascogale Species Polygon
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2022)

- Brush-tailed Phascogale

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2020 - 2026)

- Brush-tailed Phascogale

FIGURE 4.8

Brush-tailed Phascogale (Phascogale tapoatafa) Records and Habitat Polygons

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024), NSW Bionet Atlas TS Records (2025)

4.2.2.6 Masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)

The masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) is known to occupy dry eucalypt forests and woodlands from sea level to 1100m. Pairs have a large home-range of 1000 ha or more, depending on prey availability. The species has been recorded regularly at the Ashton Coal Mine offset site in 2015, 2023, 2024 and 2025 located approximately 1.8 km from the eastern extent of the HVO North Development Footprint.

The species was confirmed on acoustic recordings from four locations within the HVO North Development Footprint near Archerfield Road during the 2025 and 2026 surveys. The habitats around this area are predominately regrowth, but also mature trees surrounded by open grassland habitats. Another record was confirmed during the 2026 surveys near Lake James predominantly in the HVO South Development Footprint. The species was not recorded during any other survey of the site, however the location of the calls could indicate these areas are part of the home range of the masked owls previously recorded around Ashton Coal Mine.

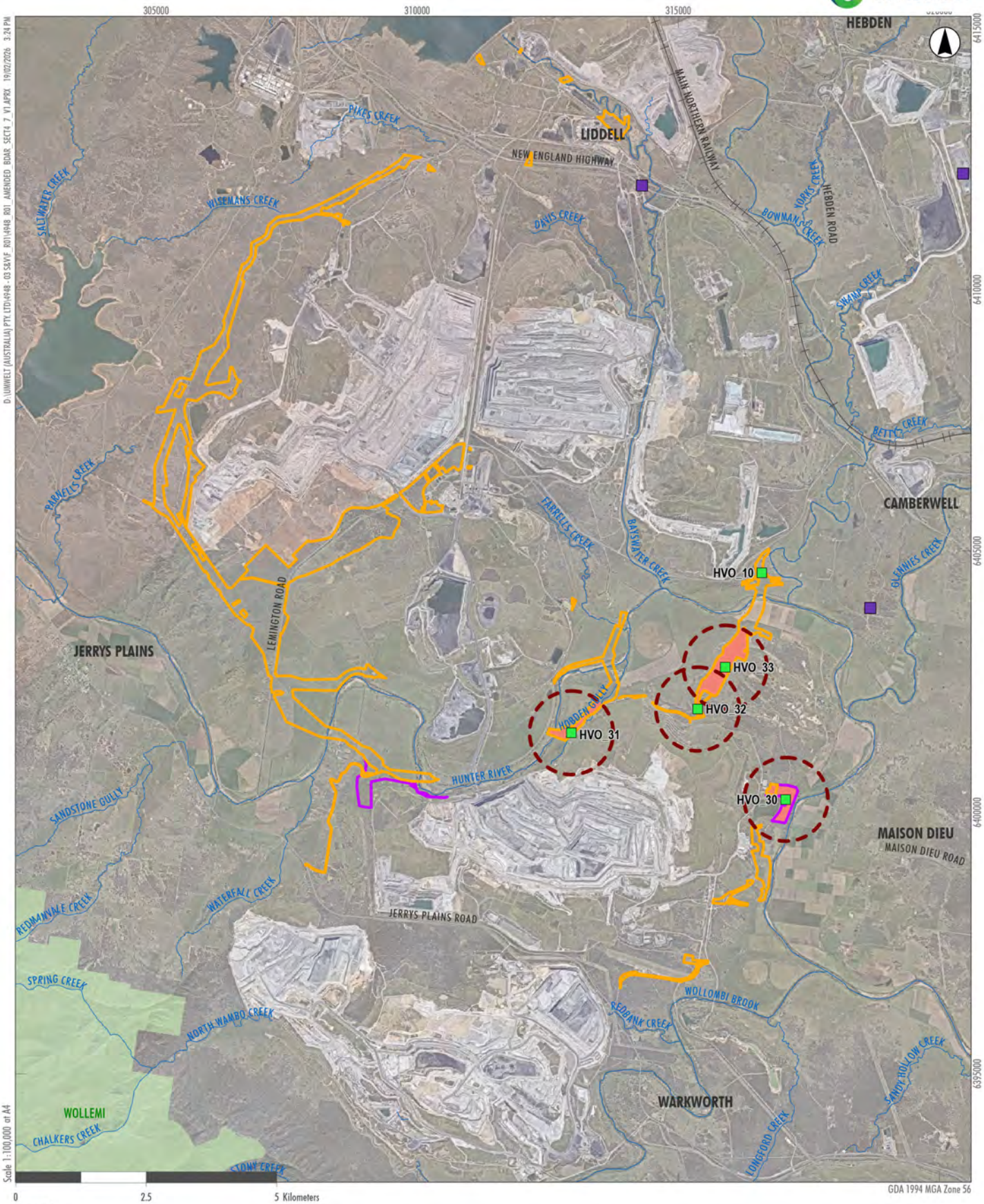
For the purposes of this assessment all associated PCTs and conditions zones containing suitable hollows (in accordance with the TBDC) have been included in the species polygon (refer to **Figure 4.9**). This includes:

- PCT3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland (Moderate, Thinned Woodland, Woodland with Exotic Understorey and Derived Native Grassland and Exotic Grassland condition).
- PCT4081– Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest (Moderate condition)
- PCT4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest (Derived Native Grassland and Exotic Grassland condition).

Table 4.6 below outlines the records of the species for this assessment.

Table 4.6 Masked Owl Records

Acoustic Recorder Reference	Relevant Development Footprint	Record Dates	Suitable Hollows within 800 m buffer
HVO10	HVO North	14/06/2025 20/01/2026	No
HVO31	HVO North	19/06/2025	Yes
HVO32	HVO North	3/07/2025	Yes
HVO33	HVO North	28/06/2025	Yes
HVO30	HVO North and South	20/01/2026 31/01/2026	Yes



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Masked Owl Species Polygon
- 800m Buffer on Masked Owl Record
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2025)

- Masked Owl

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2025-2026)

- Masked Owl

FIGURE 4.9

Masked Owl Records and Habitat Polygons

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024), NSW Bionet Atlas TS Records (2025)

Table 4.7 Species-credit Species Recorded or Assumed Present in the Development Footprints

Species Name	Biodiversity Risk Weighting	SAII	Habitat and/or Geographic Constraint	HVO North		HVO South	
				Records	Unit of Measure	Records	Unit of Measure
southern myotis ***Myotis macropus***	2.0	No	Potential roosting habitat (i.e. hollow-bearing trees, bridges, caves or artificial structures) within 200 m of riparian zone or waterbodies with pools greater than 3 m wide.	Assumed present – in potential roosting habitat in intact vegetation close to water.	78.6 ha	Assumed present – in potential roosting habitat in intact vegetation close to water.	2.2 ha
Eucalyptus camaldulensis – River Red Gum endangered population in the Hunter catchment	2.0	No	Floodplains of watercourses, including rivers, creeks, intermittent streams or billabongs.	Recorded – remnant stands recorded along Hunter River, in particular at the crossing of the proposed transmission line realignment north of Cheshunt Pit.	0.8 ha	Recorded – small area along Hunter River at the crossing of the proposed transmission line realignment north of Riverview Pit.	0.7 ha
				River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area Recorded – remnant stands recorded along Hunter River, in particular at the crossing of the proposed transmission line realignment north of Cheshunt Pit.	0.7 ha	N/A	0.0 ha
Hunter Valley delma ***Delma vescolineata***	2.0*	No	-	Recorded – in seven locations in DNG and open grassy woodland areas.	224.9 ha	Assumed present – in the same vegetation zones recorded in HVO North.	8.7 ha

Species Name	Biodiversity Risk Weighting	SAII	Habitat and/or Geographic Constraint	HVO North		HVO South	
				Records	Unit of Measure	Records	Unit of Measure
brush-tailed phascogale ***Phascogale tapoatafa***	2.0	No	-	Recorded – in one location in woodland habitats immediately adjacent the HVO North Development Footprint.	123.3 ha	Assumed present – in woodland habitats.	2.5 ha
masked owl ***Tyto novaehollandiae***	2.0	No	-	Recorded – in four locations near Archerfield Road	57.7 ha	Recorded – near Lake James	18.1 ha

5.0 Avoidance and Minimisation

HVO has sought to avoid and minimise potential impacts on biodiversity values through Project design. This included targeted avoidance and minimisation of disturbance of key high conservation value vegetation communities and fauna habitats through designing the Project to maximise use of existing mining facilities and existing and approved disturbance areas, reducing the mining footprint and relocating infrastructure, where possible and implementing a range of biodiversity mitigation measures.

HVO undertook a detailed biodiversity constraints study as part of the Project's pre-feasibility assessment to guide the development and detailed design of the Project. Through this process alternative mining options were considered, and HVO has sought to minimise the biodiversity impacts associated with the Project whilst maximising the economic resource recovery.

5.1 Project Location and Site Selection

5.1.1 Impacts Targeted to Previously Impacted Areas

The continuation of mining across the HVO Complex is proposed to be predominantly undertaken through previously mined and disturbed areas, and areas previously approved to be disturbed (approximately 72% of the Project disturbance area occurs as re-disturbance). While this approach provides significant resource recovery largely through the extraction of coal from deeper seams and mining efficiency advantages it also provides improved final landform outcomes and minimises impacts on remnant vegetation and higher quality habitat in the locality.

The majority of the proposed development consent boundaries are within areas previously cleared and disturbed by mining operations, agricultural practices and rural development, or subject to an existing project approval. Only 4% of the proposed development consent boundaries for HVO North and HVO South contain native vegetation cover in the form of remnant forest/woodland and derived native grasslands. **Table 5.1** outlines the approximate proportion of the impacts proposed for areas across the proposed development consent boundaries.

Table 5.1 Disturbance Areas Across the Proposed Development Consent Boundary

Site Context	Area (ha)		
	HVO North	HVO South	Total
Approved Disturbance Area (existing consents)			
Existing and approved disturbance area	4963	3242	8205
Other approved disturbances^	263.5	0.0	263.5
River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area	44	0	44
Areas to be Relinquished*	6.7	267#	273.7
Additional Disturbance Areas			
Cleared land, non-vegetated land and exotic vegetation	335.4	36.7	372.1

Site Context	Area (ha)		
	HVO North	HVO South	Total
Remnant forest/woodland and derived native grasslands (native cover)	567.8	10.4	578.2
Total Area (ha) in Development Footprint	**903.2**	**47.1**	**950.3**

^ Includes areas within other site consents (i.e. Liddell Coal Operations and Ravensworth Operations).

* Lemington Short Rail Loop, RSEE, SLP 2, LCPP and rail.

46 ha of this occurs within the United Wambo JV approved disturbance area.

5.1.2 Alternative Options Considered

To meet Project objectives, detailed concept and pre-feasibility studies considering mining options and infrastructure arrangements were carried out as outlined in the Mine Plan Options Report (HVO 2022a) and the Infrastructure Options and Avoidance Report (HVO 2022b) (refer to Appendix D of the EIS). These studies evaluated potential environmental and social impacts to inform the Project design. The preferred Project mine and infrastructure design was chosen as they provide the best balance between optimal resource recovery and financial return, and reducing environmental and social impacts, through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures. The preferred Project mine design has been continually optimised as further information has been made available via exploration drilling and the completion of environmental and infrastructure studies.

These options are further detailed in Section 2.7 of the EIS and summarised in **Table 5.2** below.

Table 5.2 Summary of Alternative Options

Alternative Options	Justification
Alternative Mine Options	
Alternative option 2 – No Project – mining ends at the complex as per the HVO North consent (December 2026).	This option would forego the approximately 430 Mt of ROM coal proposed to be extracted at HVO South and HVO North, and would mean cessation of employment and the associated flow-on benefits to the approximate 1,500 FTE HVO workforce.
Alternative option 3 – Maximise resource recovery – mining in several additional locations around and in addition to the preferred mine design localities	A total of six alternative mining locations were considered and are documented in the Mine Plan Options Report (refer to Annexure D in EIS). These options were considered not reasonable and feasible due to their proximity to community receptors, geotechnical constraints, heritage features, natural features and/or existing infrastructure.
Alternative option 4 – No final void remaining at the end of the preferred mine design	This option includes the mining voids being progressively backfilled and rehabilitated as soon as practicable as mining progresses. This option was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives due to the ongoing noise and dust generation, potential significant removal of established rehabilitation, delays in establishing final landform and associated land use, and associated costs that significantly affects the Project's viability.
Alternative option 5 – Impacting the CM-CD1 Aboriginal cultural heritage site	Mining through the identified CM-CD1 Aboriginal cultural heritage site was considered as a mine plan alternative due to the coal resources present and was included within the initial mine plan presented in the Scoping Report for the Project. Mining in this area was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives due to the disturbance of the CM-CD1 site, once the high significance of the site was understood, and as part of the Project HVO has committed to not disturbing this site.
Alternative option 6 – Excluding Lemington Road from the mining footprint	No disturbance of the existing Lemington Road alignment was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives. Furthermore, the proposed Lemington Road realignment benefits to the community from the upgrade of the road, such as improved flood immunity, as per the preferred Project option, would not be realised.
Alternative option 7 – Underground extraction of target seams	As an alternative to the open cut mining methodology, the extraction of resources in the Project area using underground mining methods was considered. The benefit of this option is that it would reduce the impact on the surface; however, underground mining is not considered economically viable for resource extraction in this area.

Alternative Options	Justification
Alternative Infrastructure Options	
Realignment path of Lemington Road	Alternative routes considered for the Lemington Road realignment included: • Lemington Road realignment south of HVO North – option to realign Lemington Road south of HVO North but north of the Hunter River. This would not require the construction of new intersections with the New England Highway or Golden Highway nor a bridge over the Hunter River; however, safe separation between the public traffic, mining operations and the Hunter River would be difficult. Mining would be highly visible from the relocated section of Lemington Road. This alignment would also be partly located over an area of rehabilitated mine overburden, which could present challenging geotechnical conditions and associated potential construction difficulties. • Pikes Gully Road Extension – option to upgrade and extend of the existing Pikes Gully Road along the western side of the HVO Complex and construction of a new Hunter River crossing and Golden Highway intersection in the vicinity of Jerrys Plains. This option would rely upon the purchase of private land, and the location of an intersection with the Golden Highway would increase traffic movements in the vicinity of Jerrys Plains Village and the surrounding equine industry. • Close Lemington Road – Approximately 8% of road users rely on Lemington Road to travel between the New England and Golden Highways as a through road, providing a thoroughfare for the community of Jerry Plains to access the north of Singleton. This option was not considered reasonable and feasible and did not best meet Project objectives. Lemington Road is subject to significant closure periods due to the flooding of Moses Crossing, which will be negated by the proposed Lemington Road alignment and new Hunter River bridge. • Following exhibition of the EIS in January 2023, HVO revised a portion of the proposed location of the Lemington Road re-alignment further to the west of the originally proposed location to further avoid impacts to *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. This is further discussed in **Section 5.2.1** below.
Realignment path of transmission and telecommunication lines	The Project involves the realignment of transmission and telecommunication lines. The most significant of the realignments is the Ausgrid 132 kV transmission line, for which several alternatives were considered. Given the nature of transmission and telecommunication infrastructure in which connection points are fixed locations, direct alternatives are often not achievable. As such the following design practice was implemented to minimise potential indirect and direct Project impacts. The design process of the realignment routes for power transmission and telecommunication linear assets, both 3rd party and HVO owned, has been the same regardless of the asset. The process relied upon to ensure reasonable and feasible mitigation measures have been adopted whilst ensuring Project outcomes is defined below. • Identify the Project interaction point with transmission or telecommunication line item. • Identify the nearest reasonable connection points each side of the interaction.

Alternative Options	Justification
	• Identify areas or points of avoidance such as sensitive biodiversity matters, heritage items and or landownership constraints. • Understand potential amenity impacts. • Plan a minimum length alignment between available connection points whilst recognising outcomes of Steps 3 and 4. • Consult with the asset owner on the appropriateness of the alignment. • Adjust if necessary. Through this process implementing reasonable and feasible impact avoidance and mitigation whilst achieving Project outcomes, the potential impacts of the Project as it relates to transmission and telecommunication line infrastructure is kept to a minimum.
Product stockpile and train loading facility upgrades	Rather than progressing the design of new coal handling and processing facilities for the Project, the primary objective of the CPP design process was to utilise existing facilities where possible, and to re-evaluate the implementation of facilities already approved but not yet constructed. This approach to maximise the efficiency of the existing facilities was driven by the objectives of achieving maximum operational efficiencies and reduced capital and operating costs. As such, existing stockpile areas are proposed to be upgraded to increase capacity, reduce costs and impacts to new areas.
Improvements to HVO North MIA	The Project proposes to upgrade the HVO North MIA to include a new workshop suitable for ultra-class haul trucks and incorporate modern maintenance facilities. This option was chosen over new facilities as the existing MIA is already the principal HVO facility and works are achievable without additional disturbance, the MIA and HVCPP combined are centrally located without near neighbours and close to mining operations, minimising potential impact to sensitive receivers; and as mining progress further south upgrading and or refurbishment of the Howick MIA represents an impractical long term solution.
Lemington CPP and associated rail loop	Construction of the LCPP, and the trucking of ROM coal from the Riverview and Cheshunt Pits for processing there, was approved in an earlier development application for HVO South (PA 06_0261) and remains approved under the current consolidated project approval. In reviewing the approved LCPP and associated rail loop in consideration of the Project, a range of constraints were identified should it be moved outside the existing approved location including impacts on biodiversity features. Following review of the Project, Construction of the LCPP and associated rail loop is no longer proposed to be constructed.

5.2 Project Design

5.2.1 Avoidance of Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC

5.2.1.1 Lemington Road Realignment

Lemington Road currently travels between the West/Mitchell Pits and the Carrington area. As this area is proposed to be mined, the Project seeks to realign part of Lemington Road.

The Lemington Road realignment presents an opportunity to improve the accessibility and reliability of the road as the primary access point between the Golden Highway and New England Highway. It includes the construction of a new bridge over the Hunter River which will meet the requirements of a 1 in 10 average recurrence interval (ARI) flood protection design. This will improve accessibility and safety of the crossing compared to the existing Moses Crossing low level bridge, which often results in closure of the road during times of heavy rainfall.

The proposed alignment of Lemington Road was carefully considered to avoid or minimise impacts to areas of environmental sensitivity, in particular *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* and *Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland EEC*. As outlined in **Section 3.1.5.2**, following public exhibition of the EIS in January and February 2023, HVO revised the portion of the proposed Lemington Road re-alignment that traversed areas of 'known' Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC further to the west, where the depth of potential aeolian sandy substrate varies and floristic characteristics appear to favour box-ironbark woodland associations.

The additional design review sought an alignment that considered:

- Adopting an alignment further away (west) on land that transitions away from known/accepted *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*.
- Adopting an alignment further away from existing biodiversity offset areas where *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* is present.
- Further minimising the Project disturbance footprint of the proposed road corridor through remnant vegetation Utilising areas of existing disturbance or rehabilitation areas at HVO.
- Maintaining the already established principle design requirements.

Table 5.3 below outlines the key biodiversity features avoided by the proposed alignment presented in the exhibited BDAR (Umwelt 2022b) and following further avoidance measures undertaken during the Response to Submissions phase. Overall avoidance features are shown on **Figure 5.1**.

Table 5.3 Impacts Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment Design Refinement

Biodiversity Feature	Area (ha) Avoided^	
	Exhibited EIS	Following Exhibition
Native forest and woodland habitat	19.5	25.4
Native and exotic grasslands	6.3	18.8
BC Act-Listed Features		
Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC	7.2	9.8
Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland EEC	9.1	12.7
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC	2.6	1.1

^ Areas not cumulative.

The field inspection carried out on 5 September 2023 by Umwelt and Minesoils focused on areas within the new alignment and adjacent areas previously and conservatively assigned as possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. The information collected during this inspection was combined with rapid floristic data and VI plot data previous collected in the Archerfield Road locality. The analysis of this information indicated there were areas previously identified as possible *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* that had a greater similarity to the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*. Floristic composition of these areas often shared some key characteristic species from both TECs, with the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* having a higher species richness in comparison to the *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*. Key characteristic canopy species for both TECs are shared with a persistent cover of *Eucalyptus crebra* (narrow-leaved ironbark) across many of the re-assessed areas with localised patches of *Angophora floribunda* (rough-barked apple). The canopy in some areas also consists of *Eucalyptus tereticornis/blakelyi* (red gum hybrids) which is a characteristic species of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* but can occur extensively within *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*. The dominance of *E. crebra* (single species canopy) in most areas with some lower stratum characteristic species supported the assignment to *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*, even in areas that had some sandy influence within the substrate, as the floristic composition pointed strongly to these areas no longer supporting *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* despite the persistence of a shallow sandy veneer.

Where there was a higher portion of *E. tereticornis/blakelyi* with *A. floribunda* further consideration was given to soil profile. Soil test pits from earlier assessments by Minesoils (as described in Minesoils 2023) were reviewed where data was available, and these areas had been determined to be a Shallow Duplex soils (Chromosol, Sodosol or Kurosol). This soil type has been mapped by Minesoils (2023) throughout vegetation immediately north of Archerfield Road and vegetation adjacent to the spoilic arthoposols south of Archerfield Road. These soils have been described to have very minimal to no sand present in the upper layers. The area appeared to have been subject to extensive sheet erosion, as the drainage lines were infilled with coarse sand, presumed to be washed off the surrounding land. This sand was coarse and gritty in texture and did not appear to be of aeolian origin (Minesoils 2023).

These areas have since been assigned to PCT 1691 based on the recent floristics and soil analysis, therefore are consistent with the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC*. All areas that have been re-assigned to the *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* not only considered the canopy but also the lower stratum species to support the assignment of the TEC. In general, the plot data and rapid data points indicated a higher presence of characteristic species from *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* with between 6 and 14 species (listed in the final determination) at each location. Up to 40% of the characteristic species in some plots were shared with *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*, with a smaller number (4–8) of characteristic species specific to this TEC only.

For the areas outside the Development Footprints, where data was either insufficient or inconclusive to assign either of the TECs, they have been conservatively revised as transitional *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* (refer to **Figure 5.2**) as they were not reviewed in detail during the inspection. The areas are likely to share characteristics of both TECs due to the ecotonal nature of the areas between confirmed *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*, the Yancoal Northern Offset Area and areas mapped as *Central Hunter Grey box Ironbark Woodland EEC* during the vegetation surveys for this Project. The transitional vegetation like most of the area has been modified by historic land management activities which has contributed to the changes in the composition and structure of the vegetation making it increasingly difficult to determine the boundary of best fit between the TECs.

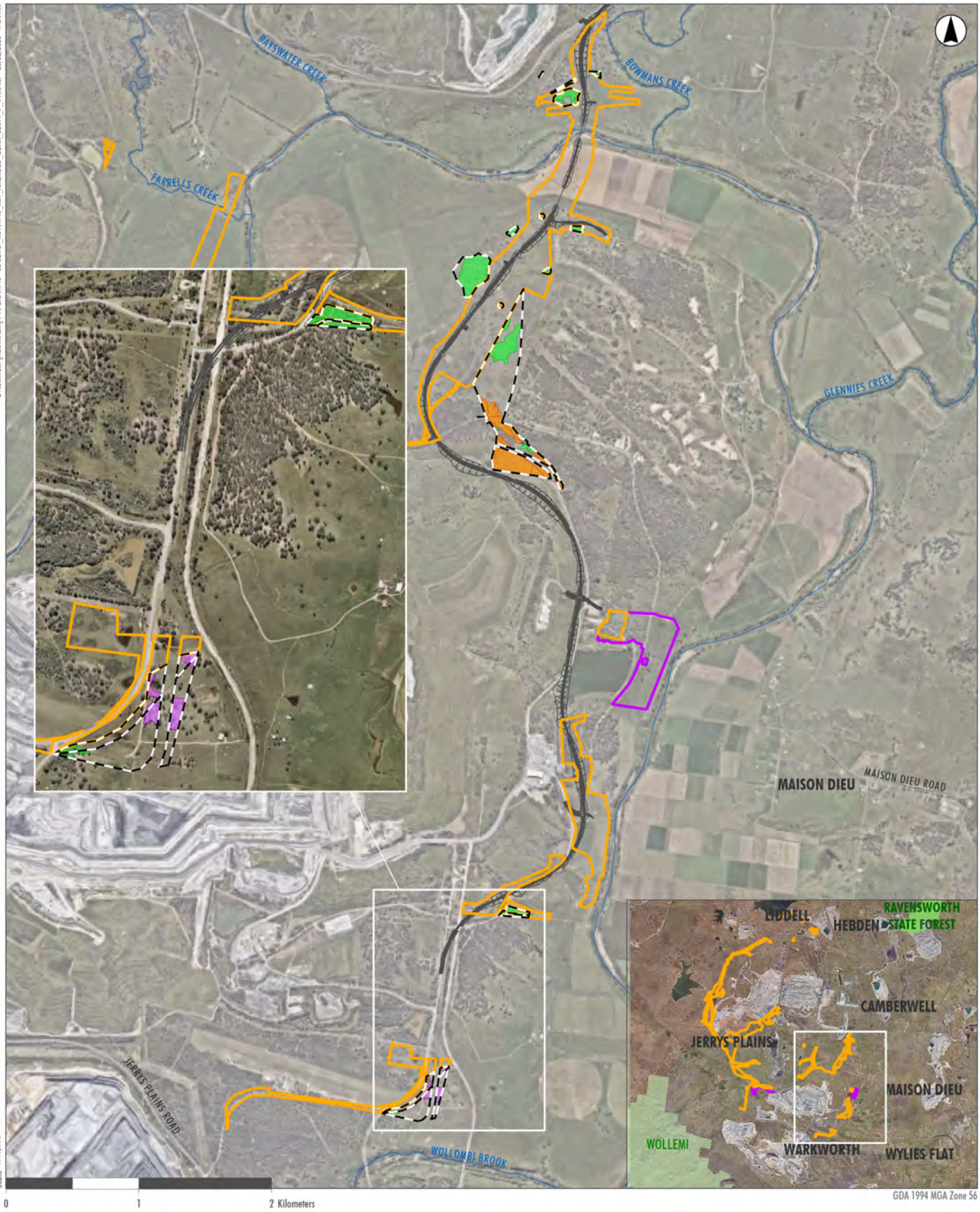
As a result of the further detailed investigations, the revised Lemington Road re-alignment has subsequently avoided all direct impacts to confirmed *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* in the HVO North Development Footprint (refer to **Figure 5.2**) and located impact further away from existing offset sites (Yancoal's Northern Offset Area).

5.2.1.2 Removal of the Impacts around the South Lemington Rail Loop

The construction of the approved LCPP and rail infrastructure is no longer being sought as part of the Project. Accordingly, the residual impact to the small area (0.3 ha) of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* identified near the South Lemington Rail Loop will not occur as a result of the project and has been removed from the Development Footprint.

This amendment, along with the avoidance of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* associated with the Lemington Road Realignment (as outlined in **Section 5.2.1.1** above), represents complete avoidance of direct impacts to the EEC.

Other vegetation communities and species habitats were further avoided as part of the most recent amendment to the Project. These are summarised in **Table 5.7**.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Proposed Lemington Road Alignment
- Areas Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment Design Refinement

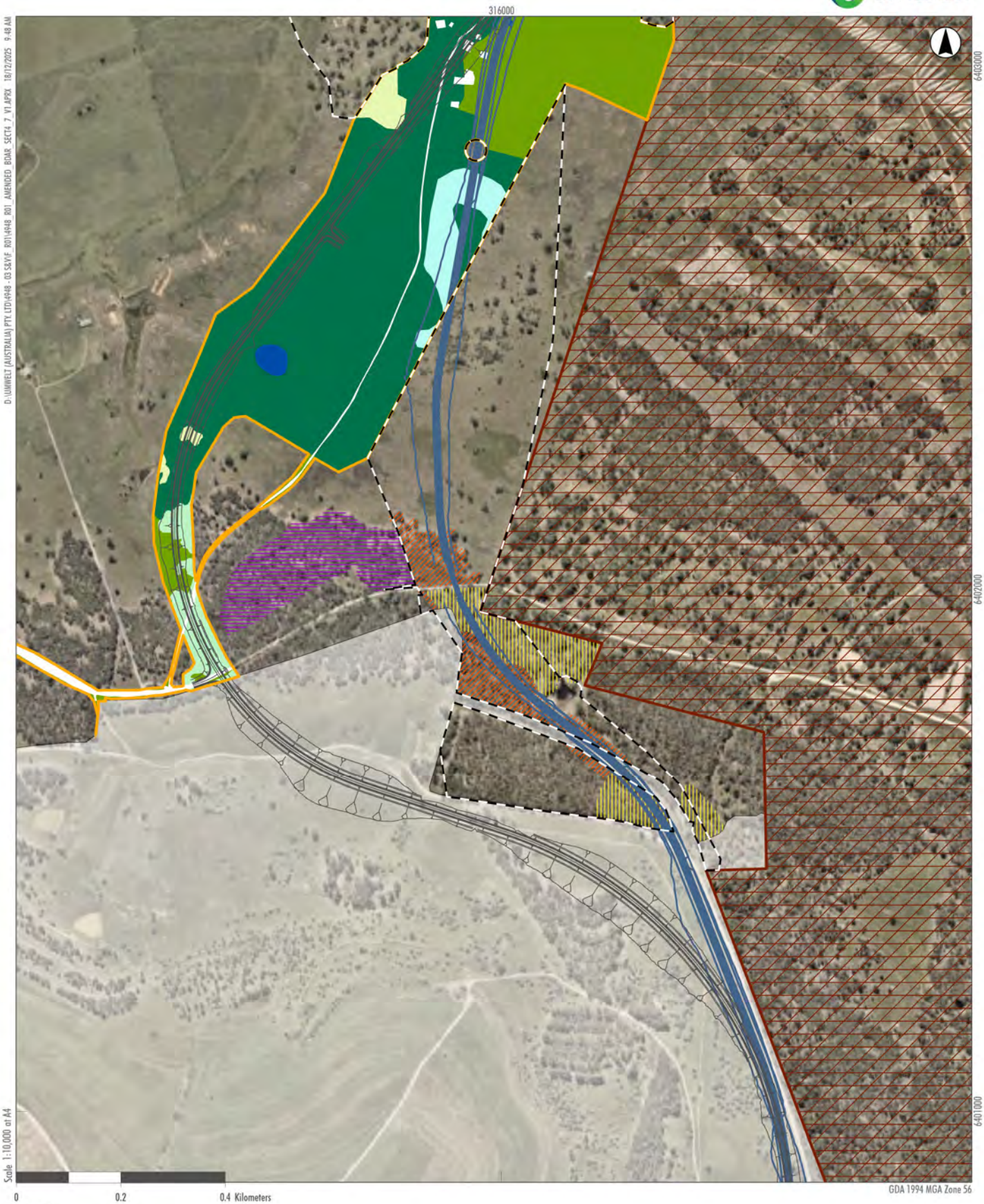
BC Act TEC

- Central Hunter Grey Box - Ironbark Woodland EEC
- Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC
- Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC

FIGURE 5.1

Areas Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment Design Refinement

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Proposed Lemington Road Alignment
- Former location of Proposed Lemington Road Alignment
- HVO Existing and Approved Disturbance Areas
- Areas Avoided following Lemington Road Realignment Design Refinement
- Yancoal's Northern Biodiversity Area

Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC

- Accepted/known WSW
- Possible WSW - uncertainty regarding soil and/or floristic alignment with TEC
- Transitional Zone

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3 - 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland

FIGURE 5.2

Targeted Avoidance of Warkworth Sands Woodland and Re-alignment of Lemington Road

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

5.2.2 Electricity and Telecommunications Realignment Paths

The Project requires the realignment of several transmission lines, as well as some telecommunication lines. New access points to realigned electricity and communication infrastructure will also be established to avoid interaction with mining activities. As part of the Project design phase, the preferred realignment path of this infrastructure was carefully considered to avoid areas of higher quality vegetation and habitats, and to provide for maximum vegetation and habitat retention, wherever possible.

While this report calculates the impacts of the preferred alignment path and proposed locations of maintenance tracks, pole pads and transmission line paths, these are currently indicative only and subject to detailed design. The final footprint of the easements will be located within the wider additional disturbance boundary. For the purposes of this assessment, impacts are calculated on the indicative footprints, with the intention of updating these impact calculations following the final design.

Table 5.4 outlines the impacts and avoided areas within the proposed easement corridors and these are illustrated in **Figure 5.3**. Where appropriate, these avoidance and vegetation retention measures have been accounted for in the BAM-C through the application of MZs (e.g. where easement vegetation management requires the removal of tall shrub and canopy species).

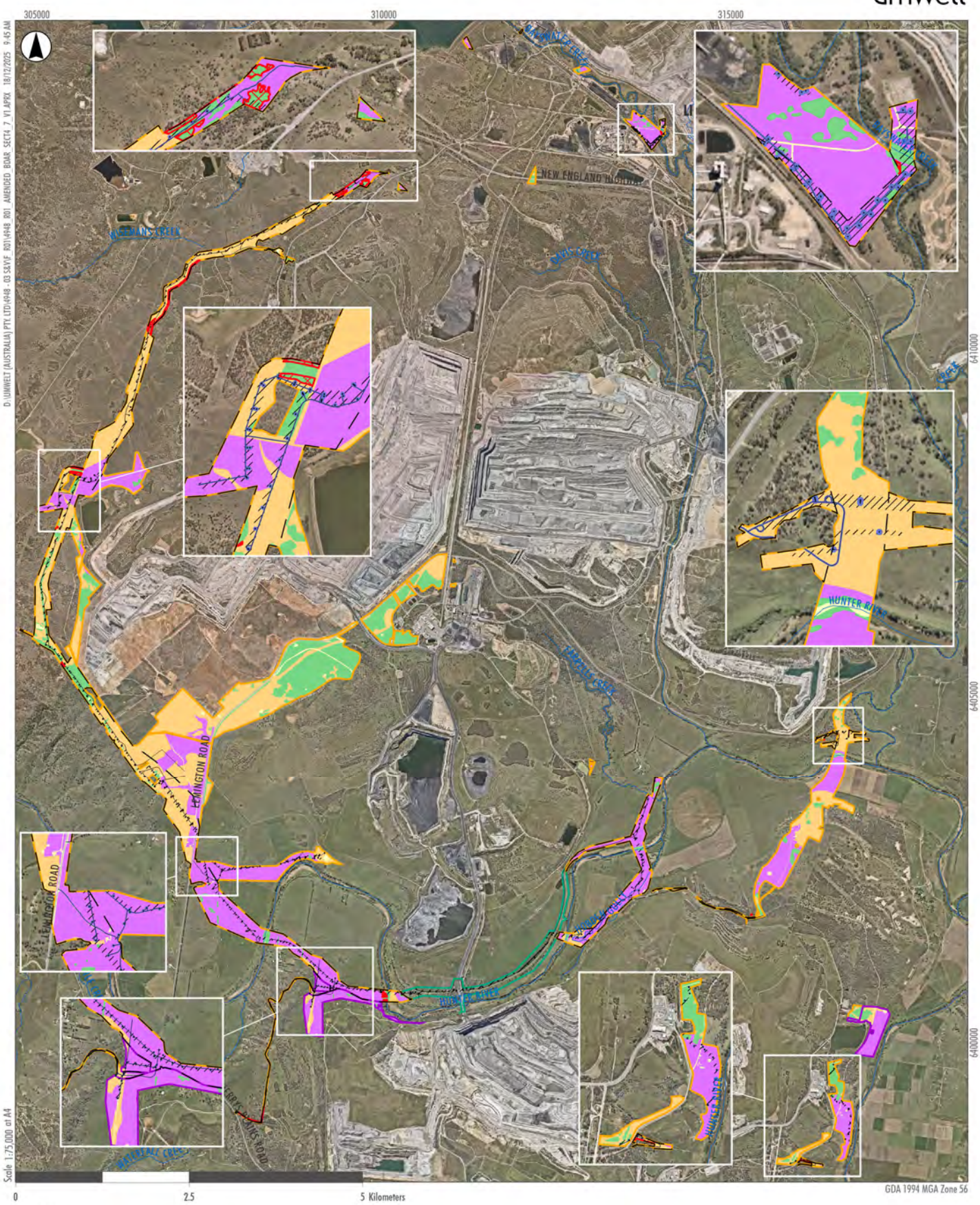
An estimate of around 145 ha of suitable habitat for the Hunter Valley delma, in particular, is not expected to be impacted by the establishment of the new electricity transmission lines (i.e. in the wider easement area). Approximately 34 ha of native vegetation in the easement maintenance area (MZ2) will be maintained as grassland during the operation of the easement, likely providing suitable habitat for the Hunter Valley delma.

Mitigation and management strategies identified for the easement realignment design are considered to be well known and routinely implemented, minimising the risk of failure.

Table 5.4 Impacts and Avoided Impacts in Easement Realignment Design

Impact	Description of Impacts and Vegetation Management	Vegetation/Habitat Impacts Avoided
Maintenance tracks and pole pads (MZ1 refer to Section 6.1)	Complete disturbance assumed for transmission line poles (10 m buffer around each pole). Complete disturbance assumed for 6 m wide access tracks for construction and operational maintenance.	The access tracks have been designed to be contained within the easement (MZ2) to minimise unnecessary encroachment into the wider easement area.
Easement vegetation maintenance (MZ2 refer to Section 6.1).	No impact to grassland vegetation within easements unless impacted by access tracks/pole pads as above. Any woody vegetation zones will be retained as grassland in accordance with ISSC 20 Guideline for the Management of Activities within Electricity Easements and Close to Electricity Infrastructure (ISSC 2012).	34 ha of existing native vegetation (grassland, woodland and shrubland) to be maintained as grassland during operational phase. No impact to Hunter Valley delma in these areas. Targeted avoidance of river red gum stands through careful placement of pole locations where possible along the Hunter River.

Impact	Description of Impacts and Vegetation Management	Vegetation/Habitat Impacts Avoided
Wider easement area	No impact currently proposed, however changes to the final easement alignment may result in minor changes and impacts. Current areas avoided.	145 ha of Hunter Valley delma habitat unimpacted. Avoidance of 23.6 ha of native forest and woodland habitat including 4.6 ha of Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Forest EEC and 0.3 ha of Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC. Avoidance of 161 ha of exotic and native grassland habitat.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)
- BC Act TEC Mapping
- ETL Power Pole
- Access Track
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact

Native Vegetation Extent

- Native Vegetation (Woody)
- Native Vegetation (Non-Woody)
- Exotic Vegetation
- Cleared Land

FIGURE 5.3

Minimisation of Impacts in Electricity and Telecommunication Easements

Refer to Appendix C Figure for detailed vegetation mapping

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2024)Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

5.2.3 Avoidance of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*

5.2.3.1 Avoidance within the Development Footprint

As previously assessed (Umwelt 2023) the Project was expected to impact approximately 1.6 ha of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*, comprising 1.1 ha due to mining operations (1 ha at HVO North and 0.1 ha at HVO South), and 0.5 ha during construction (associated with the relocation of a transmission line across the Hunter River).

Since submission of the HVO North Amendment Report (EMM 2023b), further work has been undertaken to avoid Project impacts to the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*. As a result, the anticipated direct impact of the Project on this EEC has been reduced to 1.06 ha, as summarised in **Table 5.5.** Avoided areas are detailed in the insert in **Figure 5.4**. The residual impact of the Project reflects the significant work already undertaken to avoid impacts to areas containing *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*. All impacts to the EEC are anticipated to occur in Stage 1 of the Project (refer to **Section 8.1**).

Table 5.5 Avoided Impacts to *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*

	Area (ha)			
	EIS Avoidance	**EIS Impact**	**Post-EIS Avoidance**	**Residual Impact**
HVO North	6.2	1.5	0.44	1.06
HVO South	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total	**7.5**	**1.6**	**0.54**	**1.06**

5.2.3.2 Avoidance within the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area

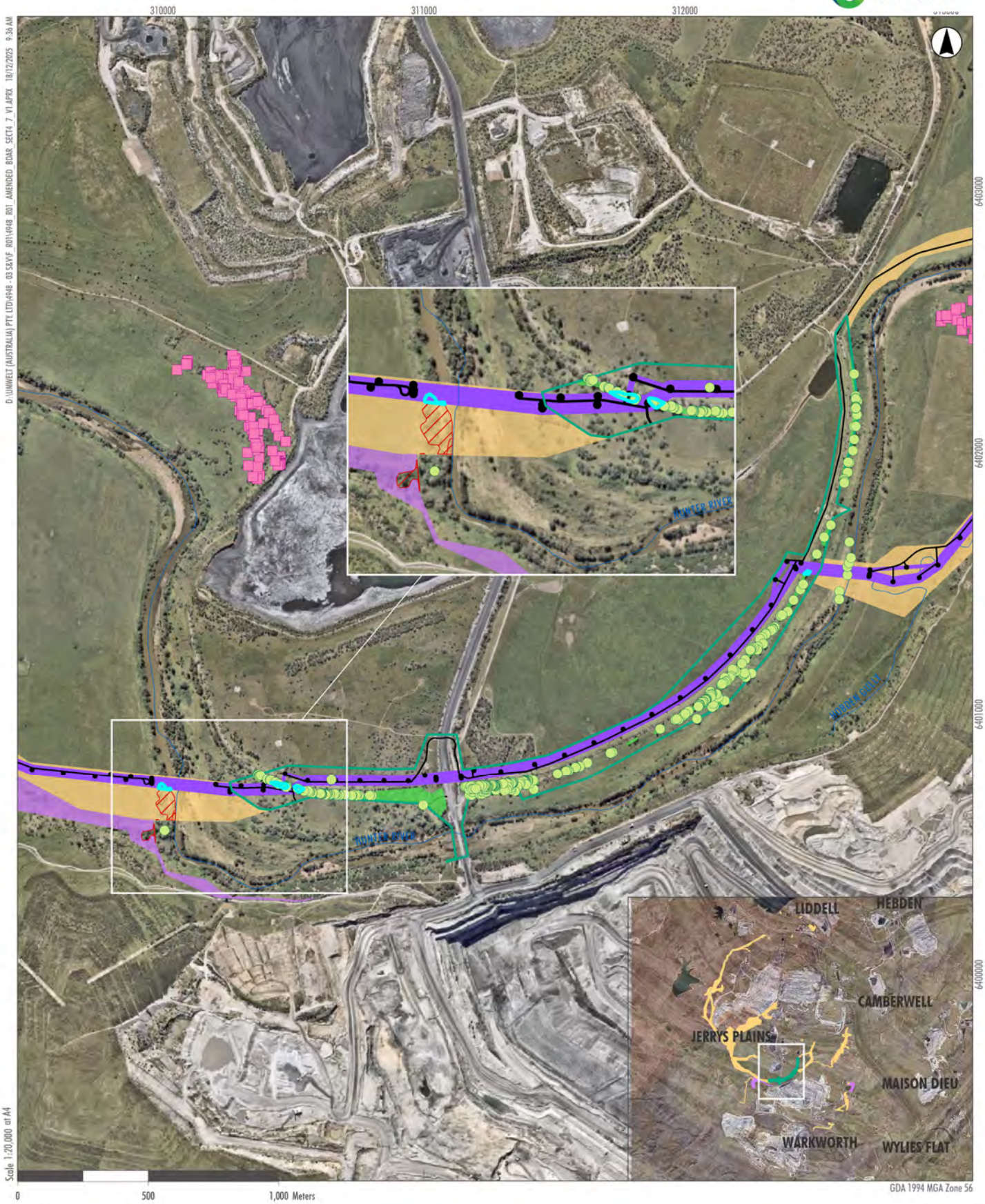
As outlined in **Section 1.5** and shown in **Figure 1.5**, the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area is an area within the existing HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) adjacent to the Hunter River where impacts to the river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) endangered population and *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* are expected to occur as a result of the proposed transmission line relocation.

While the location of the proposed transmission line relocation is indicative, following the identification of river red gums and *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* in this area, the footprint of the transmission line was changed to minimise impacts on these threatened entities. The surveys of the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area identified approximately 5.9 ha of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* and 269 individual river red gums ranging from saplings to mature trees (refer to **Figure 5.4**).

Changes to the proposed alignment have avoided approximately 5.8 ha of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* and 255 river red gums, resulting in an expected impact of 0.15 ha of the EEC and nine River Red Gum individuals. The avoidance measures have also avoided impacts to Stand C of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* identified in Annexure 8 of the Project Approval PA 06_0261 (refer to **Figure 1.5**). Impacts to the remaining TEC and river red gums are calculated in accordance with the BAM (refer to **Section 6.1**). Impacts will be avoided and minimised through the following measures:

- Pre-clearance surveys and clear delineation of easement boundaries avoiding river red gums during construction.

- Information signage to assist long-term management of the easement without impacting surrounding river red gums.
- Ongoing monitoring of river red gum in this area as outlined in the HVO RRGRRS (HVO 2025) with a recommendation to change this area from a low priority site to a ‘priority site’.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Drainage Line
- Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC
- Access Tracks and New Pole Pad (MZ1) – indicative only
- Easement Vegetation Maintenance (MZ2) – indicative only
- Avoided Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC
- Impacted River Red Gums and Impacted Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC

NSW Bionet Atlas Threatened Species Records (2022)

- *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (River Red Gum)

Umwelt Threatened Species Records (2020 - 2025)

- *Eucalyptus camuldulensis* (River Red Gum)

FIGURE 5.4

Avoidance of River Red Gums and Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

5.2.4 Relinquishment of Previously Approved Impacts

Throughout the Project design process, a range of refinements and improvements have been incorporated into the design of the Project that has resulted in the minimisation of impacts to vegetation and habitats. The final Project design includes the relinquishment of the following components that are currently approved at HVO South under PA 06_0261:

- coal extraction from the RSEE
- coal extraction in the SLP1 and SLP2
- construction of the short rail loop associated with the LCPP
- construction of the long rail loop including the associated LCPP.

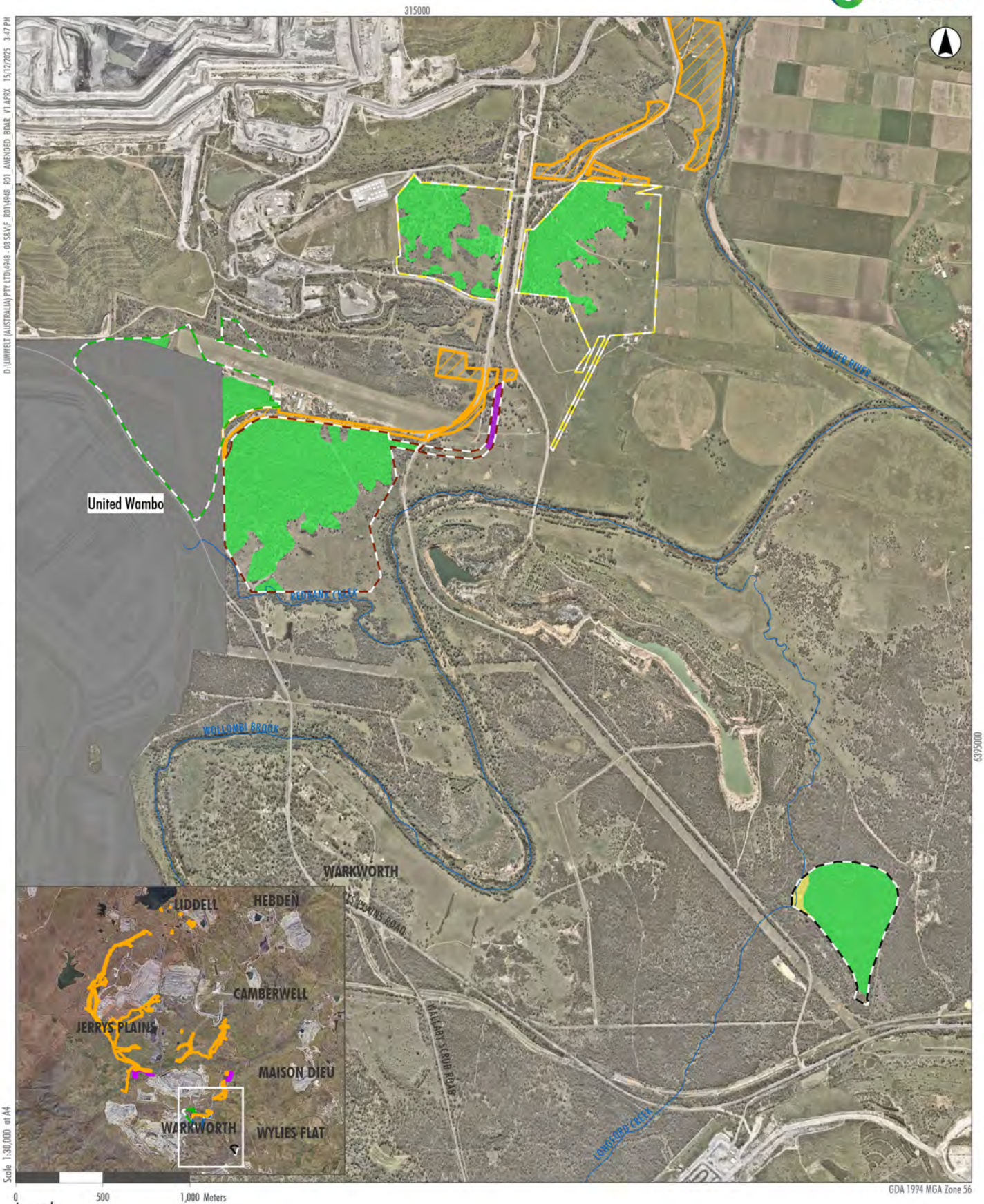
Table 5.6 below provides an estimate of the areas avoided for each biodiversity feature avoided in the Project design as outlined above. These areas are no longer captured in the Development Footprint. Note: areas in the table are not cumulative. Previously approved areas that are proposed for relinquishment are shown on **Figure 5.5**.

Table 5.6 Key Biodiversity Features Avoided Through Removal of Previously Approved Impacts

Biodiversity Feature	Project Component Area (ha)			
	RSEE^	SLP2	Short Rail Loop	Long rail loop and LCPP
Native forest and woodland habitat	5.7	58.4	90.2	40.7
Native and exotic grasslands	4.0	29.7	0.0	51.3
BC Act-Listed Features				
Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland EEC	5.7	56.9	24.8	40.3
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
Hunter Lowland Redgum Forest EEC	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0

^ Does not include areas within the United Wambo JV approval boundary.

While coal extraction will no longer take place at SLP1, some disturbance will still be required for the purposes of rehabilitation works and therefore this area has not been included in the avoidance calculations in **Table 5.6**. It should be noted that approximately 9 ha of disturbance of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* was approved for disturbance under PA 06_0261.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Riverview SEE
- Short Rail Loop
- South Lemington Pit 2
- Long Rail Loop and LCPP
- Approved Disturbance Area - United Wambo

BC Act TEC

- Central Hunter Grey Box - Ironbark Woodland EEC
- Hunter Lowland Redgum Forest EEC
- Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC

FIGURE 5.5

Relinquishment of Previously Approved Areas

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

5.3 Summary of Avoidance

Table 5.7 below provides a summary of the avoidance measures for key biodiversity features undertaken for the Project.

Table 5.7 Key Biodiversity Features Avoided Through Project Design and Refinement

Biodiversity Feature	Project Component Area Avoided (ha)						Total Area Avoided Since EIS (ha)
	Lemington Road Realignment (exhibited EIS)+	Lemington Road Realignment (current)	Transmission Line Alignment	River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area	Removal of Previous Impacts	Post-RTS Project Amendments	
Native forest and woodland habitat	19.5	25.4	23.6	5.8	90.2	9.8	**154.8**
Native and exotic grasslands	6.3	18.8	161.2	N/A	33.7	5.8	**219.5**
Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) habitat^	4.7	4.8	145.4	N/A	0.0	5.7	**155.9**
BC Act-listed Features							
Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC	7.2	9.8#	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	**10.1**
Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland EEC	9.1	12.7	4.6	0.0	87.4	49.5	**154.2**
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC	0.0	0.0	0.4	5.8	1.3	0.6	**8.1**
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC	2.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	**2.6**
River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)	0	0	5 individuals	255 individuals	0	0	**260 individuals**

^ PCT3431 DNG, Thinned Woodland, Scattered Regeneration and PCT4089 DNG.

+ Not included in total (ha).

Not inclusive of approximately 2.3 ha of possible WSW EEC included in original impact calculations.

5.4 Construction and Operation Phase Impact Mitigation Strategies

HVO has committed to the design and implementation of a comprehensive biodiversity mitigation strategy to mitigate the unavoidable impacts of the Project. The following specific control measures, as detailed in the existing approved HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan and Biodiversity Offset Strategy, are considered to be integral to the mitigation of impacts on the biodiversity features by the Project:

- salvage of biodiversity features, including habitat resources (e.g. hollow logs, tree hollows, fallen timber and rocks/boulders) and material for mine rehabilitation (e.g. seed collection and topsoil collection), where practicable
- a pre-clearing procedure to minimise the potential for impacts on native fauna species (focusing on threatened species) as a result of the clearing of hollow bearing trees
- weed management
- pest animal control
- pathogen management
- fencing and access control
- bushfire management
- erosion and sedimentation control
- providing appropriate environmental management measures as part of the mining operations to minimise the potential for indirect impacts.

Each of these control measures will contribute to the maintenance of habitat quality in proximity to the Development Footprint. It is considered that these measures are suitable to minimise impacts on direct, indirect and prescribed impacts. The measures described below are considered to represent a suitable suite of management strategies that are well known and routinely implemented in biodiversity management plans for mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and therefore are considered to represent a low risk of failure.

Should the Project be approved, HVO will review and revise the existing approved HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan in accordance with any additional development consent requirements. The revised plan will guide the implementation of the mitigation steps and will be reviewed and adapted in response to new information.

5.4.1 Salvage of Biodiversity Features

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Salvage of biodiversity features – timber, rocks, topsoil, mulch	Minimise impacts to fauna species. Minimise the clearance of fauna habitat.	During clearance works	HVO
Installation of salvaged features in rehabilitation zones	Increase habitat complexity for fauna and flora species in rehabilitation zones.	Operation	

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to ensure best practice. Early identification and rectification of any issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Salvaged habitat resources include tree hollows, fallen timber and rocks/boulders that provide foraging and refuge habitat for a number of key threatened species, particularly insectivorous woodland birds and terrestrial mammal species. The microclimates provided around fallen timber and rocks/boulders can assist in the establishment of flora species and the decomposing woody material from fallen timber can assist in soil conditioning.

The relocation of salvaged habitat resources is proposed for rehabilitation areas according to the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (EMM 2018). The use of these materials is dependent upon availability and opportunities for safe and practical collection and reuse. Where salvaged materials are to be used they would be implemented in a way that is consistent with rehabilitation completion criteria. This will increase habitat complexity for fauna species sooner than when they would naturally develop.

5.4.2 Pre-Clearance and Tree-Felling

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Pre-clearance surveys	Identification of potential translocation opportunities.	Construction and operation	HVO
Tree felling process and supervision	Minimisation of potential harm, injury and death of fauna occupying habitat. Identification and salvage of habitat features.	During clearance works	
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to ensure best practice. Early identification and rectification of any issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Pre-clearance surveys and tree-felling supervision recommendations will be implemented to minimise the potential for impacts on native fauna species (including threatened species) as a result of the clearing of hollow-bearing trees.

5.4.2.1 Pre-Clearance Surveys

Pre-clearance surveys are to be undertaken prior to tree felling works, be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced person and include:

- The demarcation of areas approved for clearing to reduce risk of accidental clearing.
- Habitat resources and habitat trees should be identified and marked.
- The potential presence of threatened flora and fauna species, endangered populations and TECs should be identified.

- The identification of threatened species or habitat features that are suitable for translocation or salvage. This includes native plant species containing seed for collection and propagation purposes and habitat features to be used in habitat augmentation.
- Disturbance activities should be targeted to specific times of the year to minimise impacts to threatened species usage of habitat features for breeding and roosting, where practicable.

5.4.2.2 Tree-Felling

Tree felling will be completed as close to the completion of pre-clearance surveys as practicable. Tree felling supervision will be undertaken after pre-clearance surveys have identified potential habitat features.

The tree-felling process will include the following:

Prior to Felling Habitat Trees

- Removal of non-habitat trees/vegetation as close to the habitat tree felling date as possible in order to create disturbance to discourage fauna usage of the habitat trees.
- Shaking of habitat trees (with heavy machinery) as appropriate to encourage fauna to abandon trees.

On the Day of Felling Habitat Trees

- All habitat trees will be subject to a visual ground inspection to examine for threatened, or resident species.
- Trees identified as containing fauna will be shaken and then felled, providing no threatened species are identified.
- The lowering of hollow-bearing trees will be done as gently as possible with heavy machinery.
- If a threatened species is identified in a habitat tree on the day of felling, the supervising person is to advise the most appropriate method to minimise potential harm. This may include leaving the tree overnight, further shaking to encourage the animal to vacate the tree, gradual removal of branches to discourage ongoing use, soft-felling of the tree with the animal in the tree, or measures to capture and relocate the animal to secure habitats.
- Uninjured animals should be released on the day of capture into nearby suitable secure habitat and should not be held for extended periods of time.
- Injured animals will be taken to the nearest veterinary clinic or wildlife carer as soon as possible for assessment and treatment.
- Felled trees are to be rolled where appropriate so that the number of hollows blocked against the ground is minimised.
- All felled habitat trees should remain in place for a least one night to allow any remaining fauna to escape.
- Habitat features identified for translocation or salvage operations should be extracted and stored appropriately.

5.4.3 Weed Management

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Weed management actions	• Minimisation of Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), priority weeds under NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 and/or environmental weeds in the final Development Footprint. • Minimisation of weed spread from and into the wider locality.	Construction Operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	• Identification of emerging weed infestations • Identification of successful weed management techniques • Adaptive management recommendations to ensure best practice and improvements	Post completion of management actions	

The presence of weed species has the potential to be an impediment to revegetation and regeneration activities and native vegetation regeneration. In addition, the presence of weed species has the potential to decrease the value of vegetation for native species, particularly threatened species.

Existing weed management controls as specified in the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan will be applied to the Project.

5.4.4 Pest Animal Control

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Pest animal control actions	• Management and reduction of pest animal species.	Construction Operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	• Identification of emerging pest invasion. • Identification of successful pest animal management techniques. • Adaptive management recommendations to ensure best practice and improvements.	Post completion of management actions	

Introduced fauna species such as deer, foxes, rabbits, pigs, wild dogs and feral cats could change in distribution and abundance as future areas are cleared, mined and then rehabilitated. Clearing, thinning of vegetation and the creation of tracks through existing dense vegetation could assist the penetration of introduced fauna species such as pigs, cats and foxes, and allow them to establish in new areas.

Pest and feral animal control will be undertaken in accordance with current mine practices and as outlined in the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan.

5.4.5 Pathogen Management

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Pathogen management actions – checking, cleaning equipment, vehicles, footwear and tools, following frog handling procedures as per HVO Vegetation Clearance Plan (EMM 2016)	• Management and reduction of pathogens impacting biodiversity.	Operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	• Identification of emerging pathogen issues. • Identification of successful pathogen management techniques. • Adaptive management recommendations to ensure best practice and improvements.	Post completion of management actions	

It is important to reduce the risks of introducing pathogens (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*, myrtle rust and chytrid fungus) into new areas in NSW, especially those with susceptible threatened species and threatened ecological communities. Basic hygiene procedures (in accordance with the Hygiene guidelines – Protocols to protect priority biodiversity areas in NSW from *Phytophthora cinnamomi, myrtle rust, amphibian chytrid fungus and invasive plants* (DPIE 2020b)) can include checking, cleaning equipment, vehicles, footwear and tools of soil materials prior to entering and leaving the site.

5.4.6 Fencing and Access Control

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Demarcation of impact footprints	• Ensuring the extent of clearance is understood and visible. • Minimisation of unnecessary and accidental impacts to surrounding vegetation and habitats. • Ensuring impact thresholds identified for the Project are not compromised.	Construction and operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	• Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to ensure best practice. • Early identification and rectification of any issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Access control is an important feature in protecting and demarcating areas outside the Project disturbance area from vehicle access, human access and accidental disturbance. Measures include:

- appropriate fencing and signposting of areas to prevent the uncontrolled entry of people, accidental disturbance and to minimise vehicular and human traffic
- clear and visible signage is to be appropriately located to inform the workforce and others of the restricted access or otherwise of areas outside the Project disturbance area
- locking of gates to prevent unwanted vehicle, person access and disturbance.

5.4.7 Bushfire Management

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Bushfire management actions – maintain equipment, management of fuel loads, maintenance of fire breaks and access roads	Protect life and property, while supporting appropriate conditions for the existing ecological features.	Construction and operation	HVO
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to ensure best practice. Early identification and rectification of any fire, fuel load issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

The vegetation that will be retained within areas adjoining the Development Footprint will require appropriate bushfire management to protect life and property, while supporting appropriate conditions for the significant ecological features identified. This will be achieved through the implementation of a range of measures, including:

- maintaining a suitably equipped response to any fires on site and assisting the Rural Fire Service and emergency services on site in the event of a fire within the Development Footprint
- where permitted, appropriate grazing management regimes to reduce ground fuel loads and fuel hazard reduction burns
- maintaining strategically positioned fire breaks and access roads.

Bushfire management measures are detailed in the HVO Bushfire Management Plan (available on the HVO website).

5.4.8 Erosion and Sediment Control

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Erosion and sedimentation control measures	Minimise sediment pollution. Minimise erosion of soils. Minimise impacts to waterways and habitats.	Construction and operation	HVO

Action	Outcome	Timing	Responsibility
Monitoring and adaptive management strategies	Document key learnings and improve or alter actions throughout the Project to ensure best practice. Early identification and rectification of any erosion issues with current actions or approaches.	Construction and operation	

Erosion and sediment control is critical to the long term stability of the land surface and downstream water quality, with the main objective being to protect soil resources and maintain local water course quality. The HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan outlines the requirements for erosion and sediment control that will be implemented for the Project, including:

- Where possible, clean water diversion structures are employed to divert clean water away from the active pits.
- A Ground Disturbance Permit (GDP) is required for all disturbance activities.
- Prior to disturbance, appropriate erosion and sediment controls will be established.
- Where ground conditions allow, erosion and sediment controls will be designed generally in accordance with the 'Blue Book': Managing Urban Stormwater: soils and construction (Volume 1 and 2E – Mines and Quarries).
- Areas will be rehabilitated and stabilised as soon as possible following disturbance.

5.4.9 Other Environmental Management Measures

Appropriate environmental management measures will be used as part of the mining operations to minimise the potential for indirect impacts through currently approved management plans, including:

- Appropriate lighting controls to minimise impacts will continue to be implemented as part of the Project as necessary (providing that these actions do not compromise site safety issues). This is proposed to include the use of unidirectional light techniques, the use of shielding fittings to limit the spill of light and directing lights downwards (as outlined in the Visual Impact Assessment in Appendix S of the EIS). There is not expected to be any substantial change to lighting impacts on adjacent habitats given that the Project is part of an existing operation with existing impacts.
- Blasting and noise control systems to minimise noise impacts will continue to be implemented as part of the Project. There is not expected to be any substantial change to noise impacts on adjacent habitats given that the Project is part of an existing operation with existing impacts.
- Dust suppression measures to minimise impacts to the surrounding landscape will continue to be implemented at HVO. In regard to potential impacts on biodiversity, there will be no substantial change to dust impacts given that the Project is part of an already existing operation with existing impacts. Similar levels of impact would be expected for the Project, particularly given the increased focus by regulators on reducing dust impacts associated with mining and other operations, and given that the Project is not proposing an increase in the approved annual ROM coal production rate (with a reduction proposed at HVO South).

5.5 Managing Risk of Failure

The mitigation measures are considered to represent a suitable suite of management strategies that are well known and routinely implemented in biodiversity management plans for mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and therefore are considered to represent a low risk of failure.

HVO's existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (HVO 2025) includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions. This includes specific monitoring, annual review processes and updating of plans on a regular basis to ensure best practice mitigation and improvements once new information is available or changed circumstances arise. **Table 5.8** outlines the potential risks to the mitigation measure strategy and the response proposed in the event of a trigger.

Table 5.8 Risks to Achieving Key Mitigation Measure Objectives and Response

Key Objectives	Potential Failure Event or Circumstance^	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level	Trigger	Response	Revised Risk Level
Salvage of biodiversity features							
Minimise impacts on fauna species.	Structural integrity of salvaged resources unable to be retained for future use and relocation/accidental damage during clearance works	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Loss of habitat features	Review salvage methods and undertake preventative actions where appropriate.	Low
Increase habitat complexity in rehabilitation zones.	Low availability of habitat features in impacted zones	Possible	Minor	Low	Rehabilitation areas contain no roosting or sheltering habitat features for fauna.	Source artificial habitat features.	Low
Pre-clearance and tree-felling							
Minimisation of potential harm, injury and death of fauna occupying habitat	Death or serious injury to threatened fauna	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Death or serious injury to threatened fauna	Injured fauna to be taken to the nearest veterinary clinic or wildlife carer as soon as possible for assessment and treatment. Review tree-felling and clearance methods and amend as per ecologist advice.	Low
Weed management							
Minimisation of Weeds of National Significance (WoNS), priority weeds under	Seasonal conditions result in increase in weeds within the Development Footprints (e.g. high rainfall).	Possible	Minor	Low	Monitoring shows weed increase in the Development Footprints.	Review weed management actions and undertake	Low

Key Objectives	Potential Failure Event or Circumstance^	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level	Trigger	Response	Revised Risk Level
***NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* and/or environmental weeds.**						preventative actions where appropriate.	
Minimisation of weed spread from and into the wider locality	Seasonal conditions result in increase in weeds within the wider locality (e.g. high rainfall).	Possible	Minor	Low	Monitoring shows weed spread into the wider locality resulting from proposed impacts and disturbance works.	Review weed management actions and undertake preventative actions where appropriate.	Low
Identification of emerging weed infestations	Monitoring does not identify emerging weeds prior to significant weed establishment.	Possible	Minor	Low	New weed species become established in surrounding areas.	Increase monitoring locations and/or frequency.	Low
Pest animal control							
Management and reduction of pest animal species	Disturbance results in increase in pest animal species.	Possible	Minor	Low	Monitoring shows pest animal increase in the Development Footprints.	Review pest management actions and undertake preventative actions where appropriate.	Low
Management and reduction of pest animal species	Seasonal conditions result in increase in pest animal species within the wider locality (e.g. high rainfall).	Possible	Minor	Low	Monitoring shows pest animal increase in surrounding areas.	Review pest management actions and undertake preventative actions where appropriate.	Low
Identification of emerging pest invasion	Monitoring does not identify emerging pest invasion prior to significant establishment.	Possible	Minor	Low	New and emerging pest species become established in surrounding areas.	Increase monitoring locations and/or frequency.	Low

Key Objectives	Potential Failure Event or Circumstance^	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level	Trigger	Response	Revised Risk Level
Pathogen management							
Management and reduction of pathogens impacting biodiversity	Disturbance results in identification of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, myrtle rust or chytrid fungus in Development Footprints.	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Monitoring shows pathogen increase in the Development Footprints.	Review pathogen management procedures and undertake preventative actions where appropriate.	Low
Identification of emerging pathogen issues	Monitoring does not identify emerging pathogen prior to significant establishment.	Unlikely	High	Medium	New and emerging pathogen species become established in surrounding areas.	Increase monitoring locations and/or frequency.	Low
Fencing and access control							
Minimisation of unnecessary and accidental impacts to surrounding vegetation and habitats	Fence, signposting, demarcation or lock failure.	Unlikely	Moderate	Low	Disturbance in areas outside approved impact areas.	Review adaptive management procedures and disturbance impacts and report impacts to authorities.	Low
Bushfire management							
Protect life and property, while supporting appropriate conditions for the existing ecological features.	Uncontrollable fire following extreme weather and seasonal conditions.	Possible	High	Medium	Loss in vegetation, habitats and/or significant fauna death or injury.	Review adaptive management procedures for bushfire management in consultation with Rural Fire Service (RFS).	Low

Key Objectives	Potential Failure Event or Circumstance^	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Level	Trigger	Response	Revised Risk Level
Erosion and sediment control							
Minimise sediment pollution. **Minimise erosion of soils.** **Minimise impacts to waterways and habitats**	Weather events (e.g. high rainfall) that result in a failure of erosion and sedimentation controls	Possible	Minor	Low	Disturbance in areas outside approved impact areas (i.e. pollution of water resulting from unlicenced discharge)	Review adaptive management procedures for erosion and sediment control and undertake preventative actions where appropriate.	Low

^Assumes effective implementation of mitigation measures, as described in the to-be-updated HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan.

Table 5.9 Risk Framework

Likelihood		Consequence				
		Minor	Moderate	High	Major	Critical
	Highly likely	Medium	High	High	Severe	Severe
	Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Severe
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Severe
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Table 5.10 Criteria to Determine Likelihood

Qualitative measure of likelihood (how likely is it that this event/circumstances will occur after management actions have been put in place/are being implemented)	
Highly likely	It is expected to occur in most circumstances
Likely	Will probably occur during the life of the project
Possible	Might occur during the life of the project
Unlikely	Could occur but considered unlikely or doubtful
Rare	May only in exceptional circumstances

Table 5.11 Criteria to Determine Consequence

Qualitative measure of consequences (what will be the consequence/result if the issue does occur)	
Minor	Minor incident of environmental damage that can be reversed
Moderate	Isolated but substantial instances of environmental damage that could be reversed with intensive efforts
High	Substantial instances of environmental damage that could be reversed with intensive efforts
Major	Major loss of environmental amenity and real danger of continuing
Critical	Severe widespread loss of environmental amenity and irrecoverable environmental damage

5.6 Minimisation of Indirect and Prescribed Impacts

It is considered that the measures outlined in **Section 5.3** above will mitigate the impacts on indirect and prescribed impacts. Additional measures are outlined below using particular consideration for impacts on connectivity and vehicle strike.

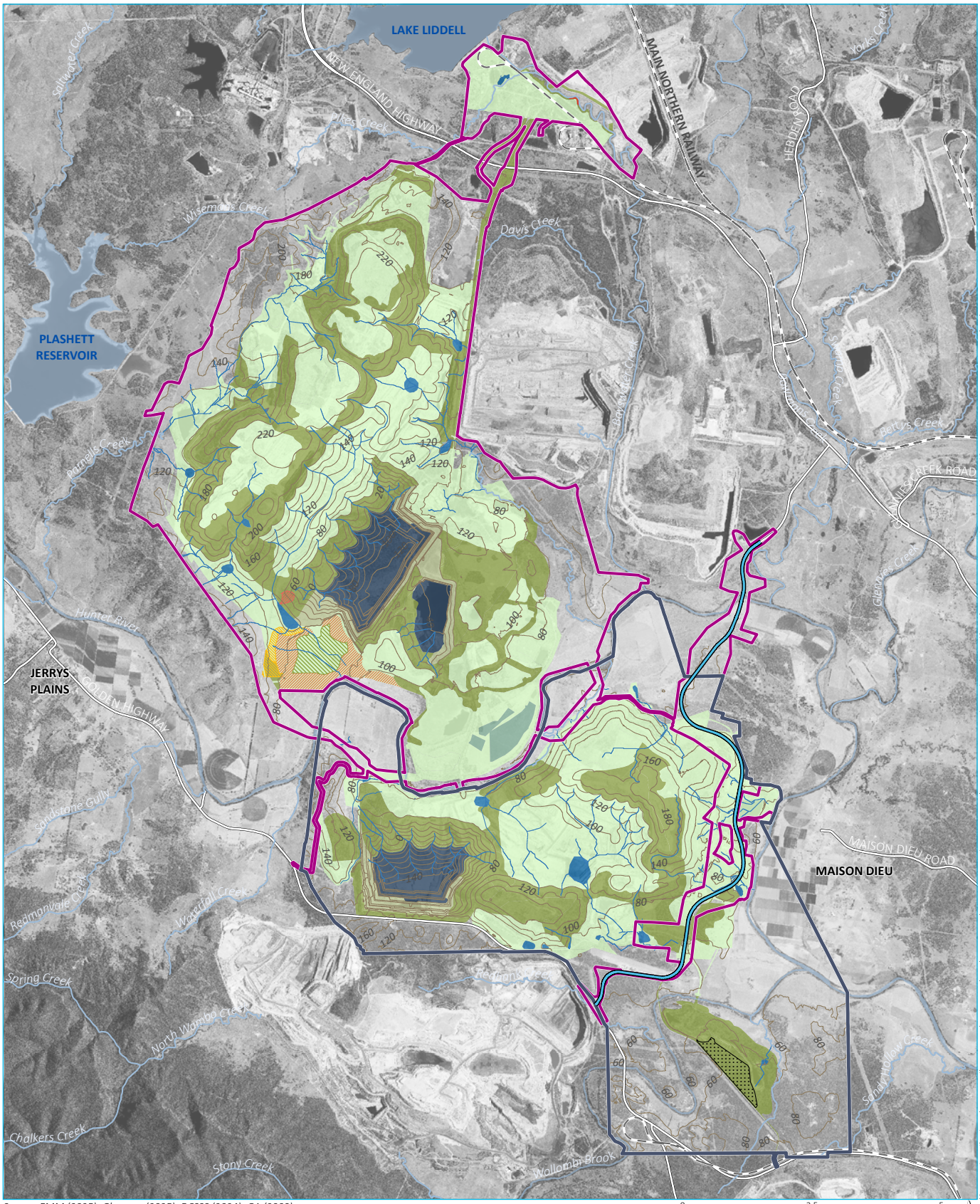
5.6.1 Long-Term Rehabilitation Strategy for Connectivity

All disturbance areas across HVO Noth and HVO South will be rehabilitated in accordance with an approved Rehabilitation Management Plan. Rehabilitation will comprise a mix of grazing land and native woodland habitat. Establishment of native woodland habitat will aim to be consistent with the remnant vegetation communities and the vegetation communities that are likely to have existed pre-agricultural and mining disturbance and be consistent with the native ecosystem rehabilitation works approved at the neighbouring mines. The proposed rehabilitation strategy has been designed to facilitate long-term connectivity across the landscape with Domain A (native ecosystem) to be established connecting habitats in a broad north/south and east-west direction.

Previously approved rehabilitation focused on establishing between approximately 30 to 40% native vegetation. The percent of native vegetation to be established for the Project is designed to achieve a similar percentage of land being returned to what has previously been approved. Existing HVO North commitments to rehabilitate specific areas representative of Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest community and Central Hunter Box - Ironbark Woodland are proposed to be continued under the Project. Highwalls will be revegetated to achieve partial revegetation on highwall benches with appropriate habitat species. This revegetation will provide some habitat values and will assist to soften the geometric visual form of the highwalls.

Rehabilitation at HVO is undertaken progressively over the life of the mine, with overburden emplacements shaped and rehabilitated once dumping is complete.

Conceptual final land use domains for the Project are illustrated on **Figure 5.6**.



Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 2.5 5 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

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KEY

- Amended proposed HVO North development consent boundary
- Proposed HVO South development consent boundary
- Proposed South Lemington offset
- Predicted drainage
- Predicted 20 m contour
- Lemington Road realignment

Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody

Final landform land use domain

- Domain A | Native ecosystem
- Domain A- Sub domain Ka | Other- Native ecosystem- partial vegetation on highwall benches
- Domain B | Agriculture- grazing
- Domain B- Sub domain Kb | Other- Agriculture- alluvial land
- Domain G | Water storage
- Domain J | Pit Lake

Existing commitments maintained by the Project (indicative location)

Rural land capability

- Class 2- DA 450-10-2003 MOD3
- Class 3- DA 450-10-2003 MOD3
- Class 4- DA 450-10-2003 MOD3

Native ecosystem

- Central Hunter Box-Ironbark Woodland - DA 450-10-2003 MOD3
- Swamp Oak Floodplain Forest - DA 450-10-2003 MOD5

Land use domains

HVO Continuation Project
Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
Figure 5.6

EMM creating opportunities

5.6.2 Measures to Reduce Vehicle Strike on Local Fauna

To reduce potential impacts as a result of changed traffic conditions along the Lemington Road realignment, the following measure is proposed:

- Wildlife warning signs and 'Injured Native Wildlife' signs will be installed in likely high impact locations as a reminder to take care when driving.

Other measures relevant for the maintenance of roadsides that may mitigate fauna strikes, such as clearance of roadsides to improve visibility for adjacent fauna is the responsibility of local council (Singleton Council).

5.6.3 Adaptive Management Plan for Potential Drawdown Impacts

The BDAR addresses cumulative impacts in **Table 6.5** in relation to potential drawdown impacts and cumulative impacts on biodiversity in the wider locality. It should be noted that all drawdown impact predictions are cumulative – that is they take into account drawdown predictions from surrounding developments in the locality.

It is considered that the measures outlined in **Section 5.4** above will mitigate the impacts on indirect and prescribed impacts including those on man-made structures and non-native vegetation.

Table 5.12 below provides a draft adaptive management plan for potential drawdown impacts which includes mitigation and adaptive management measures for hydrological processes.

Table 5.12 Adaptive Management Strategy Details for Drawdown Impacts

Impact Description	Impacted threatened species and TECs	Base Line Data Required and Monitoring Method	Monitoring Frequency and Reporting Schedule	Performance Indicators for Management Intervention	Management Response	Risk of Monitoring Failure
Changes to vegetation structure and floristic composition resulting from modifications to the hydrological regime	*Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* River red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) population in the Hunter Catchment Other alluvial PCTs (PCT4015 – Swamp Oak and PCT4081 River Oak)	BAM VI Plots in retained potential areas of impact	Annual	>30% reduction in VI score sustained over 3 consecutive years, attributable to Project.	Provision of BAM credits proportional to the VI loss over the area affected.	Low
Changes to vegetation structure and floristic composition resulting from groundwater drawdown	*Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* River red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) population in the Hunter Catchment Other GDEs (PCT4015 – Swamp Oak and PCT4089 River Oak)	BAM VI Plots in retained potential areas of impact and additional survey and investigation work to determine nature and extent of GDE groundwater dependency in the drawdown zone.	Annual (to be commenced at least 2 years prior to predicted drawdown impacts outside the Development Footprint)	To be developed in accordance with the recommendation of the GIA and any approval conditions. Suggest >30% reduction in VI score sustained over 3 consecutive years, attributable to the Project.	Provision of BAM credits proportional to the VI loss over the area affected.	Low

5.7 Management of Potential Serious and Irreversible Impacts

The potential for Serious and Irreversible Impacts (SAII) are outlined in **Section 6.4**. Following recommendations from the BCS in relation to the potential SAII on *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* as a result of the Project, it is proposed that the development of an Ecological Restoration Plan (ERP) for the TEC is undertaken. HVO propose to review and update the existing HVO RRGRRS to include the ERP. The plan would provide a framework for the management of the vegetation community during and post-development of the Project. The ERP would include management actions to inform specific weed control, re-establishment of vegetation, security /protection measures and a trigger response plan to ensure the continued improvement of the TEC.

While all direct impacts to *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* have been avoided, the community occurs in proximity to the proposed Lemington Road Re-alignment. It is proposed that any potential indirect impacts will be managed through implementation of the measures outlined below. Further, no impacts are predicted to occur on *Weeping Myall Woodland CEEC*, however management measures are recommended to ensure surrounding impacts do not encroach on the extent of the community in the Wider Easement Area. Key management actions that would be implemented will include:

Weed Management

Weed management should be a staged program to facilitate the restoration of ecological attributes associated with the TECs through natural recruitment and revegetation where appropriate and reduce the opportunity for new and emerging weeds. Key weed control task would include:

- Use of best practice weed control methods in sensitive areas from hand removal of targeted weeds through to slashing of tussock grasses and direct application of herbicide to remaining tussocks or manual removal (crowning out of biomass).
- Focused weed management targeting high threat weeds and transformer weeds to limit their spread and allow for natural recruitment of native species associated with the TECs.
- Development of a weed control program to ensure all target weeds are treated during optimal times while reducing further spread.
- Inclusion of inspection schedule to coincide with high growth periods of target species to develop an action plan for priority weeds.
- Weed management to occur to meet performance criteria set around maintain and improve from baseline data.

Protection and Habitat Restoration

Where natural resources from the TECs are generated such as logs, topsoil and native mulch from the Project areas (refer to **Section 5.4.1**), these should be used as part of the restoration and enhancement works. Resource utilisation would include:

- Large logs used as natural barriers to limit human access to TEC, timber would also limit (in part) the movement of weed species into remnant areas (hard barrier).
- Use of logs in remnants to create small niches to facilitate the establishment of characteristic species associated with each of the TEC.

- Usage of topsoils from TECs into areas of disturbance (post ground preparation) to re-establish the target community.

Establishment of Native Vegetation

The following measures will provide options to allow for the re-establishment of the TECs in degraded areas or areas impacted by the Project:

- Establish vegetation buffers between remnants of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* and adjacent infrastructure or disturbance boundaries. vegetation buffers would be created by undertaking revegetation works with characteristic species from the TEC and would be planted in a manner that would create a natural barrier with various species creating layered effect to help limit (not stop) the movement of weeds into remnants.
- Use of topsoils from areas previous weed free or low weed present in areas degraded that will help re-establish the target community.
- Enhancement planting of degraded areas of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* in priority sites particularly to increase presences of characteristic species and improve overall biodiversity values for the TEC.
- All planting works would be undertaken in accordance with a revegetation plan (incorporated into the ERP) that detail target species, seed collecting strategy, appropriate lead in times for revegetation works, performance criteria and adequate maintenance program to ensure compliance with the criteria.
- Demarcation of TECs within proximity to direct impacts to inform environmental sensitivity.
- Removal of cattle grazing in areas of *Weeping Myall Woodland CEEC*.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

To ensure the condition of the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* is maintained through construction and post operation a monitoring and inspection program will be developed to maintain and improve the TEC. The program will be developed based on collection of baseline data with the aim to maintain and improve the overall condition of the TEC.

The program would identify threats to the TEC with appropriate triggers to ensure any threat is reduced/controlled in a timely manner and where appropriate identify adaptive management strategies.

6.0 Assessment of Residual Impacts

6.1 Direct Impacts

Following the application of avoidance and minimisation measures (as outlined in **Section 5.0**) the Project will result in residual direct impacts on biodiversity values within the Development Footprints. Direct impacts include the loss of native vegetation and fauna habitats as a result of clearance works and subsequent mining activity.

Table 6.1 and **Table 6.2** below outlines these impacts as they were entered into the BAM-C for ecosystem and species credits respectively. **Table 6.3** outlines the specific impacts on BC Act listed TECs (note: these impacts are not additional to those outlined in **Table 6.1**).

Table 6.1 also includes the areas associated with MZs relevant for this assessment. These are:

- Management Zone 1 – full clearance assumed, VI score following impact is 0.
- Management Zone 2 – newly proposed transmission line easement vegetation maintenance (i.e. areas within the new transmission line easement under transmission lines and excluding access tracks will be managed to remove canopy and shrub species and retain understorey/grassland species). In the BAM-C this involved reducing tree and shrub species structure and composition to zero and the removal of any large trees, hollows, stem classes or regeneration functions. All other VI components were retained.
- Wider Easement Area – wider transmission line easement. Not currently identified for impact, however the location of the transmission line is indicative only and subject to final detailed design hence the area's inclusion in the Development Footprints. This area is not currently entered into the BAM-C or included in direct impact areas in **Table 6.1**.

MZs are shown in the detailed figures in **Annexure C.**

Avoidance and mitigation measures associated with minimising the effects of these direct impacts are discussed in **Section 5.1**and **Section 5.2** above.

Table 6.1 Direct Impact of the Project on PCTs

Plant Community Type	MZ	Vegetation Zone No. and Condition	Area (ha)		
			HVO North	HVO South	Total
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	MZ1	1. *Moderate*	63.9	0.5	65.4
	MZ2		1.0	0.0	
	MZ1	2. *Thinned* Woodland	9.0	1.9	11.5
	MZ2		0.6	0.0	
	MZ1	3. *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.3	0.0	3.3
	MZ1	4. *Plantation*	1.3	0.1	2.5
	MZ2		1.1	0.0	
	MZ1		38.1	0.0	43.0

Plant Community Type	MZ	Vegetation Zone No. and Condition	Area (ha)		
			HVO North	HVO South	Total
	MZ2	5. *Scattered Regeneration*	4.9	0.0	
	MZ1	6. *Cooba Woodland*	11.9	0.2	12.4
	MZ2		0.3	0.0	
	MZ1	7. *Poor Condition DNG*	177.5	6.8	210.6
	MZ2		26.0	0.3	
	MZ1	8. *Exotic Grassland*	108.3	21.2	142.5
	MZ2		12.4	0.6	
	MZ1	9. *Bulloak Variant*	32.1	0.0	32.8
	MZ2		0.7	0.0	
		TOTAL for PCT 3431	**492.4**	**31.6**	**524.0**
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	MZ1	10. *Moderate*	7.1	0.0	7.1
		TOTAL for PCT 3485	**7.1**	**0.0**	**7.1**
4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	MZ1	11. *Moderate*	1.6	0.0	2.2
	MZ2		0.6	0.0	
		TOTAL for PCT 4015	**2.2**	**0.0**	**2.2**
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	MZ1	12. *Moderate*	0.7	0.0	1.9
	MZ2		1.2	0.0	
		TOTAL for PCT 4081	**1.9**	**0.0**	**1.9**
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	MZ1	13. *Moderate*	1.0	0.0	1.0
	MZ1	14. *Low to Moderate*	0.05	0.0	0.1
	MZ2		0.06	0.0	
	MZ1	15. *Cooba Woodland*	0.0	0.6	0.7
	MZ2		0.1	0.0	
	MZ1	16. *Derived Native Grassland*	0.3	0.0	1.0
	MZ2		0.7	0.0	
	MZ1	17. *Exotic Grassland*	38.9	13.2	72.3
	MZ2		20.1	0.1	
		TOTAL for PCT 4089	**61.2**	**13.9**	**75.1**
		Total Vegetation	**564.8**	**45.5**	**610.3**

Table 6.2 Direct Impact of the Project on Species-credit Species

Species Name	SAII Entity	Vegetation Zone No. PCT and Condition	Area (ha)			
			HVO North	HVO South	RRG Dist. Area	Total
southern myotis *Myotis Macropus*	No	1. PCT3431 – *Moderate*	26.4	0.5	-	26.9
		2. PCT3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	4.0	1.4	-	5.4
		4. PCT3431 – *Plantation*	0.6	0.0	-	0.6
		5. PCT3431 – *Scattered Regeneration*	14.8	0.0	-	14.8
		6. PCT3431 – *Cooba Woodland*	6.3	0.1	-	6.4
		7. PCT3431 – *Bulloak Variant*	19.2	0.0	-	19.2
		10. PCT3485 - *Moderate*	3.1	0.0	-	3.1
		11. PCT4015 - *Moderate*	1.3	0.0	-	1.3
		12. PCT4081 - *Moderate*	1.8	0.0	-	1.8
		13. PCT4089 – *Moderate*	0.9	0.0	-	0.9
		14. PCT4089 – *Low to Moderate*	0.12	0.0	-	0.1
		15. PCT4089 – *Cooba Woodland*	0.1	0.2	-	0.3
	Total southern myotis species polygon		**78.62**	**2.2**	**-**	**80.8**
***Eucalyptus camaldulensis* – River red gum endangered population in the Hunter catchment**	No	6. PCT3431 – *Cooba Woodland*	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
		8. PCT3431 – *Exotic Grassland*	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
		12. PCT4081 – *Moderate*	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
		13. PCT4089 - *Moderate*	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
		14. PCT4089 – *Low to Moderate*	0.06	0.0	0.1	0.2
		15. PCT4089 – *Cooba Woodland*	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
		16. PCT4089 – *Derived Native Grassland*	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
		17. PCT4089 – *Exotic Grassland*	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.7
	Total river red gum species polygon		**0.8**	**0.7**	**0.4**	**1.9**

Species Name	SAII Entity	Vegetation Zone No. PCT and Condition	Area (ha)			
			HVO North	HVO South	RRG Dist. Area	Total
Hunter Valley delma ***Delma vescolineata***	No	2. PCT3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	9.0	1.9	-	10.9
		5. PCT3431 – *Scattered Regeneration*	38.1	0.0	-	38.1
		8. PCT3431 - *Poor Condition DNG*	177.5	6.8	-	184.3
		16. PCT4089 – *Derived Native Grassland*	0.3	0.0	-	0.3
	Total Hunter Valley delma species polygon		**224.9**	**8.7**	**-**	**233.6**
masked owl ***Tyto novaehollandiae***	No	1. PCT3431 - *Moderate*	4.1	0.5	-	3.0
		2. PCT3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	2.4	1.9	-	1.0
		3. PCT3431 -*Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	1.9	0.0	-	1.9
		8. PCT3431 – *Poor Condition DNG*	19.4	2.9	-	22.3
		9. PCT3431 - *Exotic Grassland*	24.3	6.1	-	30.4
		12. PCT4081 – *Moderate*	0.2	0.0	-	0.2
		16. PCT4089 – *Derived Native Grassland*	0.7	0.0	-	0.7
		17. PCT4089 – *Exotic Grassland*	4.7	6.7	-	11.4
	Total masked owl species polygon		**57.7**	**18.1**	**-**	**75.8**
brush-tailed phascogale ***Phascogale tapoatafa***	No	1. PCT3431 - *Moderate*	64.8	0.5	-	65.3
		2. PCT3431 – *Thinned Woodland*	9.6	1.9	-	11.5
		3. PCT3431 -*Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	3.4	0.0	-	3.4
		4. PCT3431 – *Plantation*	2.4	0.1	-	2.5
		7. PCT3431 – *Bulloak Variant*	32.7	0.0	-	32.7
		10. PCT3485 - *Moderate*	7.1	0.0	-	7.1
		11. PCT4015 - *Moderate*	2.2	0.0	-	2.2
		13. PCT4089 - *Moderate*	1.0	0.0	-	1.0
		14. PCT4089 - *Low to Moderate*	0.12	0.0	-	0.1
	Total brush-tailed phascogale species polygon		**123.32**	**2.5**	**-**	**125.8**

Table 6.3 Direct Impact of the Project on TECs

Threatened Ecological Community	Listing Status	SAII Entity	Area (ha)		
			HVO North	HVO South	RRG Dist. Area
Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	EEC	No	79.1	2.3	0.0
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	EEC	Yes	1.06	0.0	0.15
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion	VEC	No	7.1	0.0	0.0
Total TEC Impacts	**-**	**-**	**87.2**	**2.3**	**0.15**

6.1.1 Partial Loss in Electricity Easement

MZ2, as outlined above includes areas associated with the newly proposed transmission line where temporary or permanent clearance is not required and vegetation within the easement will be managed to remove any emerging canopy and shrub species. Existing operational transmission lines in the Development Footprint demonstrate the likely long-term condition of this MZ as demonstrated by plot P149 located in PCT3431 – Poor Condition DNG. This plot was undertaken adjacent to an existing transmission line in commensurate vegetation conditions. **Table 6.4** shows the composition, structure and function and overall VI score for P149, demonstrating the likely future condition of vegetation managed in the easement.

Table 6.4 P145 – Example of Managed Easement Vegetation

Plot	Composition	Structure	Function	VI Score	Hollow-bearing Trees?
P149 – PCT3431 – *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	49.0	21.5	2.8	**14.0**	No

The future value of each vegetation composition, structure and function attribute for MZ2 was amended in the BAM-C to reflect both the impacts from partially clearing the vegetation zone and associated future management to retain biodiversity values. For MZ2, this involved reducing tree and shrub species structure and composition to zero and the removal of any large trees, hollows, stem classes or regeneration functions. All other VI components were retained. The future VI scores in MZ2 were compared to the current VI score generated by P149, and manipulated to be 14.0 as per the VI score associated with P149.



Photo 6.1 Example of existing long-term condition of electricity easement management zone

6.2 Indirect Impacts

Indirect impacts are those that occur when the Project affects native vegetation and threatened species habitat beyond the Development Footprint in an indirect manner. The potential indirect impacts are considered to be well known, due to a long history of mining in the Hunter Valley and the extensive biodiversity monitoring that has been undertaken across the Hunter Valley over the last 20 years. As a result, the assessment of indirect impacts has not been hampered by limitations, assumptions or predictions that are not supportable by evidence or extensive knowledge. Whilst Section 8.2 of the BAM identifies a range of potential indirect impacts to be considered, upon review only those relevant to the Project are discussed below.

Some indirect impacts associated with the Project that have the potential to impact on biodiversity features in the locality. These include:

- Drawdown impacts on surrounding GDE, in particular the river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) endangered population in the Hunter (also a prescribed impact discussed in **Section 6.3**).
- Rubbish dumping along the re-aligned Lemington Road.
- Edge effects (weeds and other disturbances) reducing the viability of surrounding habitats.
- Cumulative impacts of the Project for biodiversity in the wider locality.
- Fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats.

Table 6.5 below outlines the potential for indirect impacts on biodiversity as a result of the Project.

Section 5.4 discusses the mitigation measures proposed to limit the impacts of indirect impacts.

As outlined in Section 2.2 of the BAM Operational Manual – Stage 2, indirect impacts may be harder to predict spatially and have unclear boundaries. Predictions of drawdown effects are well understood and are not considered to be significant and are illustrated in **Figure 6.1A**, **Figure 6.1B** and **Figure 6.2**, however the extent of indirect impacts associated with rubbish dumping, edge effects, fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts are not readily measurable and presentable on a map. **Figure 6.3** shows the potential extent of roadside litter (10 m buffer) associated with the realignment of Lemington Road and the areas where the Development Footprints adjoin broadly intact (woody) vegetation in relation to edge effects such as weeds and the maximum extent of noise and dust impacts. Fugitive light emissions cannot be shown on figures as this has not been specifically mapped in the relevant specialist report (Visual Impact Assessment, Appendix S of the EIS).

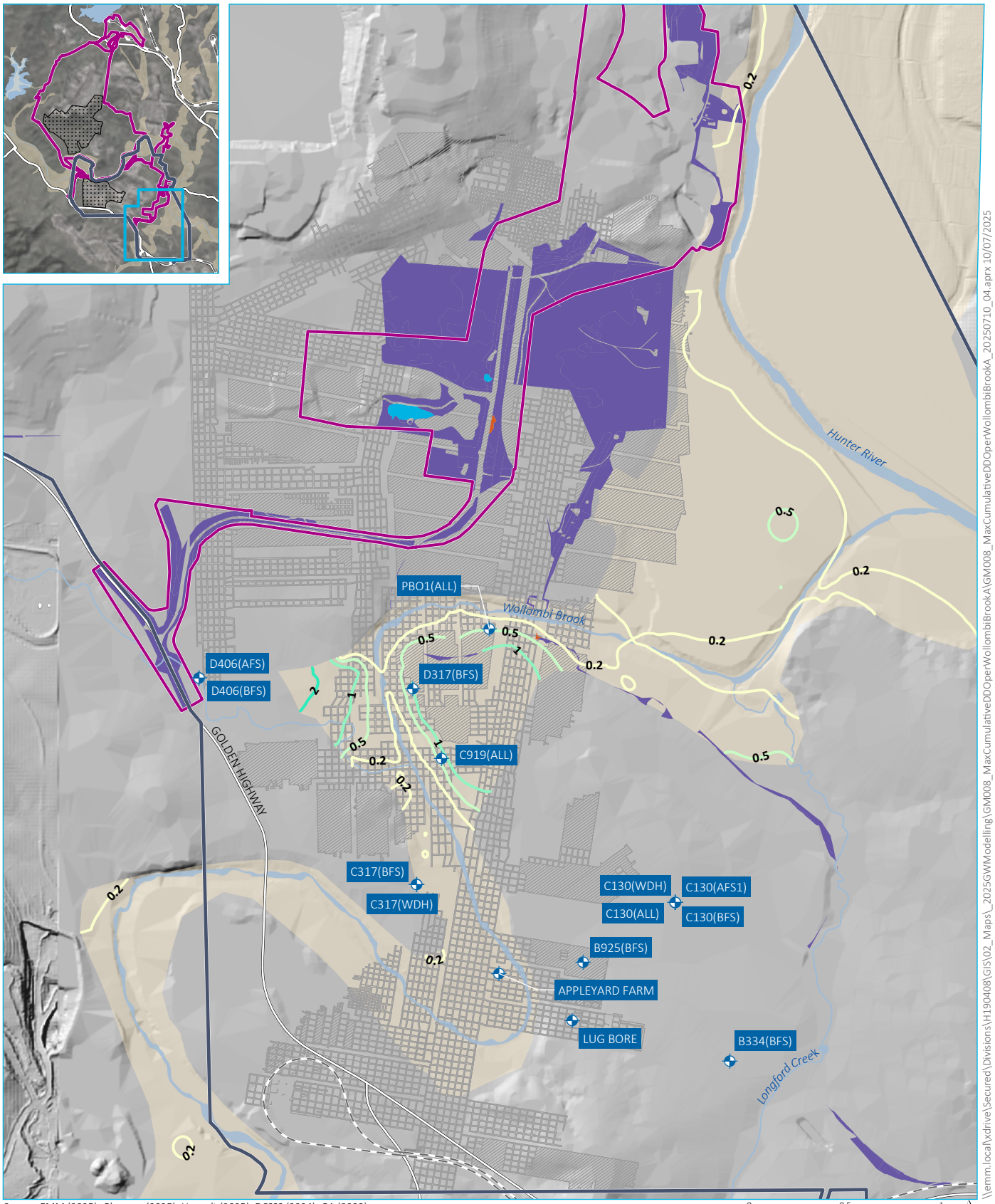
Table 6.5 Assessment of Indirect Impacts

Potential Indirect Impact	Project Applicability		Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
Drawdown impacts on surrounding groundwater dependent ecosystems	✓	✓	River red gum endangered population *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* Other GDEs (PCT4015 – Swamp Oak and PCT4089 River Oak)	**Nature:** Groundwater modelling (EMM 2025) predicts potential incremental drawdown (i.e. drawdown related to the Project) in only small parts of the Hunter River alluvial aquifer. Potential for drawdown in the alluvium along the main channel of the Hunter River is largely buffered from drawdown by low permeability barrier walls installed along sections of the aquifer (at the HVO North pit boundaries) and because infiltration from the Hunter River is a dominant recharge source to the aquifer and flows are regulated by releases from Glenbawn Dam. As a result, impacts to this aquifer ecosystem and the river red gum populations due to the Project are predicted to be minor or negligible (refer to **Figure 6.1A**). Approved Conservation Advice states that the soil that supports WSW EEC is "rapidly drained and has a low available water-holding capacity" and that the EEC "probably extracts groundwater from the underlying shallow aquifer and hence is at risk from activities that impact the sand sheet". Groundwater monitoring and associated studies indicate these vegetation communities may access groundwater associated with an ephemeral perched watertable that is replenished during high rainfall periods (refer to **Figure 6.2**). **Extent**: The Aquatic Ecology and GDE Assessment (Eco Logical 2022) states that *"Modelling predicts some drawdown in the Quaternary alluvium of the Hunter River near the riparian river red gum sites, however, the incremental drawdown is predicted to be less than 0.5 m and no widespread dewatering will occur. Minor drawdown of 0.2–0.5 m is modelled for below Carrington Billabong (AGE 2022). Any decline in the water table due to mining activities in other parts of the aquifer is likely to be replaced by the leakage of surface water through the bed of the Hunter River (AGE 2022).*	Potential decline in health of river red gum stands and *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* along the Hunter River and decline in health of other GDEs in the locality. However, a significant impact is not considered likely (EMM 2025, Eco Logical 2025). Drawdown impacts are not predicted for areas of *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC*.

Potential Indirect Impact	Project Applicability		Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
				River red gum populations close to the Hunter River will continue to have access to groundwater due to drainage from the Hunter River, and no significant impact is expected". **Timing:** Operation. **Duration**: Long-term.	
Rubbish dumping along the re-aligned Lemington Road	✓	-	All threatened fauna species in the locality. *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* *Central Hunter Grey Box - Ironbark Woodland EEC*	**Nature**: The realignment of Lemington Road will be located to along the eastern side of the HVO Complex, linking back to the Golden Highway near Warkworth. The establishment of the new Lemington Road corridor will introduce road traffic and human access to an area not previously subject to regular vehicle movements. It is likely that this will introduce road side rubbish and litter to surrounding habitats. **Extent**: The Lemington Road realignment will introduce 12.1 km of new road. This will traverse adjacent to *Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC* and through areas identified as *Central Hunter Grey Box – Ironbark Woodland EEC*. The extent of litter damage to surrounding lands is variable across the country depending on the location, use of the road and proximate amenities. National litter monitoring usually extends 10 m from the roads' edge (refer to **Figure 6.3**, however rubbish dumping along the existing Lemington Road is considered to be minimal and not known to be a significant problem. The risk is expected to be low for the realigned road. **Timing**: Operation. **Duration**: Long-term.	Injury or death of threatened species through entanglement or ingestion of litter. Reduction in threatened species and TEC resilience in the locality due to damage to vegetation and habitat condition.
Edge effects (weeds and other disturbances) reducing the viability of surrounding habitats	✓	✓	All adjacent plant communities and locally-occurring threatened species.	**Nature**: Edge effects occur in lands adjoining direct disturbances and can involve weed invasion, feral animal encroachment, restrictions in animal movements and can ultimately alter the species assemblage of a community. Clearing, thinning of vegetation and the creation of tracks have the ability to assist the establishment and spread of feral fauna species, as well as invasive weed species.	Reduction in threatened species and TEC resilience in the locality due to damage to vegetation and habitat condition.

Potential Indirect Impact	Project Applicability		Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
				Extent: The majority of edge effects is likely to be captured in the proposed Development Footprint, as the footprint allows for buffers around the actual area subject to direct impacts. Further mitigation measures are proposed in **Section 5.6** to acknowledge potential edge effects into surrounding sensitive receptors. **Timing**: Construction and operation. **Duration**: During vegetation clearing and creation of new tracks.	Further fragmentation of already small patches of intact vegetation and habitats.
Cumulative impacts of the Project for biodiversity in the wider locality	✓	✓	All locally-occurring plant communities and threatened species.	**Nature:** The Development Footprints are situated in a landscape that is characterised by agricultural land and mining land. The history of land clearing, agriculture and mining development has resulted in an incremental loss of vegetation and fauna habitat surrounding the Development Footprints, and within the Hunter Valley more generally. The Project will remove vegetation and further increase fragmentation and isolation of habitats in the vicinity of the Project, and thus contribute to cumulative habitat loss and vegetation clearance in the locality. **Extent:** The Project will result in a loss of approximately 178 ha of native woodland and forest vegetation in a highly fragmented and disturbed landscape. It is expected that up to approximately 191 ha of grassland habitats suitable for the recently-discovered Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) will be removed as part of the Project. The HVO Complex is expected to have cleared over 7,100 ha of land at the commencement of the Project and other recently approved projects in the locality contribute to the removal of native habitats such as United Wambo Open Cut (approx. 530 ha), Mt Pleasant Optimisation Project (approx. 475 ha) and Warkworth Continued Operations Project (approx. 700 ha). **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Medium-term (proposed rehabilitation strategy will restore habitats and connectivity in the locality in the long-term).	Reduction in threatened species and plant community resilience in the locality due to fragmentation and isolation of patches of intact vegetation and habitats. Loss of fauna refuges in an already highly cleared landscape.

Potential Indirect Impact	Project Applicability		Impacted Biodiversity Features	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
Fugitive light emissions, noise and dust impacts into surrounding habitats	✓	✓	All locally-occurring plant communities and threatened species.	**Nature:** Fugitive light emissions resulting from the construction and operation of the Project may result in adverse impacts on adjacent habitats and fauna species, such as reduction in the navigational signal ability for some nocturnal animals and delaying bats from emerging from roost access points and shortening the amount of time available to them for foraging. Construction and operational noise impacts have the potential to adversely impact native species such as noise disturbing the roosting and foraging behaviour of fauna species and noise reducing the occupancy of areas of suitable habitat. Construction and operational dust impacts have the potential to adversely impact native species during ground disturbing works, including blasting. Potential impacts include dust covering vegetation thereby potentially reducing vegetation health and growth. **Extent: Figure 6.3** shows the indicative maximum envelope 40 db $L_{Aeq, 15\ min}$ noise contours for the Project which represents the maximum envelope predicted for all stages, and all time periods. **Figure 6.3** also shows days above 25 µg/m^3 PM2.5 (increment) contour in relation to particle/dust impacts relating solely to the HVO Project. No modelling of fugitive light emissions is available to represent on a figure It should be noted that the Noise Impact Assessment (EMM 2022b) and Air Quality Impact Assessment (Jacobs 2022) was undertaken focusing on human-related, not biodiversity-related, receptors. It is expected that as the Project is located in a highly fragmented and disturbed landscape subject to current extensive mining areas, indirect impacts such as fugitive light emissions, air quality and noise/vibration associated with mining will not be substantially altered in the locality as a result of the Project (ERM 2022 and Jacobs 2022). Much of the new pit areas and ancillary facilities occur in areas surrounded by existing mining operations and not near intact vegetation and habitats. **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Long-term.	Reduction in threatened species and plant community resilience in the locality. Disruption of faunal behaviours and health.



Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); Umwelt (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 0.5 1 km

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

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KEY

- Amended proposed HVO North development consent boundary
- Proposed HVO South development consent boundary
- Groundwater monitoring location (HVO)
- Lemington underground mine plan
- Alluvium extent
- Mining area

Drawdown contour (m)

- 0.2
- 0.5
- 1
- 2

Plant community type (PCT) (Umwelt, 2025)

- PCT 3431 | Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland
- PCT 4015 | Central Hunter Riparian Forest
- PCT 4089 | Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

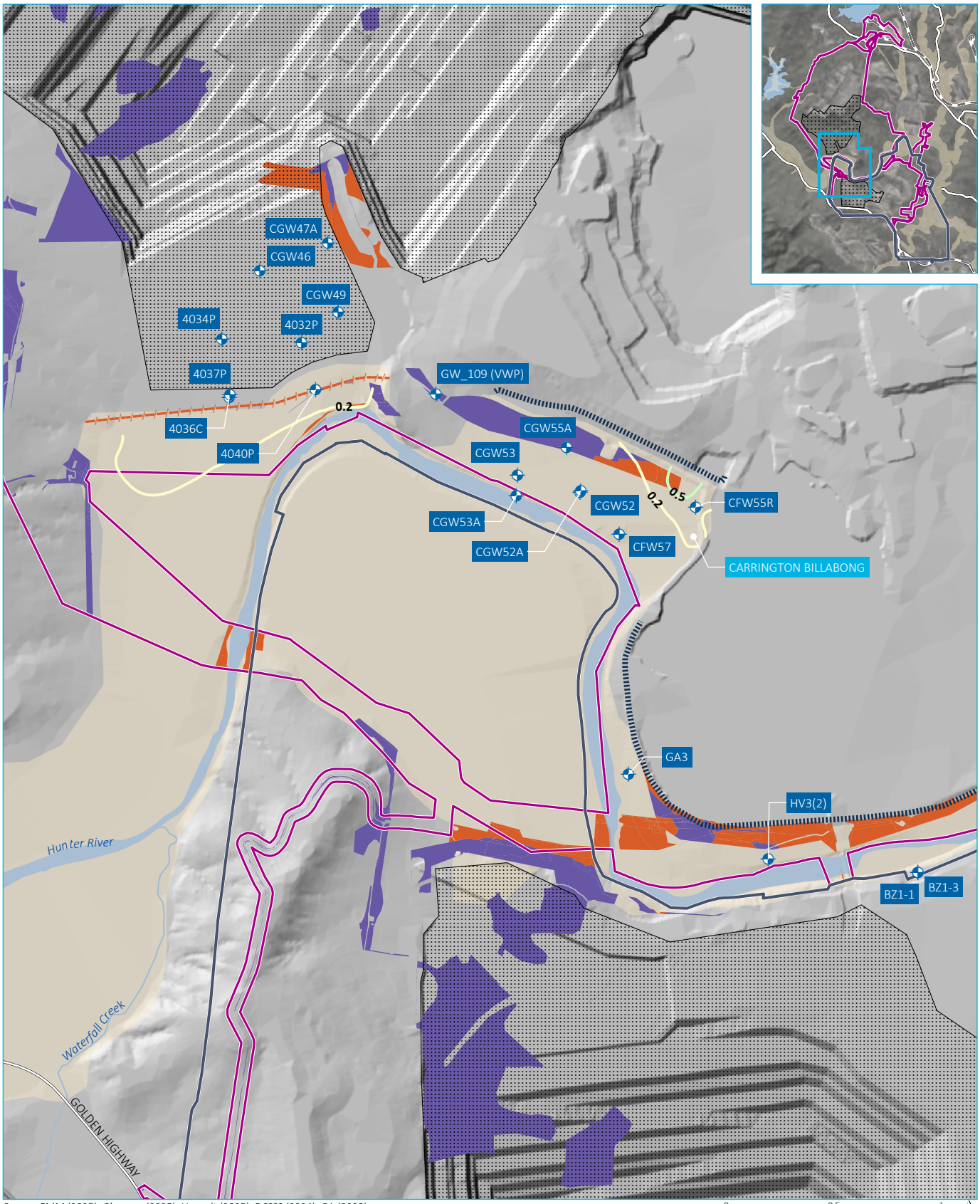
Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody

Maximum predicted cumulative drawdown during operations in the Wollombi Brook alluvium

HVO Continuation Project
Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
Figure 6.1A

EMM creating opportunities



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Source: EMM (2025); Glencore (2025); Umwelt (2025); DCSSS (2024); GA (2009)

0 0.5 1 km
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N

KEY

- Amended proposed HVO North development consent boundary
- Proposed HVO South development consent boundary
- Groundwater monitoring location (HVO)
- Carrington West Wing LPBW
- Existing low permeability barrier wall
- Alluvium extent
- Mining area

Drawdown contour (m)

- 0.2
- 0.5

Plant community type (PCT) (Umwelt, 2025)

- PCT 3431 | Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland
- PCT 4015 | Central Hunter Riparian Forest
- PCT 4089 | Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest

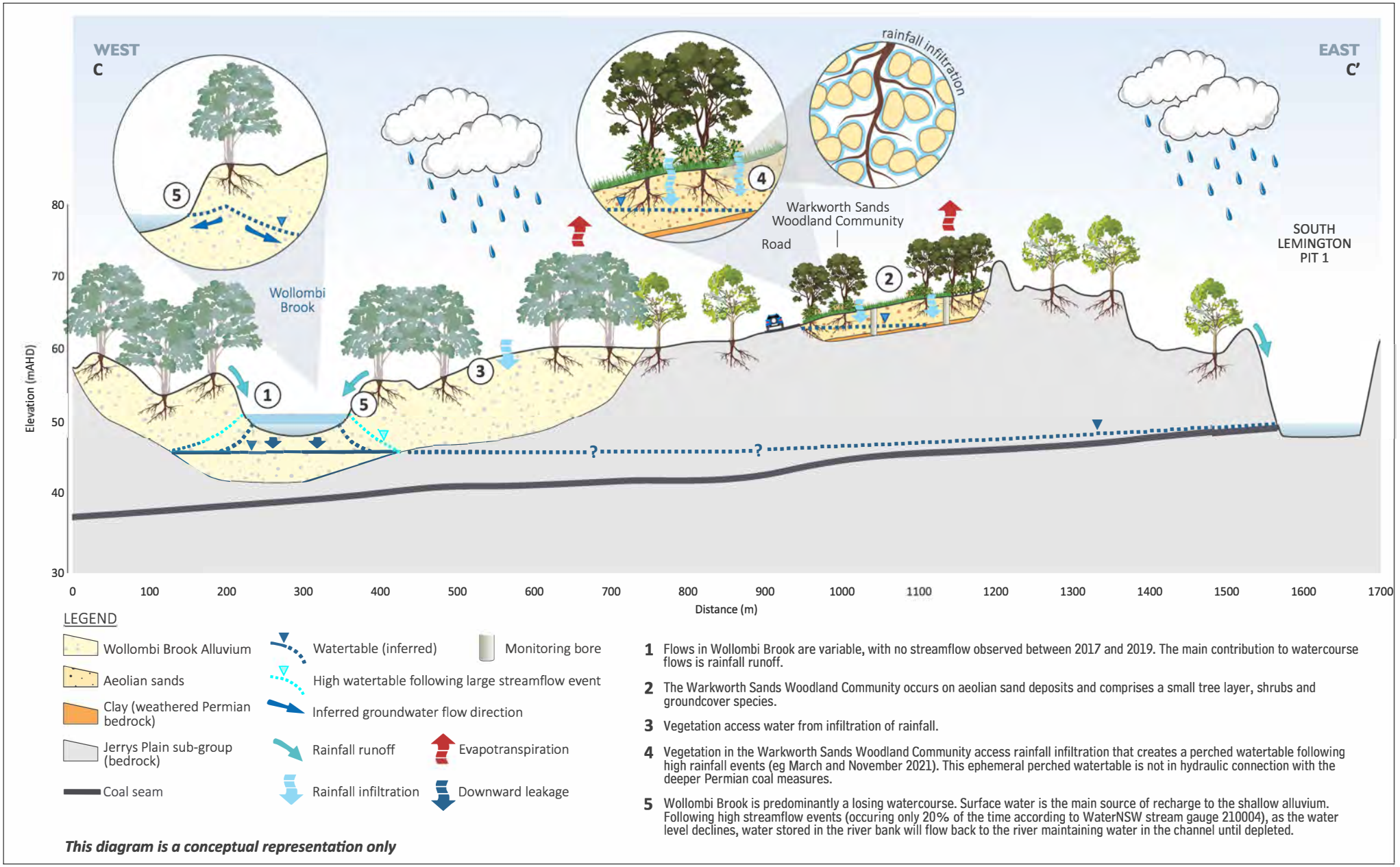
Existing environment

- Rail line
- Major road
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody

Maximum predicted cumulative drawdown during operations in the Hunter River alluvium

HVO Continuation Project
Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
Figure 6.1B

EMM creating opportunities

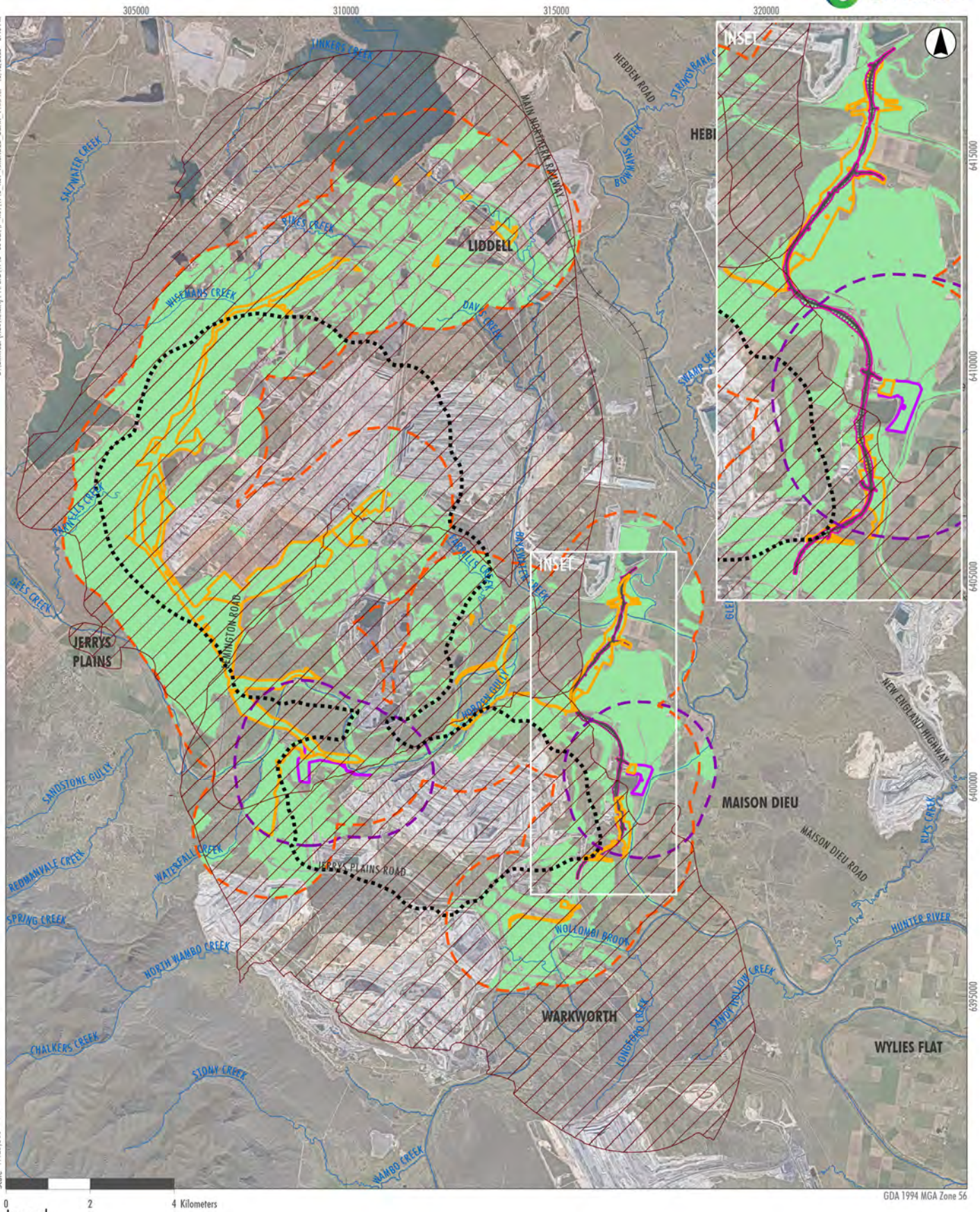


Receptor Conceptual Diagram – Warkworth Sands and Wollombi Brook

HVO Continuation Project

Biodiversity Development Assessment Report

Figure 6.2



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- 1500m North Buffer
- 1500m South Buffer
- Native Vegetation in the 1500m Buffer
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Proposed Lemington Road Alignment
- Potential Roadside Litter Zone
- 40 dB noise contour
- Days above 25 µg/m3 PM2.5 (increment)

FIGURE 6.3

Potential Indirect Impacts – Rubbish dumping, Edge effects, Light, Noise and Dust

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

6.3 Prescribed Impacts

Prescribed impacts have been considered for the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints for the Project.

Table 6.6 outlines the 'prescribed impacts' under the BC Regulation and their applicability to the Project. **Table 6.7** assesses any applicable prescribed impacts in detail as required in Section 8.3 of the BAM (DPIE 2020a). **Figure 6.4** illustrates the location of potential prescribed impacts.

Table 6.6 Prescribed Impacts Identified at HVO North and HVO South

Prescribed Impact	Applicable to Project?		Potential Impact
	HVO North	HVO South	
Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with: • karst, caves, crevices, cliffs and other geological features of significance, rocks, human-made structures or non-native vegetation	**No**	**No**	No impacts on karst, caves, crevices, cliffs and other geological features of significance, rocks, human-made structures or non-native vegetation relevant for threatened species or ecological communities.
• the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range	**Yes**	**Yes**	Removal of vegetation and habitats associated with movement corridors.
• movement of threatened species that maintains their life cycle.	No	No	No impacts on movement habitat important for maintaining species life cycles. Impacts on connectivity captured above in **Table 6.5**.
Impacts of development on water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities.	**Yes**	**Yes**	Drawdown of groundwater in the locality – no significant impact predicted. Refer to **Table 6.5** and Groundwater Assessment (AGE 2022). Impacts on dams and waterbodies suitable for southern myotis.
Impacts of wind turbine strikes on protected animals.	No	No	N/A – not a wind farm project.
Impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species or on animals that are part of a TEC.	**Yes**	No	Establishment of Lemington Road realignment.

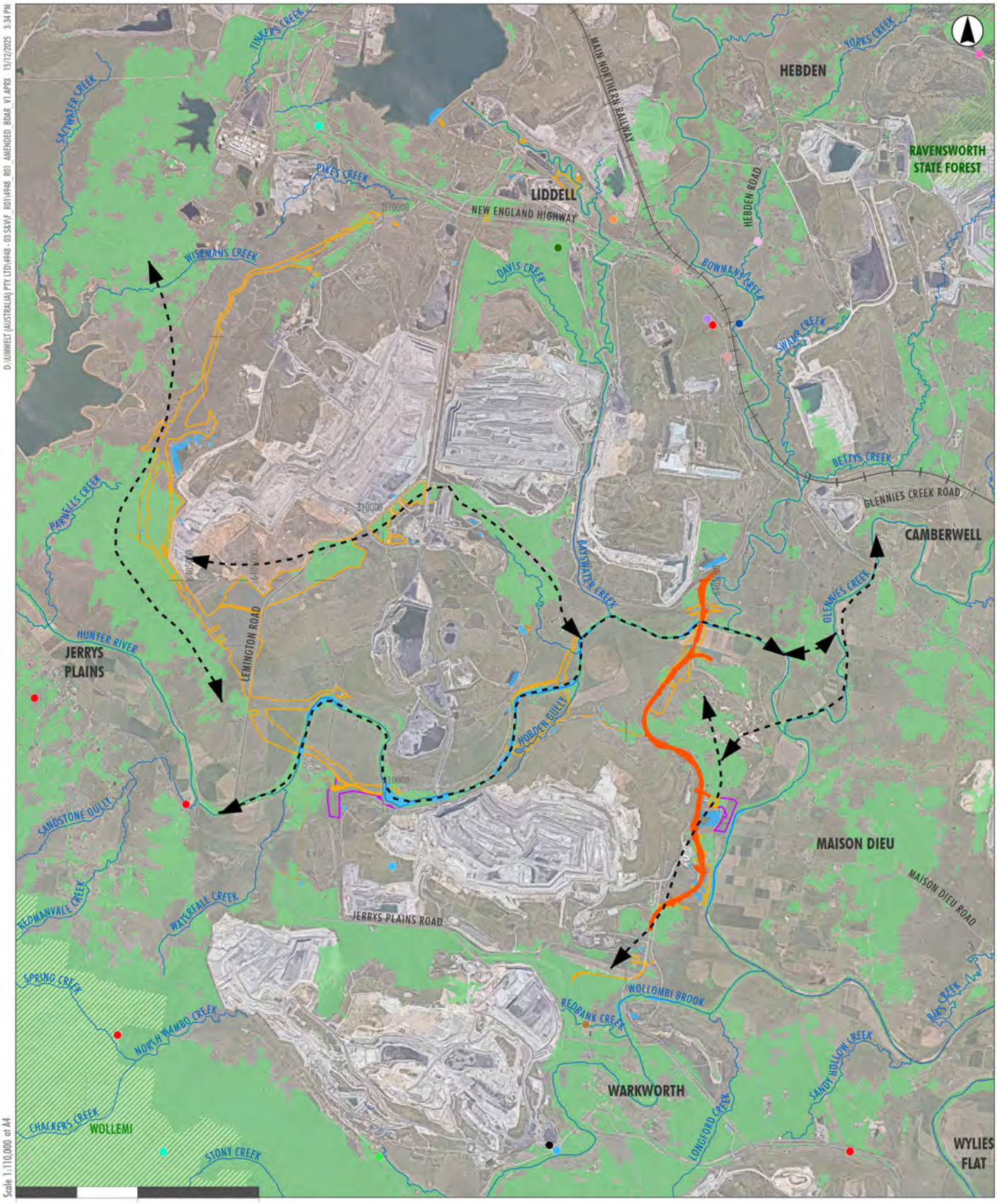
Table 6.7 Prescribed Impacts Assessment

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Applicable to Project?		Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range	✓	✓	All threatened fauna species, but particularly ground-dwelling or arboreal species known to occur such as spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale. Threatened ecological communities including: *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* *Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland EEC* *Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC*	**Nature:** The removal of native vegetation from within the Development Footprints could affect the ability of some local fauna species and TECs to move and extend throughout the landscape by removing patches of native vegetation that provide a fragmented 'stepping-stone' corridor in an already highly disturbed landscape. The loss of 'stepping stone' habitat areas for some species could result in an increased level of isolation of populations where species are unable or unwilling to travel across the increased distance between habitat areas. **Extent:** A potential fauna movement corridor occurs in highly fragmented remnant woodland and rehabilitation between the Mitchell Pit and Carrington Pit, as well as the riparian corridor of the Hunter River to the south (refer to **Figure 6.4**). While the Project will remove approximately 178.2 ha of native woody vegetation, the majority of the woodland is already highly fragmented and disturbed. Intact (moderate condition) woodland vegetation represents approximately 19% of the Development Footprints, with the remainder of the area being derived native grassland or exotic grassland. This represents lower value habitat when compared with native vegetation in a remnant state, of which very little is present within the Disturbance Footprints due to historical and ongoing clearing for mining and agriculture in the area.	The loss of connectivity and movement corridors for native flora and fauna.

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Applicable to Project?		Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
				HVO is centrally located in the Hunter Valley. The central Hunter Valley has been widely cleared of remnant vegetation primarily for agriculture and since the 1980s for mining. Review of historic aerial photographs demonstrates the lack of remnant vegetation and corridors. The Hunter River forms the most significant east-west trending corridor and the vegetation associated with Ravenworth State Forest to the north of HVO provides a moderate sized remnant through which a highly fragmented, 'stepping stone' corridor occurs trending generally north-south. Due to the location of HVO in the landscape, the Project is not expected to 'sever or interfere with corridors connecting different areas of habitat and migratory flight paths, to important habitat or local movement pathways.' It is acknowledged that habitat corridors may include networks of habitat patches or scattered paddock trees. The retention of habitat connectivity may help to reduce some of the adverse effects of habitat fragmentation by facilitating dispersal of individuals between patches of remaining habitat. Broadly, the habitats of the locality are already fragmented in a largely agricultural and mining landscape. A potential larger regional corridor in the locality, connecting Mt Royal/Barrington Tops World Heritage Area with the Wollemi World Heritage Area via Lake Liddell is not likely to be severed as a result of the Project. **Timing:** Construction and operation. **Duration:** Ongoing during the life of the Project.	

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Applicable to Project?		Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
Impacts of development on water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities (impacts on dams and waterbodies suitable for southern myotis)	✓	✓	southern myotis	**Nature**: The removal of waterbodies located within the Development Footprint could affect the extent of suitable foraging habitat for the southern myotis. The species is known to forage over streams and pools catching insects and small fish by raking their feet across the water surface. Southern myotis has been regularly recorded on several waterways in the vicinity of the Project including Glennies Creek, Bowmans Creek, and adjacent to the Hunter River near the Carrington West Wing Extension. As outlined in **Section 4.2.2.1**, the species was not recorded during the surveys undertaken for the assessment however noting the known records in the locality, has been assumed present. **Extent**: Waterbodies within the Development Footprint contain open water which provides approximately 11.3 ha of potentially suitable foraging habitat for the southern myotis. Some of these waterbodies will not be removed or materially affected in a way to prevent foraging by the species (i.e. sections of the Hunter River and dams traversed above by proposed transmission line realignments). The likely area of impact on waterbodies for the Project is approximately 5.7 ha. **Timing**: Construction and operation **Duration**: Ongoing during the life of the Project	The reduction of potentially suitable foraging habitat for the southern myotis in the locality.
Impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species or on animals that are part of a TEC.	✓	-	All threatened fauna species, but particularly ground-dwelling species known to occur such as spotted-tailed	**Nature**: The HVO North Project includes the realignment of Lemington Road from its existing location between Mitchell Pit/West Pit and Carrington Pit to along the eastern side of the HVO Complex, linking back to the Golden Highway near Warkworth. Approximately 16 km of	Injury and death of threatened species in the locality resulting in reduced populations and resilience.

Prescribed Impact (BC Regulation)	Applicable to Project?		Likely Impacted Threatened Entities	Nature, Extent, Timing and Duration of Impact	Consequences
	HVO North	HVO South			
			quoll and brush-tailed phascogale.	the existing Lemington Road will be decommissioned as a result of the extension of the HVO North mining area. The establishment of the new Lemington Road will introduce road traffic to an existing disturbed landscape (primarily due to agricultural clearing and mining operations). Millions of native animals are injured and killed each year when they are struck by vehicles while trying to cross the road. Hotspots are likely to occur where a road cuts through habitat that serves as a corridor for movement of wildlife (DPIE 2020c). BioNet Atlas data for the Hunter IBRA Subregion indicates that road kill records span across almost all fauna categories (mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds). Within the locality of HVO, the spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale have both been recorded as road kill (DPE 2022a). **Extent**: The Lemington Road realignment will introduce 11.5 km of new road (refer to **Figure 6.4**). **Frequency**: Traffic movements associated with Lemington Road are not expected to increase as part of the Project, however the location of the road will introduce a higher frequency of vehicles in an area not previously subject to regular vehicle movements (as detailed in the Traffic Impact Assessment in Appendix R of the EIS). The proposed speed limit along the re-aligned Lemington Road is 100 km/hr, consistent with the existing alignment. **Duration**: Ongoing following the completion of construction of the realignment.	



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- Lemington Road realignment - potential area of high vehicle strike
- Habitat Connectivity
- Habitat Connectivity (SVTM Native Vegetation Extent)
- Open Water Habitat Impact (Southern Myotis)

Roadkill Species Records (NSW Bionet Atlas Records 2022)

- Bare-nosed Wombat
- Brush-tailed Phascogale
- Dingo, domestic dog
- Eastern Brown Snake
- Eastern Grey Kangaroo
- Eastern Snake-necked Turtle
- Fox
- Koala
- Masked Owl
- Red-bellied Black Snake
- Short-beaked Echidna
- Southern Boobook
- Spotted-tailed Quoll
- Stubble Quail

FIGURE 6.4

Location of Prescribed Impacts

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

6.4 Serious and Irreversible Impacts

Under the BC Act, a determination of whether an impact is serious and irreversible must be made in accordance with four principles prescribed in the BC Regulation. The principles have been designed to capture those impacts that are likely to contribute significantly to the risk of extinction of a threatened species or ecological community in NSW. These are impacts that:

- will cause a further decline of the species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to be in a rapid rate of decline, or
- will further reduce the population size of the species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to have a very small population size, or
- impact on the habitat of a species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to have a very limited geographic distribution, or
- impact on a species or ecological community that is unlikely to respond to measures to improve habitat and VI and is therefore irreplaceable.

Two TECs, one endangered population and two species-credit species recorded within the Development Footprints are listed as potential SAII entities on the DPE website and the TBDC (at the time of writing). These are:

- *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC*
- *Weeping Myall Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion CEEC*
- *Acacia pendula* endangered population in the Hunter Catchment
- large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)
- little bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus australis*).

While the Development Footprints are likely to contain foraging habitat for the above micro-bat species, no areas containing caves, overhangs or crevices, or old tunnels or culverts, for breeding habitat occur within the Development Footprints or in the immediate locality. These species are listed as SAII entities for breeding habitat only and therefore the Project is not expected to result in a serious and irreversible impact on these fauna species (refer to **Section 6.4.2** for further detail).

Similarly, the *Acacia pendula* CEEC/EP will not be directly impacted by the Project and is therefore not at risk of SAII. Further assessment of the impact of the Project against the principles prescribed in the regulation is not required.

6.4.1 Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC

Table 6.8 outlines the principles relevant for the SAII entity *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* subject to further assessment (as determined by DPHI). A detailed assessment of the SAII entity subject to impacts by the Project is provided in **Table 6.8**. While not all principles are relevant to the SAII entity, information relating to each principle is provided in **Table 6.8.**

CPHR was contacted during the assessment and provided the data and information available on these SAII entities. Where suitable, this has been incorporated in the SAII assessments below.

Table 6.8 SAII Principles for *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*

SAII Principle	Applicable?
The impact will cause a further decline of a species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to be in a rapid rate of decline.	✓
The impact will further reduce the population size of the species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to have a very small population size.	✓
The impact is made on the habitat of the species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to have a very limited geographic distribution.	-
The impacted species or ecological community is unlikely to respond to measures to improve its habitat and vegetation integrity and therefore its members are not replaceable.	-

Table 6.9 Impact Assessment for SAII Entities – *Hunter Floodplain Redgum Woodland EEC*

Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions Endangered Ecological Community	
Current Status of the TEC in relation to SAII Principles	
Principle 1 – further decline of TEC Evidence of reduction in geographic distribution as the current total geographic extent of the TEC in NSW and the estimated reduction in geographic extent of the TEC since 1970 (not including impacts of the proposal)	The TBDC associates three approved PCTs to this EEC, being PCT42, PCT1698 and PCT4089. Of these, only PCT4089 is located in the Sydney basin IBRA region and is assessed for community extent in the VIS (DCCEEW 2025). PCT 4089 is noted in the VIS (DCCEEW 2025) with a pre-European extent of 45,694 ha, and with a current estimated extent of 2589 ha. It is acknowledged that the EEC is likely to occur in PCTs other than PCT4089. According to the Final Determination for this EEC (NSW Scientific Committee 2011b) Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland occupies an area of less than 500 km^2 based on 2 x 2 km grid cells, the scale of assessment recommended for species by IUCN (2008). This EEC has been recorded from the local government areas of Maitland, Mid-Western, Muswellbrook, Singleton, and Upper Hunter but may occur elsewhere within the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions (NSW Scientific Committee 2011b). The Hunter Remnant Vegetation Project (Peake 2006) described MU13 Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Complex, which informed the listing of this EEC under the (now repealed) NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* TSC Act. Mapped occurrences of the community include a few remnants greater than 10 ha and many small remnants less than 10 ha indicating severe fragmentation. Within the central Hunter Valley it is estimated that the geographic distribution of the community has been reduced by more than 90% of its pre-European extent (Peake 2006). Insufficient data exists to accurately determine the reduction in geographic extent of this EEC since 1970 (approximately 52 years), however Peake (2006) estimates the pre-European extent of MU13 Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Complex to be 41,142 ha and at the time of writing (2006) the extant area was considered to be 436 ha. Peake (2006) states that after direct clearing, floodplain alteration is likely to be the most important threatening process for this community along with weed invasion, grazing and fertiliser/herbicide application. Clearance and disturbance since 1970 is likely to be most attributable to agricultural practices in the central Hunter Valley, but also impacts associated with mining and other rural development. It is considered likely that this community has undergone further decline since 1970.
Principle 2 – further reduce size of TEC Extent of reduction in ecological function for the TEC using evidence that describes the degree of environmental degradation or disruption to biotic processes indicated by:	Factors contributing to a reduction in the ecological function of this community include increased fragmentation, weed invasion, feral animals and changes to floodplain hydrology. While this community likely exhibited a degree of natural fragmentation prior to European settlement due to its fidelity to floodplains and their margins, patches have been further fragmented as a consequence of clearing, with small, narrow remnants often the only vegetation left in a cleared landscape (i.e. linear strips along waterways). Invasive species are a serious threat to this EEC due to the fertile and productive nature of floodplains making them conducive to the invasion of weeds. The community's proximity to and association with water also makes it vulnerable to invasive fauna such as feral pigs, foxes, rabbits and deer.

Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions Endangered Ecological Community	
i. change in community structure ii. change in species composition iii. disruption of ecological processes iv. invasion and establishment of exotic species degradation of habitat, and v. fragmentation of habitat	Many of the floodplains that provide habitat for this EEC have undergone major transformation following systematic hydrological engineering for the development of agricultural land, surrounding coal mining operations and creek and river diversions. Water extraction for agriculture diminishes flows, especially during dry periods and reduces the frequency of small and medium-sized flood events, which can affect the recruitment of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. The HVO RRGRRS (HVO 2025) notes that historical vegetation clearance has meant that most remnants, including Carrington Billabong and other HVO sites, are ecologically denuded: most have effectively no ecological connectivity to nearby remnants; their area of coverage are mostly small; most have a high edge to area ratio, resulting in a small 'core' and large 'edge' habitats; and their structural and floristic compositions have been heavily modified over time through human activities, which has continued to suppress the natural recovery of the remnants.
Principle 3 – further limit distribution of TEC Evidence of restricted geographic distribution, based on the TEC's geographic range in NSW according to the: extent of occurrence area of occupancy, and number of threat-defined locations	According to the Final Determination for this EEC (NSWSC 2011), Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland generally occurs on floodplains and floodplain rises, indicating a restricted distribution. In NSW, it is estimated that the community's area of occupancy is likely an area of less than 500 km^2 in the Sydney Basin and NSW North Coast Bioregions. The EEC has undergone at least a 90% reduction in distribution following European settlement with the current extent of the ecological community estimated to be in the order of 436 ha (Peake 2006). The extant distribution of the community has few remnants greater than 10 ha and many small remnants less than 10 ha, indicating severe fragmentation and isolation from other patches. These small remnants are likely to be threatened by disturbance from agricultural activities, rural, industrial and urban development.
Principle 4 – ability to respond to management Evidence that the TEC is unlikely to respond to management	The TBDC does not contain information in relation to this TEC's ability to respond to management, however management of the community at Carrington Billabong by HVO in accordance with DA 450-10-2003 and the HVO RRGRRS (HVO 2025) and monitoring reports (Umwelt 2018, Ecoplanning 2025) demonstrates some level of understanding of this community's ability to respond to management. A 10-year monitoring program was completed in 2017 and a revised RRGRRS (HVO 2025) recommended further monitoring at Carrington Billabong and priority sites across the Hunter. Actions to manage the community (in particular river red gum stands) include the exclusion of grazing, fencing, weed management and active planting of native species. Monitoring of the Carrington Billabong site and other reference sites in the Hunter indicated similar trends in community recruitment, health and decline, depending on the prevailing conditions (weed prevalence, flooding/inundation events, etc).

Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions Endangered Ecological Community		
	Recent monitoring (Ecoplanning 2025) indicated that the overall health of the community had improved at Carrington Billabong. It is generally accepted that appropriate weed management would improve the community's ability to successfully recruit, however it is acknowledged that recruitment events are likely to be tied to flooding and inundation events. Artificial inundation has not been introduced to this site, but may be an option for future management (Ecoplanning 2025). The community is likely to respond to appropriate management of weeds and the exclusion of grazing, however it is dependent on flooding and inundation to promote germination and recruitment of canopy species.	
Potential Impacts on the SAII	**HVO North**	**HVO South**
The impact on the geographic extent of the TEC (Principles 1 & 3) Estimate the total area of the TEC to be impacted by the proposal: in hectares, and as a percentage of the current geographic extent of the TEC in NSW.	The direct impacts on this EEC as a result of the HVO North Project will be up to approximately 1.2 ha (1.06ha in HVO North and 0.15 ha associated with the Additional River Red Gum Disturbance Area). This represents 0.28% of the current estimated geographic extent of the TEC in NSW being 436 ha (Peake 2006). Impacts to the EEC are expected to occur as a result of the proposed transmission line relocation works and discrete areas associated with the proposed new pit. Impacts to the community in relation to the proposed transmission line relocation works have been assessed conservatively and are expected to primarily be associated with tree trimming and edge impacts. Where possible, mature trees will be avoided. Pre-clearance surveys and clear delineation of easement boundaries avoiding river red gums during construction will be undertaken. As outlined in **Table 6.5** and AGE (2022), no significant impact from groundwater drawdown impacts is predicted to occur. Drawdown impacts are expected to be less than 0.5 m in the area where this TEC occurs and no widespread dewatering is expected. The HVO North Project is not expected to result in substantial indirect impacts such as inappropriate fire regimes, invasive species or pathogens. The Project will manage these in accordance with the measures outlined in	No direct impacts on this EEC are expected as a result of the HVO South Project. As outlined in **Table 6.5** and AGE (2022), no significant impact from groundwater drawdown impacts is predicted to occur. Drawdown impacts are expected to be less than 0.5 m in the area where this TEC occurs and no widespread dewatering is expected. The HVO South Project is not expected to result in substantial indirect impacts such as inappropriate fire regimes, invasive species or pathogens. The Project will manage these in accordance with the measures outlined in **Section 5.5** and the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan and Bushfire Management Plan.

Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions Endangered Ecological Community		
	Section 5.5 and the HVO Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan and Bushfire Management Plan.	
describing the impacts on connectivity and fragmentation of the remaining areas of TEC measured by: distance between isolated areas of the TEC, presented as the average distance if the remnant is retained AND the average distance if the remnant is removed as proposed, and	The distances between patches of this community in the locality are highly variable due to the linear nature of the community. This ranges from >100 m (minimum distance to determine separate patches) and up to 2 km. The loss of up to approximately 1.2 ha of this community will have a negligible impact on the average distances between remaining patches of the EEC.	No direct impacts on this EEC are expected as a result of the HVO South Project. The distances between patches of this community in the locality are highly variable due to the linear nature of the community. This ranges from >100 m (minimum distance to determine separate patches) and up to 2 km.
estimated maximum dispersal distance for native flora species characteristic of the TEC, and	Insufficient data available.	Insufficient data available.
other information relevant to describing the impact on connectivity and fragmentation, such as the area to perimeter ratio for remaining areas of the TEC as a result of the development.	This community exhibits a natural degree of fragmentation due to its fidelity to floodplains and their margins and therefore an assessment using an area to perimeter ratio is unlikely to demonstrate the true nature of the impacts associated with this Project. While the Project is not likely to substantially fragment this community in a manner that will reduce the community's ability to function, it is noted that any impacts to highly restricted TECs such as this will contribute to the overall decline of the TEC in the locality.	No direct impacts on this EEC are expected as a result of the HVO South Project. This community exhibits a natural degree of fragmentation due to its fidelity to floodplains and their margins and therefore an assessment using an area to perimeter ratio is unlikely to demonstrate the true nature of the impacts associated with this Project. The Project is not likely to substantially fragment this community in a manner that will reduce the community's ability to function.

describing the condition of the TEC according to the vegetation integrity score for the relevant vegetation zone(s).

Veg Zone	Composition	Structure	Function	VI
13. PCT4089 *Moderate*	95.7	66.5	43.3	**65.0**
14. PCT4089 *Low to Moderate*	19.2	27.2	48.5	**29.4**

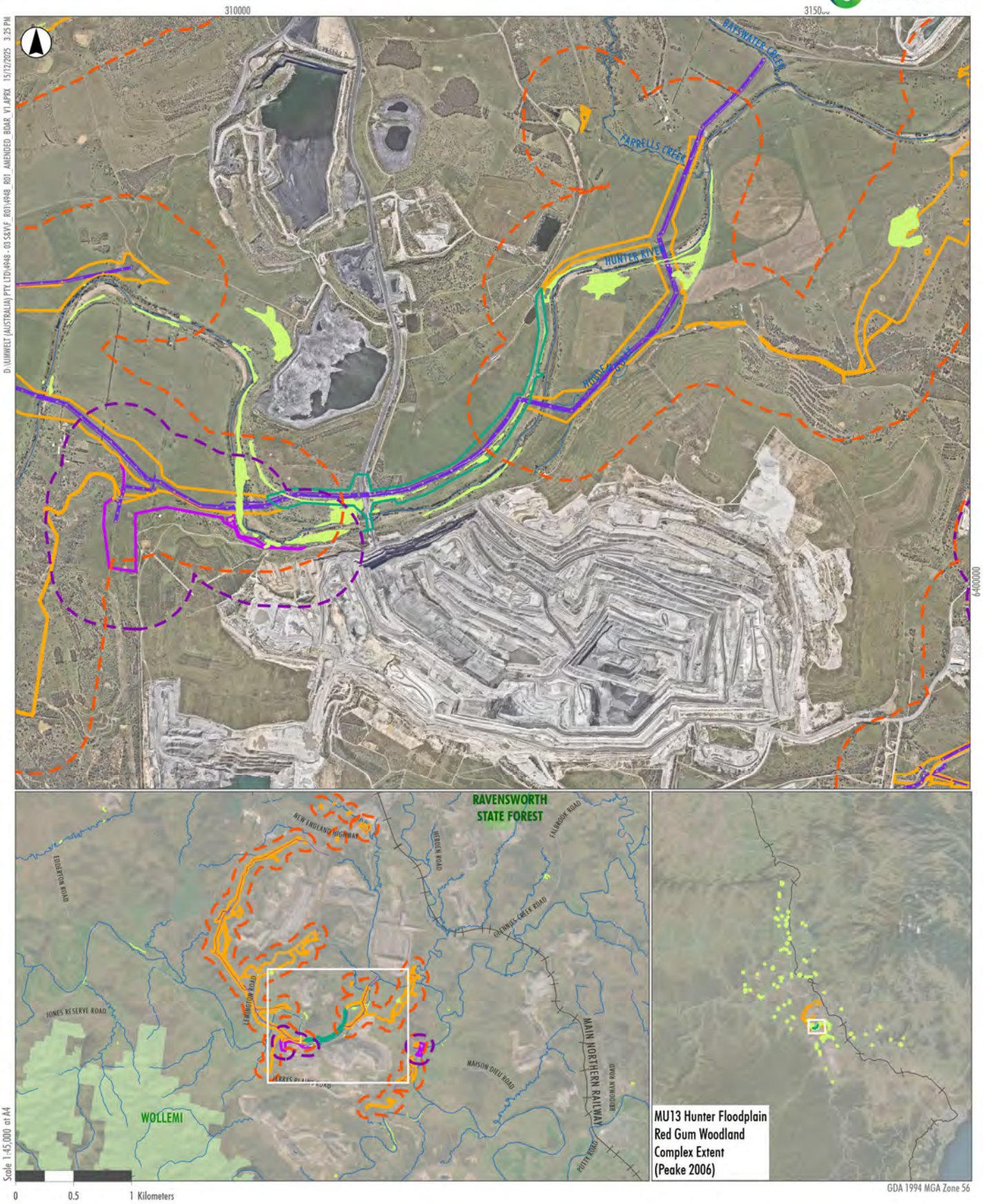
As per the VI scores of the PCT4089 vegetation zones that conform to the EEC in the Development Footprints, the *Moderate* condition of PCT4089 (VZ13) would be considered in relatively good condition as it contains relatively intact canopy, midstorey and understorey strata with relatively low/moderate weed abundance. The *Low to Moderate* condition of PCT4089 (VZ14) is a highly modified version of VZ13 with a sparse canopy cover of *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and dominance of the midstorey and understorey with weeds. This is reflected in the low VI score, particularly for species diversity. Despite this, due to the presence of characteristic canopy species, this zone conforms to the EEC.

Noting the potential for an SAII on the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*, in addition to the offsets proposed as part of the Project's biodiversity offset strategy, HVO has identified an area of land approximately 6.6 ha in size that would be subject to measures to restore this EEC through revegetation and management. This would result in a net gain for this community, and provide a higher level of protection to adjacent areas of this EEC. This area of land would be incorporated into the HVO RRGRRS that would be revised should the Project be approved (refer to Section 9.2 for more detail).

Key target actions that are likely to contribute to the improvement of the EEC in this area, as outlined in the current HVO RRGRRS and are proposed to continue and include:

- Fencing and access control: Establish and maintain fencing to exclude stock and support the expansion of the Red Gum EEC over time.
- Passive regeneration: Passive regeneration actions will be carried out to support the natural recruitment of river red gums. This includes removal of stock, restriction of access by stock, vehicles and people, weeding and control of feral animals.
- Assisted revegetation: Assisted regeneration is necessary to establish a diverse, native understorey and groundcover in the Red Gum EEC. This includes supplementary planting of native grasses, forbs and shrubs tubestock and seeds. It may also include ripping the soil and weed control.
- Weed and pest control: Implementation of an appropriate weed and pest control program, with selection of targeted species informed by the results of ecological monitoring.
- Ecological Monitoring: Design and implement an updated ecological monitoring program that will assess the success of the rehabilitation and restoration strategy going forward, as well as inform ongoing management actions.

The ongoing implementation of the measures within the RRGRRS will ensure the continued improvement of these areas. The measures in the HVO RRGRRS have been refined and updated based on the results of almost 20 years of targeted monitoring which has demonstrated the success or otherwise of these measures. The demonstrated success of restoration in areas proximate to the 6.6 ha proposed for restoration indicates that HVO has the capacity to successfully restore this community at this location.



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- 500m North Buffer
- 500m North Buffer
- Potential Extent of Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC in the locality
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks
- State Forest

FIGURE 6.5

Potential Serious and Irreversible Impacts – Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025), ESRI Basemap Data source: NSW DFSI (2024), Peake 2006, HVO River Red Gum Areas, Umwelt (2022) HVO Project vegetation mapping.

6.4.2 Threatened Micro-Bat Species

The BDAR does not require further assessment of SAII entity microbats if the Accredited Assessor determines that there is not going to be an impact on breeding habitat of the candidate SAII bat species, (DPIE 2019). For the reasons set out below, as the Accredited Assessor has determined that there will not be an impact on the breeding habitat of the candidate SAII bat species, the BDAR does not require an assessment on these SAII species.

Two candidate SAII bat species were recorded during the surveys for the assessment as outlined in **Table 6.10**.

Table 6.10 SAII Principles for Recorded Microbats

SAII Principle	Applicable?	
	Large-eared pied bat	Little bent-winged bat
The impact will cause a further decline of a species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to be in a rapid rate of decline.	-	-
The impact will further reduce the population size of the species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to have a very small population size.	-	-
The impact is made on the habitat of the species or ecological community that is currently observed, estimated, inferred or reasonably suspected to have a very limited geographic distribution.	-	-
The impacted species or ecological community is unlikely to respond to measures to improve its habitat and vegetation integrity and therefore its members are not replaceable.	✓	✓

6.4.2.1 Large-eared Pied Bat

The *'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats NSW guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method* (DPIE 2021) states that potential breeding habitat is "*All potential habitat on the subject land where the subject land is within 100 metres of caves, scarps, cliffs, rock overhangs and disused mines*." The Project will not have any direct impacts on irreplaceable habitat features like karst, caves, cliffs, crevices, and other formations that are essential for cave-dependent bat species such as the large-eared pied bat, or any habitat within 100 m of these features. The broader HVO mining area is not known to support mine shafts or workings, being an open cut mine. While it is noted that the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC) includes "derelict concrete buildings" in the general notes section, these details are not included in the Habitat Constraint section of the TBDC or in the formal 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats - NSW guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method (DPIE 2021). Umwelt is not aware of published literature that identifies buildings as suitable breeding habitat for the species. While the species may roost in habitats other than caves and clifflines, it is unlikely that maternity colonies would occur within building structures.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth Conservation Advice (DCCEEW 2023) for *Chalinolobus dwyeri* provides information on the specific habitat conditions required for suitable breeding habitat for the species:

"*The structure of maternity roosts appears to be very specific, and the number of known maternity roosts is small (3–6). Caves need to have indentations in the roof and be high and deep enough to allow juvenile bats to learn to fly inside. Roosting bats cluster in the indentations, which most likely allow the capture of heat. These physical characteristics are uncommon in the landscape and their scarcity poses another limiting factor in the distribution of the large-eared pied bat (Pennay 2008).*"

The relevant SAII Principle for this species is the lack of responsiveness to measures to improve its habitat and VI (Principle 4). The features of suitable maternity roosts for the large-eared pied bat such as caves and clifflines cannot be re-created and are considered irreplaceable. As outlined in the 'Species credit threatened bats and their habitats' (DPIE 2021), any potential SAII for this species is related to impacts to its breeding habitat only and therefore requires a focus on any impacts to the irreplaceable aspect of the habitat, which is the physical structures containing the maternity roosts (e.g. caves and cliffs). No caves or cliffs were identified within the Development Footprint and therefore no irreplaceable breeding habitat will be impacted by the Project.

In the absence of any published literature that identifies buildings as suitable breeding habitat, it is considered that there is no potential for breeding habitat for the large-eared pied bat to occur within old buildings in the Development Footprint. A SAII assessment is not required for large-eared pied bat as the habitat constraint related to SAII impacts is not present within, or in proximity to, the Development Footprint. The requirements of Section 9.1 of the BAM are met for this species in Section 6.4 of the BDAR.

6.4.2.2 Little Bent-winged Bat

The *'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats NSW guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method* (DPIE 2021) states that potential breeding habitat for little bent-winged bat is "*Caves, tunnels, mines or other structures known or suspected to be used by M. australis including species records in the NSW BioNet Atlas with microhabitat code 'IC – in cave'; observation type code 'E nest-roost'; with numbers of individuals >500; or from the scientific literature*". No records occur in, or within proximity to, the Development Footprint in the NSW BioNet Atlas with microhabitat code 'IC– in cave'; observation type code 'E nest-roost'; with numbers of individuals >500; or indicated from the scientific literature. The records of the species following anabat detection surveys undertaken during this assessment did not indicate large numbers or intense activity usually associated with roosting or breeding colonies. Umwelt is not aware of any scientific literature that would lead the assessor to consider actively used buildings and structures within the Development Footprint to be suspected of containing roosting or breeding little bent-winged bat. As per the TBDC, foraging habitat is broad ranging but breeding habitat is highly specific.

The SAII nomination for little bent-winged bat noted that "*The species is restricted to one threat-defined location at Willi Willi Caves Nature Reserve*" being the only maternity colony known in NSW. The species has very specific temperature and humidity requirements for maternity / breeding cave roosts. It is therefore highly unlikely that there is active breeding habitat for this species within either the natural habitat on site, or in the disused or used buildings in the Development Footprints due to these specific requirements.

Similar to the large-eared pied bat, the relevant SAII Principle for this species is the lack of responsiveness to measures to improve its habitat and VI (Principle 4). The features of suitable maternity roosts for the little bent winged-bat such as caves and clifflines cannot be re-created and are considered irreplaceable. As outlined in the '*Species credit threatened bats and their habitats'* (DPIE 2021), any potential SAII for this species is related to impacts to its breeding habitat only and therefore requires a focus on any impacts to the irreplaceable aspect of the habitat, which is the physical structures containing the maternity roosts (e.g. caves).

As per the above, there is no breeding habitat for these species in the Development Footprint and therefore no SAII assessment is required. The requirements of Section 9.1 of the BAM are met for this species in Section 6.4 of the BDAR.

6.5 Uncertain Impacts

There are no uncertain impacts predicted to occur as a result of the Project. It is considered that the potential impacts associated with the Project are well known, as outlined in the sections above, and particularly noting the history of mining and similar operations in the Hunter Valley.

HVO has an existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan which includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions, many of which are specifically proposed in **Section 5.3** of this report. This includes specific monitoring, annual review processes and updating of plans on a regular basis to ensure best practice mitigation and improvements once new information is available or changed circumstances arise.

7.0 Impact Summary

7.1 Impacts Not Requiring Assessment

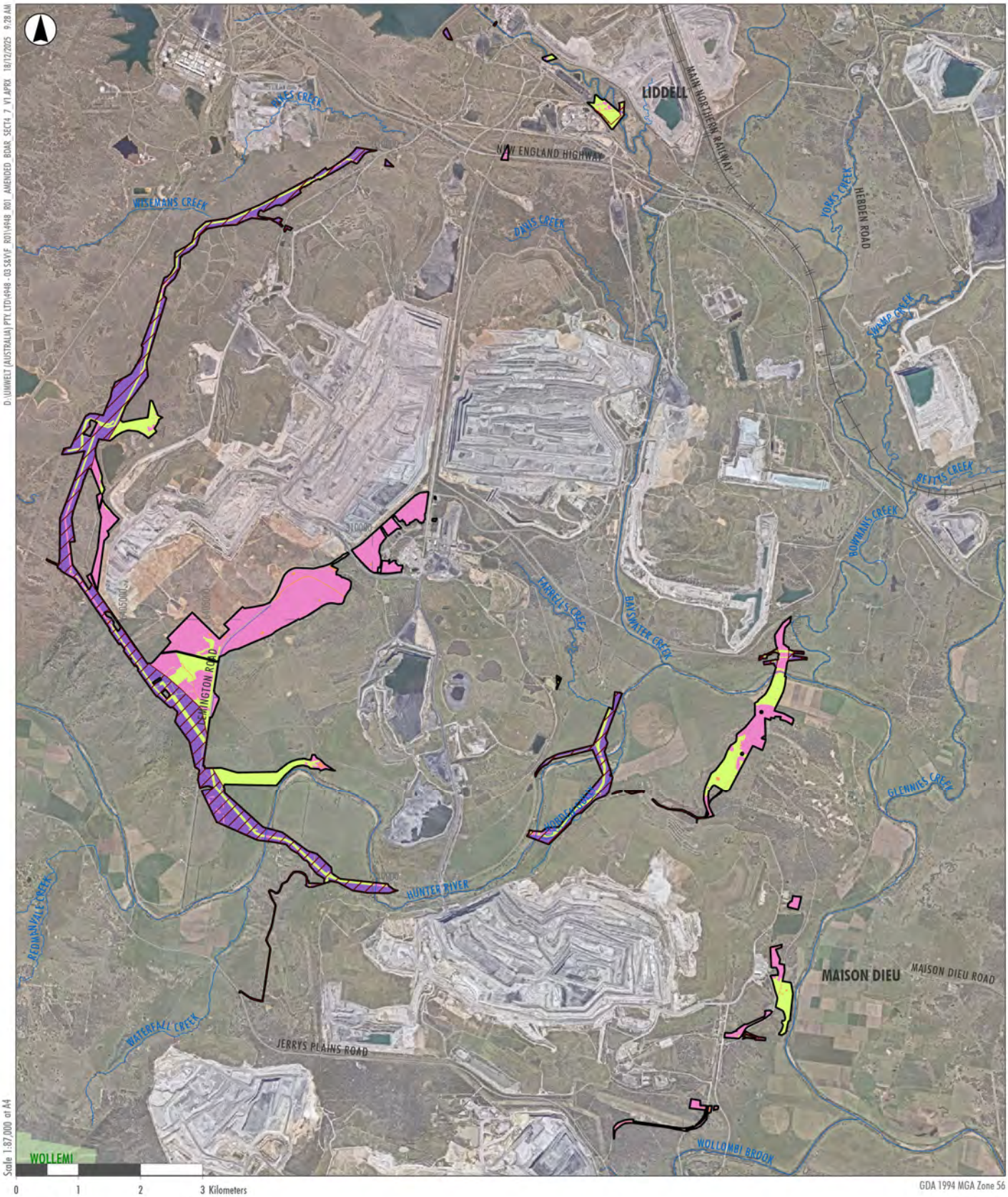
Impacts not requiring further assessment under the BAM include areas of land without native vegetation. The Development Footprints contain approximately 25.2 ha of cleared land (containing disturbed land and dams) that will be impacted as a result of the Project. This impact does not require further assessment under the BAM (other than for prescribed impacts).

Table 7.1 summarises and **Figure 7.1A** and **Figure 7.1B** illustrate these areas in the Development Footprints.

Section 2.3 discusses the areas of mine rehabilitation located in already approved disturbance areas, which are not within the Development Footprints and do not require assessment.

Table 7.1 Impacts Not Requiring Assessment

Areas Not Requiring Assessment	Area (ha)	
	HVO North	HVO South
Cleared land (non-vegetated, roads, infrastructure)	20.9	1.6
Waterbodies/dams	2.6	0.1



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Wider Easement Area - no impacts currently proposed
- Railway Line
- Road
- Drainage Line
- National Parks

Offset

- Areas not requiring assessment
- No impact proposed
- Impacts that do not require offset (below offset threshold)
- Residual Impacts that require offsets

FIGURE 7.1A

HVO North – Summary of Impacts and Offsets Required

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

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Scale 1:87,000 at A4



Legend

- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line

Offset

- Areas not requiring assessment
- No impact proposed
- Impacts that do not require offset (below offset threshold)
- Residual Impacts that require offsets

FIGURE 7.1B

HVO South - Summary of Impacts and Offsets Required

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

7.2 Impacts Not Requiring Offset

Impacts on native vegetation not requiring offsets under the BAM include native vegetation that has a VI score of:

- <15, where the PCT is representative of an EEC or a CEEC
- <17, where the PCT is associated with threatened species habitat (as represented by ecosystem credits) or represents a vulnerable ecological community
- <20, where the PCT does not represent a TEC and is not associated with threatened species habitat.

Three vegetation zones identified within the Development Footprint have a VI score lower than the stated thresholds and consequently, do not require offsetting. The vegetation zones not requiring an offset are outlined in **Table 7.2** and illustrated in **Figure 7.1A** and **Figure 7.1B.**

Table 7.2 Vegetation Zones Not Requiring Offset

Veg Zone	Plant Community Type Condition	Area (ha)		Vegetation Integrity Score	Credits Required
		HVO North	HVO South		
7.	3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*	203.5	7.1	13.9	0
8.	3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland *Exotic Grassland*	120.7	21.7	12.9	0
17.	4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest *Exotic Grassland*	59.0	13.3	9.3	0
	Total	**383.2**	**42.1**	**-**	**0**

7.3 Residual Impacts Requiring Offset

The vegetation zones that require offsetting as part of the Project are outlined in **Table 7.3** and **Table** 7.5 and illustrated in **Figure 7.1A** and **Figure 7.1B**. Credits for species-credit species are outlined in **Table 7.4** and species polygons are shown in **Figure 4.4** to **Figure 4.9.**

VI score losses are variable between different stages of the Project, due to the extent of management zones in these stages. Refer to credit reports in **Annexure B-1** for more detail.

Table 7.3 Vegetation Zones Requiring Offset and Ecosystem Credits

Vegetation Zone No. and Condition	HVO North			HVO South		
	VI Score	Area (ha)	Credits	VI Score	Area (ha)	Credits
PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland						
Conforming to Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland EEC						
1. *Moderate*	57.9	64.8	1876	57.9	0.5	14
2. *Thinned Woodland*	53.8	9.6	254	53.8	1.9	51
3. *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*	22.1	3.4	38	-	0.0	0
4. *Plantation*	47.0	1.3	28	-	0.0	0
Non-threatened vegetation						
4. *Plantation*	47.0	1.1	23	-	0.1	2
5. *Scattered Regeneration*	46.5	43.0	967	-	0.0	0
6. *Cooba Woodland*	47.8	12.3	291	47.8	0.2	5
9. *Bulloak Variant*	41.4	32.7	677	-	0.0	0
TOTAL for PCT 3431	**-**	**168.2**	**4154**	**-**	**2.7**	**72**
PCT 3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest						
Conforming to Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland VEC						
10. *Moderate*	88.1	7.1	313	-	0.0	0
TOTAL for PCT 3485	**-**	**7.1**	**313**	**-**	**0.0**	**0**
PCT 4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest						
Non-threatened vegetation						
11. *Moderate*	69.8	2.2	65	-	0.0	0
TOTAL for PCT 4015	**-**	**2.2**	**65**	**-**	**0.0**	**0**
PCT 4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest						
Non-threatened vegetation						
12. *Moderate*	34.6	1.8	39	-	0.0	0
TOTAL for PCT 4081	**-**	**1.8**	**39**	**-**	**0.0**	**0**
PCT 4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest						
Conforming to Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC						
13. *Moderate*	65.0	1.0	33	-	0.0	0
14. *Low to Moderate*	29.4	0.06	1	-	0.0	0
Non-threatened vegetation						
14. *Low to Moderate*	29.4	0.07	1	-	0.0	0
15. *Cooba Woodland*	54.5	0.1	3	54.5	0.6	20

Vegetation Zone No. and Condition	HVO North			HVO South		
	VI Score	Area (ha)	Credits	VI Score	Area (ha)	Credits
16. *DNG*	21.8	1.0	9	-	0.0	0
TOTAL for PCT 4089	**-**	**2.2**	**47**	**-**	**0.6**	**20**
Total	**-**	**181.5**	**4618**		**3.3**	**92**

Note: Vegetation zones 7, 8 and 17 are not included in this table as they do not meet the minimum offset threshold as outlined in **Section 7.2**.

Table 7.4 Species-credit Species Requiring Offset

Species	Biodiversity Risk Weighting	HVO North		HVO South	
		Area (ha)	Credits	Area (ha)	Credits
southern myotis *Myotis macropus*	2.0	78.6	2024	2.2	59
Eucalyptus camaldulensis – population in the Hunter catchment	2.0	0.8	6	0.7	8
brush-tailed phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa*	2.0	123.3	3331	2.5	67
Hunter Valley delma *Delma vescolineata*	2.0	224.9	2567	8.7	106
masked owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*	2.0	57.7	552	18.1	158

Table 7.5 Impacts and Credits Associated with the Additional River Red Gum Disturbance Area

Species	Biodiversity Risk Weighting	River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area	
		Area (ha)	Credits
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC	-	0.15	5
Eucalyptus camaldulensis –population in the Hunter catchment	2.0	0.4	11

7.4 Offsets for Indirect and Prescribed Impacts

Table 7.6 below outlines the indirect and prescribed impacts considered likely to occur as a result of the Project and whether additional offset strategies are suitable or proposed for these impacts.

Table 7.6 Offset Measures for Indirect and Prescribed Impacts

Impact	Biodiversity Feature Impacted	Offsets Proposed
Indirect Impacts		
Drawdown impacts	River red gum endangered population *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* Other GDEs	As no significant impacts are expected to occur in relation to drawdown impacts, no specific offset measures are proposed.
Edge effects (weeds, light emissions, noise, dust, rubbish dumping along Lemington Road realignment)	All adjacent plant communities and locally-occurring threatened species	As discussed in **Section 6.2**, the majority of indirect impacts associated with edge effects are likely to be captured in the proposed Development Footprint, as the footprint allows for appropriate buffers around the actual area proposed for direct impacts and clearance. No additional offsets proposed.
Cumulative impacts of HVO North and South	All locally-occurring plant communities and threatened species.	The cumulative impacts of HVO North and South are captured with the combined credit assessments. No additional offsets proposed.
Prescribed Impacts		
Impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity	Ground-dwelling species such as spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale	The proposed rehabilitation strategy outlined in **Section 5.6.1** and Appendix F of the EIS is proposed to result in long-term connectivity around the HVO Complex. The Project will be undertaken in stages, which will allow the continued rehabilitation of decommissioned areas and reduction in immediate loss of habitats in the Development Footprints. No additional offsets are proposed.
Impacts of development on water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes – drawdown impacts	River red gum endangered population *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* Other GDEs	As no significant impacts are expected to occur in relation to drawdown impacts, no specific offset measures are proposed.

Impact	Biodiversity Feature Impacted	Offsets Proposed
Impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species – Lemington Road realignment	Ground-dwelling species such as spotted-tailed quoll and brush-tailed phascogale	Mitigation and minimisation measures are proposed in **Section 5.6.2** to address the impact of vehicle strike on local fauna following the establishment of the Lemington Road realignment. Offsetting this impact (the extent of which is not currently measurable) is unlikely to appropriately alleviate the impacts. Road kill has been recorded along many of the major road networks in the locality (refer to **Figure 6.4**) and is known to occur across all road networks in NSW. It is considered that the mitigation measures outlined in **Section 5.6.2** provide practical measures for reducing this impact as a result of the Project. No additional offsets are proposed.

8.0 Biodiversity Credit Report

The full Biodiversity Credit Reports for HVO North and HVO South are included in **Annexure B.**

Table 8.1 below provides a summary of the ecosystem and species credits and their credit classes required to offset the Project under the "Like-for-like" rules under the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme. The credits are divided into offset areas that must include hollow-bearing trees (HBTs) and areas that do not require HBTs. A total credit requirement is also provided.

Under the like-for-like rules, all ecosystem credit offsets are required to be located in the Hunter, Ellerston, Karuah Manning, Kerrabee, Liverpool Range, Peel, Tomalla, Upper Hunter, Wyong or Yengo IBRA subregions or in any IBRA subregion that is within 100 km of the outer edge of the Development Footprints. Species credits are able to be offset in any IBRA subregion in NSW.

Table 8.1 Ecosystem and Species Credits Required to Offset the Project

Name	Credit Class	HVO North		HVO South		TOTAL
		With HBTs	Without HBTs	With HBTs	Without HBTs	
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland						
Conforming to *Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC*	Any PCT conforming to *Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC*. This includes PCTs: 1603, 1605, 1691, 1692, 3314, 3431, 3485	2168	28	65	0	**2261**
Non-TEC	Hunter-Macleay Dry Sclerophyll Forests ≥ 70% - <90% cleared group (including Tier 2 or higher threat status). This includes PCTs: 3431, 3442, 3446	677	1281	0	7	**1965**
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest						
Conforming to *Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion VEC*	Any PCT in the *Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion VEC*. May include PCTs 1176, 1655, 3490.	313	0	0	0	**313**
4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest						
Non-TEC	Coastal Floodplain Wetlands - ≥ 70% - <90% cleared group (including Tier 2 or higher threat status). This includes PCTs: 4015, 4023, 4024, 4025, 4026, 4027, 4029, 4034, 4035, 4036, 4037, 4041, 4042, 4044, 4046, 4049, 4050, 4051, 4055, 4059	0	65	0	0	**65**
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest						
Non-TEC	Eastern Riverine Forests - ≥ 90% cleared group (including Tier 1 or higher threat status). This includes PCTs: 42, 4081	0	39	0	0	**39**

Name	Credit Class	HVO North		HVO South		TOTAL
		With HBTs	Without HBTs	With HBTs	Without HBTs	
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest						
Conforming to *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC*	Any PCT conforming to *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions VEC* This includes PCTs: 42, 1698, 4089	33	1	0	0	**34**
Non-TEC	Inland Riverine Forests ≥ 90% cleared group (including Tier 1 or higher threat status). This includes PCTs: 4088, 4089	3	10	20	0	**33**
Species Credits						
Eucalyptus camaldulensis – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment species credits anywhere in NSW.	6		8		**14**
Hunter Valley delma *Delma vescolineata*	Hunter Valley delma species credits anywhere in NSW.	2567		106		**2673**
southern myotis *Myotis macropus*	Southern myotis species credits anywhere in NSW.	2024		59		**2083**
brush-tailed phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa*	Brush-tailed phascogale species credits anywhere in NSW.	3331		67		**3398**
masked owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*	Masked owl species credits anywhere in NSW.	552		158		**710**

8.1 Staged Credit Requirements

HVO proposes to stage the retirement of credits as clearing of the Development Footprint occurs to be consistent with the staging of the Rehabilitation Management Plan for the Project. Broadly, the stages of the Project includes the following:

- **Stage 1** – areas to be disturbed associated with the additional disturbance areas (i.e. additional mining area, Lemington Road realignment and infrastructure construction). Stage 1 activities will generally be undertaken in the first few years post approval (HVO North and HVO South).
- **Stage 2** – disturbance required associated with the HVLP product stockpile extension (if constructed) (HVO North only).

Table 8.2 and **Table 8.3** outlines the credit requirement for the relevant stages of the HVO North and HVO South Projects, respectively. **Table 8.4** shows the credit retirement required for the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area. **Figure 8.1A** and **Figure 8.1B** show the staged impacts for the Project.

Annexure B-1 contains the credit summary reports by Project stage.

Table 8.2 HVO North – Staged Credit Retirement Requirements

Biodiversity Feature	Stage 1		Stage 2		TOTAL HVO NORTH CREDITS
	Area (ha)	Credits	Area (ha)	Credits	
TEC Ecosystem Credits					
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	1.1	34	0.0	0	34
Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion VEC	7.1	313	0.0	0	313
Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	77.8	2160	1.3	36	2196
Non-TEC Ecosystem Credits					
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	89.0	1956	0.1	2	1958
4015 - Central Hunter Riparian Forest	1.7	53	0.5	12	65
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	1.8	39	0.0	0	39
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	1.1	13	0.0	0	13
Species Credits					
Eucalyptus camaldulensis – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	0.8	6	0.0	0	6
Hunter Valley delma *Delma vescolineata*	224.6	2559	0.3	8	2567

Biodiversity Feature	Stage 1		Stage 2		TOTAL HVO NORTH CREDITS
	Area (ha)	Credits	Area (ha)	Credits	
southern myotis *Myotis macropus*	77.5	1990	1.1	34	2024
brush-tailed phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa*	121.5	3277	1.8	54	3331
masked owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*	57.7	552	0.0	0	552

Table 8.3 HVO South – Staged Credit Retirement Requirements

Biodiversity Feature	Stage 1	
	Area (ha)	Credits
TEC Ecosystem Credits		
Central Hunter Grey Box—Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	2.3	65
Non-TEC Ecosystem Credits		
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	0.3	7
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	0.6	20
Species Credits		
Eucalyptus camaldulensis – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	0.7	8
Hunter Valley delma *Delma vescolineata*	8.7	106
southern myotis *Myotis macropus*	2.2	59
brush-tailed phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa*	2.5	67
masked owl *Tyto novaehollandiae*	18.1	158

Table 8.4 River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area – Credit Retirement Requirements*

Biodiversity Feature	RRG Additional Disturbance Area	
	Area (ha)	Credits
TEC Ecosystem Credits		
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions EEC	0.15	5
Species Credits		
Eucalyptus camaldulensis – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	0.4	11

*Credit reports in Annexure B for the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area have been separated into impacts associated with the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* (00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064423) and river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) (00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064428). Ecosystem credits quoted in the river red gum BAM-C case should be disregarded.

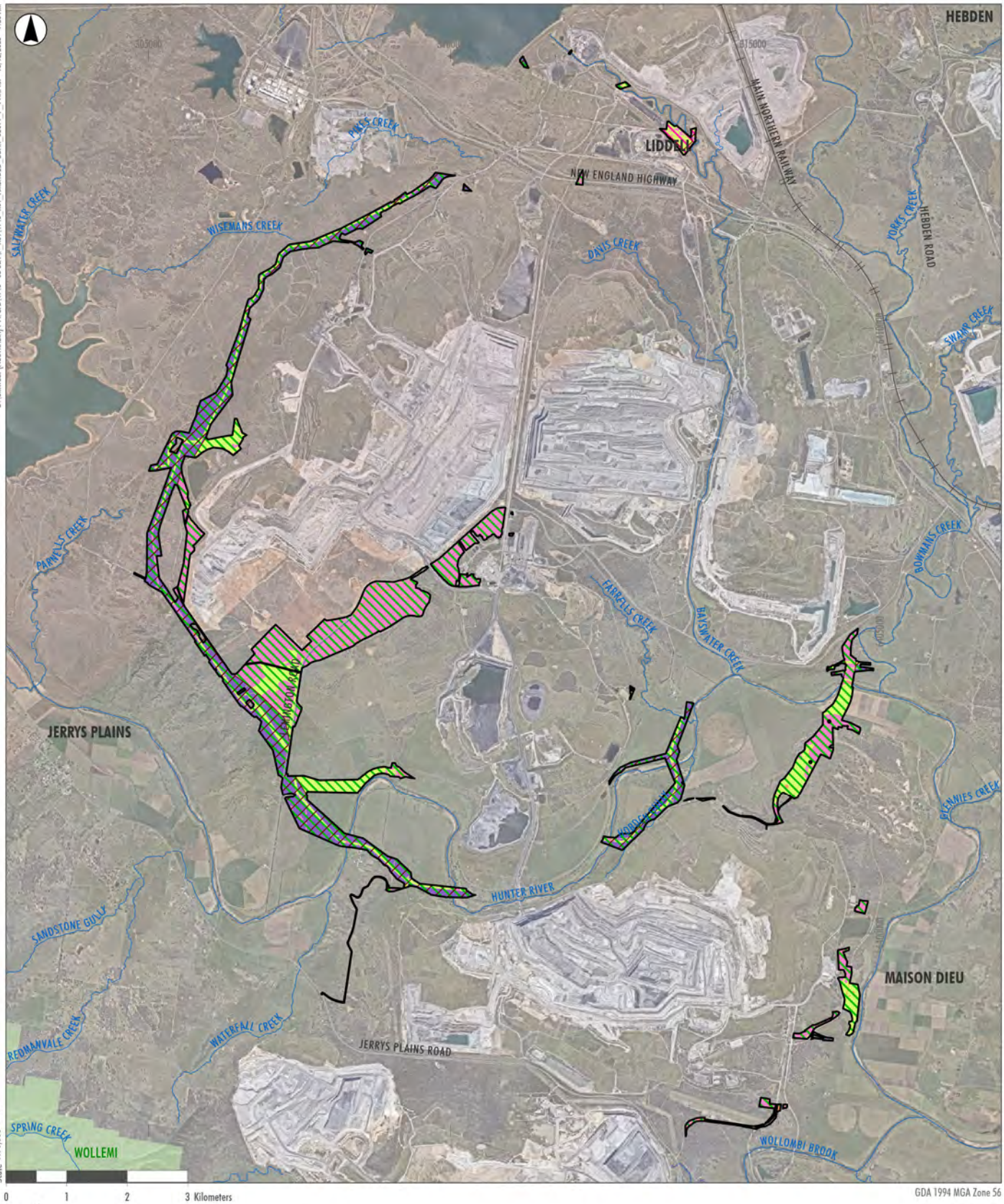


FIGURE 8.1A

HVO North Proposed Project and Offset Staging

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025)Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO South Development Footprint
- Road
- Drainage Line

Offset

- Areas not requiring assessment
- No impact proposed
- Impacts that do not require offset (below offset threshold)
- Residual Impacts that require offsets

Proposed Offset Staging

- Stage 1

FIGURE 8.1B

HVO South Proposed Project and Offset Staging

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025)Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

9.0 Biodiversity Offset Strategy

HVO is committed to delivering a biodiversity offset strategy that appropriately compensates for the unavoidable loss of ecological values as a result of the Project. As discussed in **Section 5.0**, HVO has, where possible, altered the Project to avoid and minimise biodiversity impacts in the Project planning stage, and a range of impact mitigation strategies have been included to mitigate the impact on ecological values prior to the consideration of offsetting requirements. The offset requirements for the Project, as calculated in accordance with the BAM are identified in **Section 8.0** of this BDAR.

Yancoal and Glencore, as participants in the HVO JV, have a strong record in preparing and implementing biodiversity offset strategies that address significant biodiversity matters and adequately counterbalance impacts on them. HVO is committed to delivering a biodiversity offset strategy that appropriately compensates for the unavoidable loss of ecological values as a result of the Project. The offset strategy will be implemented in consideration of the process outlined in the BC Act and the final composition of the offset strategy may evolve as the Project progresses.

A biodiversity offset strategy will be developed in consultation with the DPHI and based on the credits required to be retired to offset the impacts of the Project as specified in **Table 8.1**. The biodiversity offset strategy will be established in accordance with the offset options available under the BC Act and BC Regulation including:

- land based offsets (HVO would retire the required number and class of credits determined in accordance with the BDAR and the offset rules in the BC Regulation through the establishment of new Stewardship Sites (and the subsequent retirement of credits) or by retiring credits from existing Stewardship Sites)
- purchasing credits from the market, and/or
- paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.

It is HVO's intention that the offset strategy for the Project will focus on purchasing credits on the market both locally and regionally as per the like-for-like offsetting rules outlined in the BC Regulation as the primary means to meet offset requirements for the Project. HVO is currently actively seeking the purchase of biodiversity credits on the market. Where suitable, other avenues such as paying into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund, which contributes to regionally strategic offset outcomes will also be undertaken.

HVO has investigated land-based offsetting options targeting the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC subject to impacts in Stage 1 of the Project (refer to **Section 8.0**). This is outlined in **Section 9.1** below.

9.1 Desktop Offset Investigations

Umwelt has undertaken a detailed desktop review of HVO landholdings to understand the suitability of habitats in the locality of the Project for the key biodiversity features subject to residual impacts requiring offsetting. This was undertaken across approximately 1,600 ha and included a review of the following resources:

- State Vegetation Type Map (DPE 2022) Upper Hunter v1.0. VIS_ID 4894.
- HVO Continuation Project Vegetation Mapping (this assessment).

- Vegetation mapping for the United/Wambo Project (Umwelt 2019).
- Peake (2006) The Vegetation of the Central Hunter Valley, NSW.
- Atlas of NSW Wildlife (DPHI 2025a).

The sites investigated include areas likely containing *Hunter Floodplain Redgum Woodland EEC*, *Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland EEC* and suitable habitat for southern myotis, brush-tailed phascogale and potentially the Hunter Valley delma. In some cases, the sites are locational to existing offset sites established for previously approved projects, which would provide a long-term habitat connectivity gain in the region. These sites have been identified as High, Medium or Low priority for future investigations.

On-ground investigations will continue to further refine and determine the suitability of these sites for inclusion in the HVO Project biodiversity offset strategy.

9.2 Addressing SAII for *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*

The Project is currently proposing to impact approximately 1.2 ha of the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* (1.06 ha in HVO North and 0.15 ha in the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area). The EEC is also listed as a potentially Serious and Irreversible Impact (SAII) entity under the BOS. Following substantial efforts to avoid and mitigate impacts through Project design and site location selection (refer to **Section 5.1**), this impact is acknowledged as a key impact on a restricted TEC. HVO has been proactive in seeking a suitable local offset or additional measures to mitigate impacts to the EEC that adds to the conservation of an existing patch of *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* as well as the management and improvement of surrounding land to restore this community in the locality.

Accordingly, HVO has identified an area approximately 6.6 ha in size that will require restoration of the EEC adjacent to a remnant patch of river red gum with areas of existing supplementary plantings. This area will be in addition to any credit obligations for the Project.

HVO propose to review and update the existing HVO RRGRRS (HVO 2025) to include the additional Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site illustrated on **Figure 9.1**.

9.2.1 Site Inspection

On 11 April 2024, Travis Peake (National Ecology Lead) and Adam Cavallaro (Principal Restoration Ecologist) from Umwelt inspected the proposed restoration site which included:

- General walk across and around the nominal site area, including driving around areas proximate to the site, where possible.
- Assessment of general existing fauna habitat features, common and dominant flora species and weed species.
- General assessment of landform, soil and access for management.
- General assessment of adjoining areas and their likely influence on site management and restoration opportunities.

- The area assessed comprised an existing 'Priority Site', as part of the HVO RRGRRS, and an area adjoining this (Proposed Restoration Site). Broadly, both of these areas occur on the top of the main floodplain terrace, with minor flood runners present.
- The Priority Site is being managed at a low level of intervention and this comprises:
    - Weed management.
    - Slashing.
    - Selective planting of river red gum saplings (low density). In addition, several small (approx. 2 m x 2 m) fenced clumps of native trees and shrubs have been previously protected.

An additional site inspection was carried out on 2 June 2025 by Kate Connolly (Ecology NSW Manager) and Adam Cavallaro (Principal Restoration Ecologist) to assess the conditions of vegetation within the proposed restoration areas and the likelihood of success for the proposed restoration works as requested by BCS in June 2024.

9.2.2 Vegetation Condition of Proposed Restoration Site

The proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site was inspected and a rapid assessment of the vegetation conditions carried out with a formal BAM floristic plot collected to demonstrate the general condition. There are three distinct vegetation condition zones across the floodplain which are proposed to be restored to the EEC, these zones being:

- PCT 4089 Native grassland (5.7 ha)
- PCT 4089 Exotic mixed vegetation (0.7 ha)
- PCT 4089 Revegetation (0.2 ha).

As determined in the previous site inspection, the proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site comprises a predominantly cleared floodplain supporting largely weeping grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) Couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) and slender bamboo grass (*Austrostipa verticillata*) (refer to **Photo 9.1**), with a smaller part of the area comprising a range of exotic and native groundcover species. It does not support any notable tree cover apart from a small number of river oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) and a single river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). A description of each of the vegetation conditions zones has been provided in the following sub-sections.

9.2.2.1 PCT 4089 Native Grassland

The native grassland areas are the dominant vegetation within the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site. There are two variants of the grassland that are separated based on areas of where grazing has been excluded (refer to **Photo 9.1**) and areas of recent grazing (refer to **Photo** 9.2). The species composition between the two variants was observed to be relative similar with a high presence of slender bamboo grass (*Austrostipa verticillata*) in the grazed paddocks (possibly due to the low palatability of this species to cattle).

A review of the floristic plot data indicated 13 of the 20 species observed are native with 10 species characteristic of the EEC. Key species recorded include weeping grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) Couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), slender bamboo grass (*Austrostipa verticillata*), purple wiregrass (*Aristida ramosa*), poison pratia (*Lobelia concolor*), saltbush (*Einadia hastata*) and swamp dock (*Rumex brownii*).

All native species are groundcover species with a single shrub species *Rhagodia parabolica*. The native groundcover projected foliage cover (PFC) is approximately 75%. The native groundcover provides these areas with an ideal baseline to support any future restoration works by supporting native species that are consistent with the EEC and limit the spread and colonisation of weed species.

The main weed species observed in low density (<4% PFC) were a mix of low priority weed such as variegated thistle (*Silybum marianum*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) and the high threat weed (HTW) Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*). These species were scattered and not observed at a level that would significantly reduce the presences of the high native cover observed.

A section of the vegetation has recently been prepared for revegetation works with the groundlayer being treated with herbicides (refer to **Photo 9.1**).

9.2.2.2 PCT 4089 Exotic

There is a narrow band of vegetation that borders the native grassland along the top of the riverbank that is predominantly exotic vegetation. This vegetation was observed to contain exotic species such as Rhodes grass, Guinea grass (*Megathyrsus maximus*), balloon vine (*Cardiospermum grandiflorum*), *Galenia pubescens* and castor oil plant (*Ricinus communis*). Native groundcover species were observed at low density they include weeping grass (*Microlaena stipoides*), slender bamboo grass (*Austrostipa verticillata*) and couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) all characteristic species of the EEC. These areas do have overhanging native canopy species that include river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and River oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*). The close proximity to the native grassland areas will benefit the restoration of this area through native recruitment from the existing native groundcover.

9.2.2.3 PCT 4089 Revegetation

There is a small area of planted river red gum that are approximately 3–4 years of age. The understorey in the patch is consistent with the native grassland vegetation zone, with very few exotic species present at a density that would have a determinant impact to restoration of the existing river red gum individuals. This vegetation zone is an example of a small patch of revegetation that has been successful in re-establishing native canopy and retaining a predominantly native groundcover.



Photo 9.1 Proposed Restoration Site – Native Grassland Vegetation Zone



Photo 9.2 Proposed Restoration Site – Native Grassland Vegetation Zone (Grazed Variant)



Photo 9.3 Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site – Exotic Zone (right of the fence)

9.2.3 Comparison to the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* Final Determination

The previous section provides a high-level description of the vegetation proposed to be restored as the EEC. To ensure the proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Siteis a suitable candidate site to undertake the proposed works the following comparison to the EEC Final Determination (NSW Scientific Committee 2011b) has been provided to give the consent authority further certainty the restoration site is suitable and the appropriate and additional measures for the EEC can be considered adequately to eliminate the SAII on the EEC.

Table 9.1 Comparison of Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site to EEC Final Determination

NSW Final Determination for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC	Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site and adjacent Priority Sites
Occurs within the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	The proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site is located within the Sydney Basin Bioregion.
Occurs on floodplains and associated floodplain rises along the Hunter River and tributaries	The Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site is located on the floodplains and associated rises along the Hunter River, The Hunter River runs along the northern boundary of the Proposed Site.
Generally dominated by *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (river red gum) in combination with *Eucalyptus tereticornis* (forest red gum), *Eucalyptus melliodora* (yellow box)	The current location of the Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site only contains a single river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) in the south-west corner of the site. The site is surrounded by river red gum with a significant patch of large old remnant trees located directly adjacent to western boundary (refer to **Photo 9.4**), individuals along the northern boundary bordering the Hunter River and a

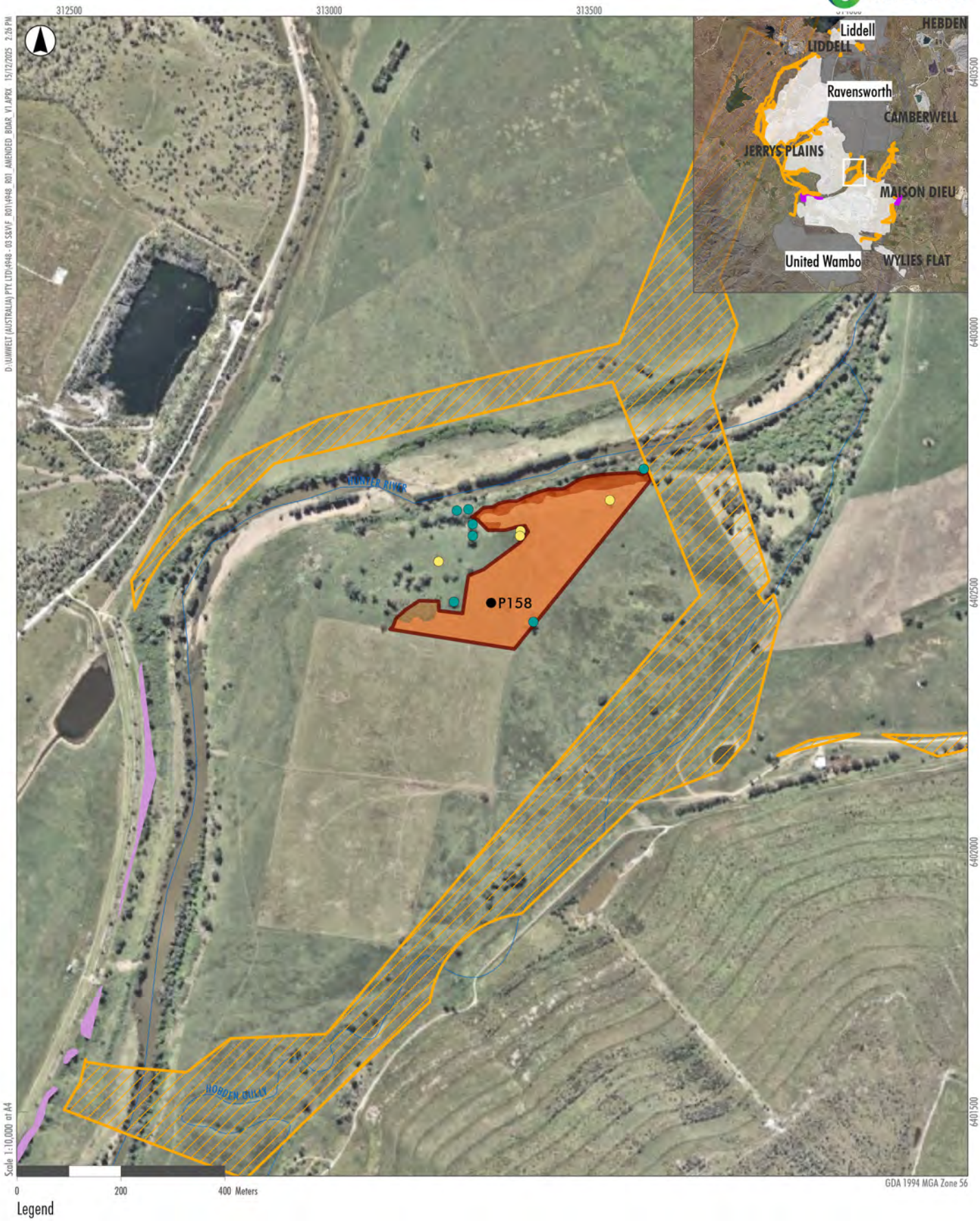
NSW Final Determination for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC	Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site and adjacent Priority Sites
and *Angophora floribunda* (rough-barked apple)	moderately aged patch 300 m to the east, all within a contiguous floodplain. In additional, the adjacent HVO priority site has been the target of on-going restoration work to increase the extent of the EEC with additional revegetation works focusing on the re-establishment of river red gum (refer to **Photo 9.5**).
Supports a reasonable proportion of species that are in the list of characteristic species for the EEC	A single floristic plot was carried out in the native grassland within the Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site. A total of 10 groundcover species characteristic of the EEC were recorded within the 400 m^2 plot. This represents 27% of species listed in the Final determination and does not include species such as the river red gum or River oak (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) recorded outside the plot which if included would increase the characteristic species 32%. Further survey or inventory of the 6.6 ha would likely see an increase in characteristic species.
Conclusion	The Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site contains species characteristic of the EEC and is located within landscape features described in the Final Determination. Combined with the location being adjacent to a patch of large old remnant river red gum it is likely the Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site will be suitable for the re-establishment of the EEC.



Photo 9.4 Successful Revegetation Works in Existing Priority Site Adjacent the Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site



Photo 9.5 Remnant Trees and Revegetation (Background) in Existing Priority Site



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Area (6.6ha)
- Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC
- River Oak
- River Red Gum
- BAM Plot
- Drainage Line

Vegetation Zone

- 4089 I Exotic
- 4089 I Grassland Native
- 4089 I Revegetation

FIGURE 9.1

Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Area

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2025)) Data source: NSW DFSI (2024)

9.2.4 Hunter Red Gum Woodland Restoration Measures

This site provides a reasonable baseline to commence restoration works and with a detailed management plan and schedule to improve and maintain the site it would result in the successful re-establishment of the EEC adjacent to the existing remnants. The presence of a primarily native groundcover is likely to reduce the effort required to prepare and maintain the site to re-establish a canopy and shrub layer. The groundlayer does represent a low to moderate diversity of characteristic species from the EEC but with ongoing management the diversity may increase through natural recruitment such that further augmentation of the groundlayer may not be required. There is capacity to increase diversity through the establishment of other characteristic canopy species such as yellow box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), river oak and rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*) and the inclusion of river red gum where this species is not present.

The adjacent HVO Priority Site has some existing canopy tree planting (refer to **Photo 9.3**) which demonstrates that with on-going management the proposed restoration of the site is likely to succeed in a similar manner as the existing revegetation works. In addition, the significant patch of old river red gum trees in relatively good condition, which support extensive hollows (refer to **Photo 9.4**) would provide further opportunity for recruitment of this species (the endangered population in the Hunter catchment) and provide protection to increase establishment of lower strata species commensurate with the EEC.

The additional measures to restore this EEC would also benefit the remnant patch of the EEC through revegetation and management would see an increase in the extent of the EEC (over time) in areas that without the help of revegetation would not be possible. It also provides an additional buffer to the remnant from edge effects.

The Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site is the adjacent land to the east of the remnant woodland and covers approximately 6 ha (refer to **Figure 9.1**). The aim would be to not only increase the extent of the EEC but through additional and appropriate measure:

- increase land management focus on the existing HVO priority site (Remnant and existing revegetation) above and beyond existing commitments
- protection and management of the additional area to the east (including revegetation)
- provide higher level of protection of a significant patch of mature river red gums and improve its resilience through revegetation and site management of the adjoining area to the east.

HVO propose to review and update the existing HVO RRGRRS to include the additional Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site illustrated on **Figure 9.1**. The RRGRS focuses on long term conservation gains for the community through improved condition and connectivity of habitat.

Key target actions that are likely to contribute to the improvement of the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC, as outlined in the current RRGRS and are proposed to continue include:

- Fencing and access control: Establish and maintain fencing to exclude stock and support the expansion of the EEC over time.
- Passive regeneration: Passive regeneration actions will be carried out to support the natural recruitment of river red gums. This includes removal of stock, restriction of access by stock, vehicles and people, weeding and control of feral animals.

- Assisted revegetation: Assisted regeneration is necessary to establish a diverse, native understorey and groundcover in the river red gum woodland. This includes supplementary planting of native grasses, forbs and shrubs tubestock and seeds. It may also include ripping the soil and weed control.
- Weed and pest control: Implementation of an appropriate weed and pest control program, with selection of targeted species informed by the results of ecological monitoring.
- Ecological Monitoring: Design and implement an updated ecological monitoring program that will assess the success of the rehabilitation and restoration strategy going forward, as well as inform ongoing management actions. This would include benchmarking success against references sites currently used for monitoring.
- The Restoration of the EEC will also contribute to increasing the population of river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) in the Hunter catchment which is listed as an endangered population under the BC Act.

The ongoing implementation of the measures within the RRGRRS will ensure the continued improvement of these areas. The measures in the HVO RRGRRS have been refined and updated based on the results of almost 20 years of targeted monitoring which has demonstrated the success or otherwise of these measures. The demonstrated success of restoration in areas proximate to the 6.6 ha proposed for restoration indicates that HVO has the capacity to successfully restore this community at the Proposed Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site.

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Annexure A

Minimum Information Requirements Checklist



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It is acknowledged that the Guidance for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report Template (DPE 2022) was released in April 2022. This BDAR was substantially progressed at the time of its release and is modelled on the minimum reporting and information requirements as outlined in Appendix K of the BAM (DPIE 2020a). For clarity, Table A.1 below provides a checklist of the components required and recommended in a BDAR as per Table 41 of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report Template.

Table A.1 Assessment of Compliance with BDAR Minimum Information Requirements

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
Introduction	**Chapters 2 and 3**	**Information**	
		Introduction to the biodiversity assessment including:	–
		☒ brief description of the proposal	**Section 1.1**
		☒ identification of subject land boundary, including: ☒ operational footprint ☒ construction footprint indicating clearing associated with temporary/ancillary construction facilities and infrastructure	**Section 1.3** **Section 1.4**
		☒ general description of the subject land	**Section 4.0**
		☒ sources of information used in the assessment, including reports and spatial data	**Section 1.7** **Section 3.1.1** **Section 4.1.1** **Section 4.1.3.3**
		☒ identification and justification for entering the BOS	**Section 1.6**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Map of the subject land boundary showing the final proposal footprint, including the construction footprint for any clearing associated with temporary/ancillary construction facilities and infrastructure	**Figure 1.3** **Figure 7.1A–B**
Landscape	**Section 3.1, Section 3.2 and Annexure E**	**Information**	
		Identification of site context components and landscape features, including:	**–**
		☒ general description of subject land topographic and hydrological setting, geology and soils	**Section 2.1**
		☒ per cent native vegetation cover in the assessment area (as described in BAM Section 3.2)	**Table 2.1**
		☒ IBRA bioregions and subregions (as described in BAM Subsection 3.1.3(2.))	**Table 2.1**
		☒ rivers and streams classified according to stream order (as described in BAM Subsection 3.1.3(3.) and Annexure E)	**Table 2.1**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ wetlands within, adjacent to and downstream of the site (as described in BAM Subsection 3.1.3(3.))	**Table 2.1** (None identified for this project)
		☒ connectivity of different areas of habitat (as described in BAM Subsection 3.1.3(5–6.))	**Table 2.1**
		☒ karst, caves, crevices, cliffs, rocks and other geological features of significance and for vegetation clearing proposals, soil hazard features (as described in BAM Subsections 3.1.3(7.) and 3.1.3(12.))	**Table 2.1** (None identified for this project)
		☒ areas of outstanding biodiversity value occurring on the subject land and assessment area (as described in BAM Subsection 3.1.3(8–9.))	**Table 2.1** (None identified for this project)
		☒ any additional landscape features identified in any SEARs for the proposal	None identified in SEARs for this project
		☒ NSW (Mitchell) landscape on which the subject land occurs	**Table 2.1**
		☒ details of field reconnaissance undertaken to confirm the extent and condition of landscape features and native vegetation cover (as described in Operational Manual Stage 1 Section 2.4)	**Section 2.2**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Site Map ☒ Property boundary ☒ Boundary of subject land ☒ Cadastre of subject land (including labelling of Lot and DP or section plan if relevant) ☒ Landscape features identified in BAM Subsection 3.1.3	**Figure 2.1** *(Note: landscape features are presented across Site Map and Location Maps for ease of viewing)*
		☒ Location Map ☒ Digital aerial photography at 1:1,000 scale or finer ☒ Boundary of subject land ☒ Assessment area (i.e. the subject land and either 1,500 m buffer area or 500 m buffer for linear development) ☒ Landscape features identified in BAM Subsection 3.1.3 ☒ Additional detail (e.g. local government area boundaries) relevant at this scale	**Figure 2.2A–B** *(Note: landscape features are presented across Site Map and Location Maps for ease of viewing).*

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		Landscape features identified in BAM Subsection 3.1.3 and to be shown on the Site Map and/or Location Map include:	–
		☒ IBRA bioregions and subregions ☒ rivers, streams and estuaries ☐ wetlands and important wetlands **N/A for this project** ☒ connectivity of different areas of habitat ☐ karst, caves, crevices, cliffs, rocks and other geological features of significance and if required, soil hazard features **N/A for this project** ☒ areas of outstanding biodiversity value occurring on the subject land and assessment area ☐ any additional landscape features identified in any SEARs for the proposal **N/A for this project** ☒ NSW (Mitchell) landscape on which the subject land occurs	**Figure 2.1** **Figure 2.2A–B** *(Note: landscape features are presented across Site Map and Location Maps for ease of viewing)*
		Data	
		☒ All report maps as separate jpeg files	–
		Individual digital shape files of:	–
		☒ subject land boundary	–
		☒ assessment area (i.e. subject land and 1500 m buffer area) boundary	–
		☒ cadastral boundary of subject land	–
		☒ areas of native vegetation cover	–
		☒ landscape features	–
Native vegetation	**Chapter 4, Annexure A and Appendix H**	**Information**	
		☒ Identify native vegetation extent within the subject land, including cleared areas and evidence to support differences between mapped vegetation extent and aerial imagery (as described in BAM Section 4.1(1–3.) and Subsection 4.1.1)	**Section 3.2.1**
		☒ Provide justification for all parts of the subject land that do not contain native vegetation (as described in BAM Subsection 4.1.2)	**Section 3.2.1**
		☒ Review of existing information on native vegetation including references to previous vegetation maps of the subject land and assessment area (described in BAM Section 4.1(3.) and Subsection 4.1.1)	**Section 3.1.1** **Section 3.1.3**
		☒ Describe the systematic field-based floristic vegetation survey undertaken in accordance with BAM Section 4.2	**Section 3.1.4**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☐ Where relevant, describe the use of more appropriate local data, provide reasons that support the use of more appropriate local data and include the written confirmation from the decision-maker that they support the use of more appropriate local data (as described in BAM Subsection 1.4.2 and Annexure A)	**N/A for this Project**
		For each PCT within the subject land, describe:	–
		☒ PCT name and ID	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ vegetation class	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ extent (ha) within subject land	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ evidence used to identify a PCT including any analyses undertaken, references/sources, existing vegetation maps (BAM Section 4.2(1–3.))	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ plant species relied upon for identification of the PCT and relative abundance of each species	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ if relevant, TEC status including evidence used to determine vegetation is the TEC (BAM Subsection 4.2.2(1–2.))	**Section 3.2.2** **Section 3.2.4**
		☒ estimate of per cent cleared value of PCT (BAM Subsection 4.2.1(5.))	**Section 3.2.2**
		Describe the vegetation integrity assessment of the subject land, including:	–
		☒ identification and mapping of vegetation zones (as described in BAM Subsection 4.3.1)	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ description of vegetation zones within the subject land (as described in Operational Manual Stage 1 Table 2 and Subsection 3.3.2)	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ area (ha) of each vegetation zone	**Section 3.2.2**
		☒ assessment of patch size (as described in BAM Subsection 4.3.2)	**Section 3.2.2** **Section 3.2.2.4**
		☒ survey effort (i.e. number of vegetation integrity survey plots) as described in BAM Subsection 4.3.4(1–2.)	**Table 3.1** **Section 3.2.2**
		☒ use of relevant benchmark data from BioNet Vegetation Classification (as described in BAM Subsection 4.3.3(5.))	**Section 3.2.2**
		Where use of more appropriate local benchmark data is proposed (as described in BAM Subsection 1.4.2, BAM Subsection 4.3.3(5.) and BAM Annexure A):	–

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☐ identify the PCT or vegetation class for which local benchmark data will be applied ☐ identify published sources of local benchmark data (if benchmarks obtained from published sources) ☐ describe methods of local benchmark data collection (if reference plots used to determine local benchmark data)	**N/A for this Project – only standard benchmark data used.**
		☐ provide justification for use of local data rather than BioNet Vegetation Classification benchmark values	
		☐ provide written confirmation from the decision-maker that they support the use of local benchmark data	
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Map of native vegetation extent within the subject land at scale not greater than 1:10,000 including identification of all areas of native vegetation including areas that are ground cover only, cleared areas (as described in BAM Section 4.1(1–3.)) and all parts of the subject land that do not contain native vegetation (BAM Subsection 4.1.2) ***Due to the size of the Development Footprints, the figures are presented at a greater scale than 1:10,000. As per Section 1.2 of the BAM Operations Manual (DPIE 2020f) the appropriate capture scale is provided in the digital dataset. All GIS layers will be provided on submission for interrogation. Annexure C shows vegetation mapping across the Development Footprints at 1:10,000 scale.***	**Figure 3.3A–B** **Annexure C**
		☒ Map of PCTs within the subject land (as described in BAM Section 4.2(1.))	**Figure 3.3A** **Figure 3.3B** **Annexure C** – Detailed Figure Set
		☒ Map of vegetation zones within the subject land (as described in BAM Subsection 4.3.1)	**Figure 3.3A** **Figure 3.3B** **Annexure C**– Detailed Figure Set
		☒ Map the location of floristic vegetation survey plots and vegetation integrity survey plots relative to PCT boundaries	**Figure 3.1** **Annexure C** – Detailed Figure Set
		☒ Map of TEC distribution on the subject land and table of TEC listing, status and area (ha)	**Figure 3.5A–B** **Table 3.4**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ Map of patch size locations for each native vegetation zone and table of patch size areas (as described in BAM Subsection 4.3.2)	**Figure 3.4 Section 3.2.2**
		Table of current vegetation integrity scores for each vegetation zone within the site and including:	–
		☒ composition condition score ☒ structure condition score ☒ function condition score ☒ presence of hollow bearing trees	**Table 3.7**
		Data	
		☒ All report maps as separate jpeg files	–
		☒ Plot field data (MS Excel format)	-
		☒ Plot field datasheets	-
		Digital shape files of:	
		☒ PCT boundaries within subject land	–
		☒ TEC boundaries within subject land	–
		☒ vegetation zone boundaries within subject land	–
		☒ floristic vegetation survey and vegetation integrity plot locations	–
Threatened species	**Chapter 5**	**Information**	
		Identify ecosystem credit species likely to occur on the subject land, including:	–
		☒ list of ecosystem credit species derived from the BAM-C (as described in BAM Subsection 5.1.1 and Section 5.2(1.))	**Table 4.3**
		☐ justification and supporting evidence for exclusion of any ecosystem credit species based on geographic limitations, habitat constraints or vagrancy (as described in BAM Subsections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2)	**N/A – none excluded**
		☐ justification for addition of any ecosystem credit species to the list	**N/A – none added**
		Identify species credit species likely to occur on the subject land, including:	–
		☒ list of species credit species derived from the BAM-C (as described in BAM Subsection 5.1.1)	**Table D.2, Annexure D**
		☒ justification and supporting evidence for exclusions based on geographic limitations, habitat constraints or vagrancy (as described in BAM Subsections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2)	**Table D.1, Annexure D**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ justification and supporting evidence for exclusions based on degraded habitat constraints and/or microhabitats on which the species depends (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.2)	**Table D.1, Annexure D**
		☒ justification for addition of any species credit species to the list	**Table D.2, Annexure D**
		From the list of candidate species credit species, identify:	**–**
		☒ species assumed present within the subject land (if relevant) (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.4(2.a.)) ☐ species present within the subject land on the basis of being identified on an important habitat map for a species (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.4(2.d.)) **N/A – none for this assessment** ☒ species for which targeted surveys are to be completed to determine species presence (BAM Subsection 5.2.4(2.b.)) ☐ species for which an expert report is to be used to determine species presence (BAM Subsection 5.2.4(2.c.)) **N/A – none for this assessment**	**Section 4.2.2 Table D.2, Annexure D**
		Present the outcomes of species credit species assessments from:	–
		☒ threatened species survey (as described in BAM Section 5.2.4)	**Section 4.2.2**
		☐ expert reports (if relevant) including justification for presence of the species and information used to make this determination (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.4, Section 5.3, Box 3)	**N/A – none for this assessment**
		Where survey has been undertaken include detailed information on:	–
		☒ survey method and effort (as described in BAM Section 5.3)	**Table 4.2 Table D.2, Annexure D**
		☒ justification of survey method and effort (e.g. citation of peer-reviewed literature) if approach differs from the department's taxa-specific survey guides or where no relevant guideline has been published	**Table D.2, Annexure D**
		☒ timing of survey in relation to requirements in the TBDC or the department's taxa-specific survey guides. Where survey was undertaken outside these guides include justification for the timing of surveys	**Table D.2, Annexure D**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ survey personnel and relevant experience	**Section 1.9** **Table 1.6**
		☒ describe any limitations to surveys and how these were addressed/overcome	**Annexure D**
		Where an expert report has been used in place of survey (as described in BAM Section 5.3, Box 3), include:	–
		☐ justification of the use of an expert report ☐ identify the expert, provide evidence of their expert credentials and departmental approval of expert status ☐ all requirements of Box 3 have been addressed in the expert report	**N/A – no expert reports have been used to replace field surveys.**
		Where use of local data is proposed (BAM Subsection 1.4.2):	–
		☐ identify relevant species ☐ identify data to be amended ☐ identify source of information for local data, e.g. published literature, additional survey data, etc. ☐ justify use of local data in preference to VIS Classification or TBDC data	**N/A – none for this assessment**
		☐ provide written confirmation from the decision-maker that they support the use of local data	
		Species polygon completed for species credit species present within the subject land (assumed present or determined on the basis of survey, expert report or important habitat map) ensuring that:	–
		☒ the unit of measure for each species is documented	**Table 4.6**
		for species assessed by area:	–
		☒ the polygon includes the extent of suitable habitat for the target species within the subject land (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.5)	**Section 4.2.2** **Table 4.6** **Figure 4.4** **Figure 4.5** **Figure 4.6** **Figure 4.7** **Figure 4.8** **Figure 4.9**
		☒ a description of, and evidence-based justification for, the habitat constraints, features or microhabitats used to map the species polygon including reference to information in the TBDC for that species and any buffers applied	**Section 4.2.2** **Table 4.6**
		for species assessed by counts of individuals:	–

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☐ the number of individual plants present on the subject land (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.5(3.))	**N/A – none for this assessment**
		☐ the method used to derive this number (i.e. threatened species survey or expert report) and evidence-based justification for the approach taken	
		☐ the polygon includes all individuals located on the subject land with a buffer of 30 m around the individuals or groups of individuals on the subject land	
		☒ Identify the biodiversity risk weighting for each species credit species identified as present within the subject land (as described in BAM Section 5.4)	**Table 4.6**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Table showing ecosystem credit species in accordance with BAM Subsection 5.1.1, and identifying:	**Table 4.3**
		☐ the ecosystem credit species removed from the list	**N/A**
		☒ the sensitivity to gain class of each species	**Table 4.3**
		☒ Table detailing species credit species in accordance with BAM Section 5.2 and identifying:	**Table D.1, Annexure D**
		☒ the species credit species removed from the list of species because the species is considered vagrant, out of geographic range or the habitat or microhabitat features are not present	**Table D.1, Annexure D**
		☒ the candidate species credit species not recorded on the subject land as determined by targeted survey, expert report or important habitat map	**Table D.2, Annexure D**
		☒ Table detailing species credit species recorded or assumed as present within the subject land, habitat constraints or microhabitats associated with the species, counts of individuals (flora)/extent of suitable habitat (flora and fauna) (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.6) and biodiversity risk weighting (BAM Section 5.4)	**Table 4.6**
		☒ Map indicating the GPS coordinates of all individuals of each species recorded within the subject land and the species polygon for each species (as described in BAM Subsection 5.2.5)	**Figure 4.4** **Figure 4.5** **Figure 4.6** **Figure 4.7** **Figure 4.8** **Figure 4.9**
		Data	

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ Digital shape files of suitable habitat identified for survey for each candidate species credit species	–
		☒ Survey locations including GPS coordinates of any plots, transects, grids	–
		☒ Digital shape files of each species polygon including GPS coordinates of located individuals	–
		☒ Species polygon map in jpeg format	–
		☐ Expert reports and any supporting data used to support conclusions of the expert report	**N/A for this Project**
		☒ Field datasheets detailing survey information including prevailing conditions, date, time, equipment used, etc.	-
Prescribed impacts	**Chapter 6**	**Information**	
		Identify potential prescribed biodiversity impacts on threatened entities, including:	–
		☐ karst, caves, crevices, cliffs, rocks and other geological features of significance (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.1) **N/A – none for this assessment**	**Section 6.3**
		☒ occurrences of human-made structures and non-native vegetation (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.2)	
		☒ corridors or other areas of connectivity linking habitat for threatened entities (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.3)	
		☒ waterbodies or any hydrological processes that sustain threatened entities (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.4)	
		☐ protected animals that may use the proposed wind farm development site as a flyway or migration route (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.5)	**N/A for this Project**
		☒ where the proposed development may result in vehicle strike on threatened fauna or on animals that are part of a threatened ecological community (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.6)	**Section 6.3**
		☒ Identify a list of threatened entities that may be dependent upon or may use habitat features associated with any of the prescribed impacts	**Section 6.3**
		☐ Describe the importance of habitat features to the species including, where relevant, impacts on life cycle or movement patterns (e.g. Subsection 6.1.3)	**N/A – none identified for this assessment**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		Where the proposed development is for a wind farm:	–
		☐ identify a candidate list of protected animals that may use the development site as a flyway or migration route, including: resident threatened aerial species, resident raptor species and nomadic and migratory species that are likely to fly over the proposal area (as described in BAM Subsection 6.1.5)	**N/A**
		☐ provide details of targeted survey for candidate species of wind farm developments undertaken in accordance with BAM Subsection 6.1.5(2–3.)	
		☐ predict the habitual flight paths for nomadic and migratory species likely to fly over the subject land and map the likely habitat for resident threatened aerial and raptor species (BAM Subsection 6.1.5(4.))	
		Where the proposal may result in vehicle strike:	–
		☒ identify a list of threatened fauna or protected fauna species that are part of a TEC and at risk of vehicle strike due to the proposal	**Table 6.7**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Map showing location of any prescribed impact features (i.e. karst, caves, crevices, cliffs, rocks, human-made structures, etc.)	**Figure 6.4**
		☒ Map showing location of potential vehicle strike locations	**Figure 6.4**
		☐ Maps of habitual flight paths for nomadic and migratory species likely to fly over the site and maps of likely habitat for threatened aerial species resident on the site (for wind farm developments only)	**N/A – none identified for this assessment**
		Data	
		☒ Digital shape files of prescribed impact feature locations	–
		☒ Prescribed impact features map in jpeg format	–
Avoid and minimise impacts	**Chapter 7**	**Information**	
		Demonstration of efforts to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity values (including prescribed impacts) associated with the proposal location in accordance with Chapter 7, including an analysis of alternative:	–
		☐ modes or technologies that would avoid or minimise impacts on biodiversity values and justification for selecting the proposed mode or technology	**N/A**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ routes that would avoid or minimise impacts on biodiversity values and justification for selecting the proposed route	**Section 5.1.1** **Section 5.1.2** **Section 5.2.1**
		☒ alternative locations that would avoid or minimise impacts on biodiversity values and justification for selecting the proposed location	**Section 5.1.2**
		☒ alternative sites within a property on which the proposal is located that would avoid or minimise impacts on biodiversity values and justification for selecting the proposed site	**Section 5.1.2**
		☒ Describe efforts to avoid and minimise impacts (including prescribed impacts) to biodiversity values through proposal design (as described in BAM Sections 7.1 and 7.2)	**Section 5.0**
		☒ Identification of any other site constraints that the proponent has considered in determining the location and design of the proposal (as described in BAM Subsection 7.2.1(3.))	**Section 5.1.2** **Table 5.2**
		☒ Detail measures or options considered but not implemented because they are not feasible and/or practical (e.g. due to site constraints)	**Section 5.1.2** **Table 5.2**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Table of measures to be implemented to avoid and minimise the impacts of the proposal, including action, outcome, timing and responsibility	**Section 4.0** **Table 5.7**
		☒ Map of alternative footprints considered to avoid or minimise impacts on biodiversity values; and of the final proposal footprint, including construction and operation	**Figure 5.1**
		☒ Maps demonstrating indirect impact zones where applicable	**Figure 6.3**
		Data	
		Digital shape files of:	–
		☒ alternative and final proposal footprint	–
		☒ direct and indirect impact zones	**N/A for indirect impacts**
		☒ Maps in jpeg format	–
Assessment of impacts	**Chapter 8, Sections 8.1 and 8.2**	**Information**	
		☒ Determine the impacts on native vegetation and threatened species habitat, including a description of direct impacts of clearing of native vegetation, threatened ecological communities	**Section 6.1**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		and threatened species habitat (as described in BAM Section 8.1)	
		Assessment of indirect impacts on vegetation and threatened species and their habitat including (as described in BAM Section 8.2):	–
		☒ description of the nature, extent, frequency, duration and timing of indirect impacts of the proposal	**Section 6.2** **Table 6.5**
		☒ documenting the consequences to vegetation and threatened species and their habitat including evidence-based justifications	**Table 6.5**
		☒ reporting any limitations or assumptions, etc. made during the assessment	**Section 6.2**
		☒ identification of the threatened entities and their habitat likely to be affected	**Table 6.5**
		Assessment of prescribed biodiversity impacts (as described in BAM Section 8.3) including:	**–**
		assessment of the nature, extent frequency, duration and timing of impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with:	**–**
		☐ karst, caves, crevices, cliffs, rocks and other features of geological significance	**N/A**
		☐ human-made structures	**N/A**
		☒ non-native vegetation	**Section 6.3** **Table 6.7**
		☒ connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range	**Section 6.3** **Table 6.7**
		☐ movement of threatened species that maintains their life cycle	**N/A**
		☒ water quality, waterbodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities	**Section 6.3** **Table 6.7**
		☐ assessment of the impacts of wind turbine strikes on protected animals	**N/A**
		☒ assessment of the impacts of vehicle strikes on threatened species of animals or on animals that are part of a TEC	**Section 6.3** **Table 6.7**
		☒ evaluate the consequences of prescribed impacts	**Table 6.7**
		☒ describe impacts that are uncertain	**Section 6.4.2**
		☒ document limitations to data, assumptions and predictions	**Section 6.0** **Annexure D**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Table showing change in vegetation integrity score for each vegetation zone as a result of identified impacts	**Table 7.3**
		Data	
		N/A	–
Mitigation and management of impacts	**Chapter 8, Sections 8.4 and 8.5**	**Information**	
		Identification of measures to mitigate or manage impacts in accordance with the recommendations in BAM Sections 8.4 and 8.5 including:	–
		☒ techniques, timing, frequency and responsibility ☒ identify measures for which there is risk of failure ☒ evaluate the risk and consequence of any residual impacts	**Section 5.4** **Section 5.5** **Table 5.8**
		☒ document any adaptive management strategy proposed	**Section 5.4** **Section 5.5** **Section 5.6.3** **Section 5.7**
		Identification of measures for mitigating impacts related to:	–
		☒ displacement of resident fauna (as described in BAM Subsection 8.4.1(2.)) ☒ indirect impacts on native vegetation and habitat (as described in BAM Subsection 8.4.1(3.)) ☒ mitigating prescribed biodiversity impacts (as described in BAM Subsection 8.4.2)	**Section5.4** **Section 5.6**
		☒ Details of the adaptive management strategy proposed to monitor and respond to impacts on biodiversity values that are uncertain (BAM Section 8.5)	**Section 6.5**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Table of measures to be implemented before, during and after construction to mitigate and manage impacts of the proposal, including action, outcome, timing and responsibility	**Section 5.4**
		Data	
		N/A	–
Impact summary	**Chapter 9**	**Information**	
		Identification and assessment of impacts on TECs and threatened species that are at risk of a serious and irreversible impacts (SAII, in accordance with BAM Section 9.1) including:	–

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
		☒ addressing all criteria in Subsection 9.1.1 for each TEC listed as at risk of an SAII present on the subject land	**Section 6.4**
		☒ for each TEC, report the extent of the TEC in NSW	**Section 3.2.4**
		☐ addressing all criteria in Subsection 9.1.2 for each threatened species at risk of an SAII present on the subject land	**Section 6.4**
		☐ for each threatened species, report the population size in NSW	**Table 6.1**
		☒ documenting assumptions made and/or limitations to information ☒ documenting all sources of data, information, references used or consulted ☒ clearly justifying why any criteria could not be addressed	**Table 6.9**
		☒ Identification of impacts requiring offset in accordance with BAM Section 9.2	**Section 7.3**
		☒ Identification of impacts not requiring offset in accordance with BAM Subsection 9.2.1(3.)	**Section 7.2**
		☒ Identification of areas not requiring assessment in accordance with BAM Section 9.3	**Section 7.1**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Map showing the extent of TECs at risk of an SAII within the subject land	**Figure 6.5**
		☐ Map showing location of threatened species at risk of an SAII within the subject land	**N/A**
		Map showing location of:	**–**
		☒ impacts requiring offset	**Figure 7.1A–B**
		☒ impacts not requiring offset	
		☒ areas not requiring assessment	
		Data	
		Digital shape files of:	–
		☒ extent of TECs at risk of an SAII within the subject land	–
		☐ location of threatened species at risk of an SAII within the subject land	–
		☒ boundary of impacts requiring offset	–
		☒ boundary of impacts not requiring offset	**–**
		☒ boundary of areas not requiring assessment	**–**
		☒ Maps in jpeg format	**–**

BDAR Section	BAM ref.	BAM requirement	Section reference(s) in the BDAR
Impact summary	**Chapter 10**	**Information**	
		Ecosystem credits and species credits that measure the impact of the development on biodiversity values, including:	–
		☒ future vegetation integrity score for each vegetation zone within the subject land (Equation 25 and Equation 26 in BAM Annexure H) ☒ change in vegetation integrity score (BAM Subsection 8.1.1) ☒ number of required ecosystem credits for the direct impacts of the proposal on each vegetation zone within the subject land (BAM Subsection 10.1.2)	**Table 7.3**
		☒ biodiversity risk weighting for each	**Table 7.4**
		☒ number of required species credits for each candidate threatened species that is directly impacted on by the proposal (BAM Subsection 10.1.3)	**Table 7.4**
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Table of PCTs requiring offset and the number of ecosystem credits required	**Table 7.3** **Table 8.1**
		☒ Table of threatened species requiring offset and the number of species credits required	**Table 7.4** **Table 8.1**
		Data	
		☒ Submitted proposal in the BAM Calculator	–
Biodiversity credit report	**Chapter 10**	**Information**	
		☒ Description of credit classes for ecosystem credits and species credits at the development or clearing site or land to be biodiversity certified (BAM Section 10.2)	**Table 8.1**
		☒ BAM credit report in pdf format	**Annexure B** (and submitted separately)
		Maps and tables	
		☒ Table of credit class and matching credit profile	**Table 8.1**
		Data	
		☒ BAM credit report in pdf format	**Annexure B** (and submitted separately)

Annexure B

Credit Summary Reports

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00054717/BAAS17005/25/00054718

Proposal Name
HVO North Stage 1 - Amended Project

BAM data last updated *
05/08/2025

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
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Assessment Revision
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Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
1	3431_Moderate_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	57.9	57.9	63.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		1850
2	3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	53.8	53.1	9.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		244
3	3431_Woodland_Exotic_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	22.1	22.1	3.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		38

4	3431_Plantation_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	47	42.7	1.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		28
											Subtotal	**2160**
Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
7	3431_Plantation	Not a TEC	47	41.9	1.1	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		23
8	3431_Scattered_Regen	Not a TEC	46.5	45.0	43	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		967
9	3431_Cooba_Woodland	Not a TEC	47.8	47.4	12.2	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		289
10	3431_Poor_Condition_DNG	Not a TEC	16.2	14.4	203.5	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0
11	3431_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	12.9	12.9	109.4	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0

12	3431_Bull oak_Variant	Not a TEC	41.4	41.4	32.7	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		677
											Subtotal	**1956**
Central Hunter Riparian Forest												
13	4015_Moderate	Not a TEC	69.8	62.0	1.7	PCT Cleared - 88%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		53
											Subtotal	**53**
Central Hunter Slaty Gum Grassy Forest												
5	3485_Moderate_TEC	Not a TEC	88.1	88.1	7.1	PCT Cleared - 89%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		313
											Subtotal	**313**
Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest												
6	4089_Moderate_TEC	Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	65	65.0	1	Population size	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00	True	33

18	4089_Low_to_Moderate_TEC	Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	29.4	29.4	0.05	Population size	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00	True	1
											Subtotal	**34**
Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest												
15	4089_Cooba_Woodland	Not a TEC	54.5	40.5	0.1	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		3
16	4089_DNG	Not a TEC	21.8	14.8	1	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		9
17	4089_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	9.3	9.3	59	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		0
19	4089_Low_to_Moderate	Not a TEC	29.4	29.4	0.07	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		1
											Subtotal	**13**

Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest											
14	4081_Moderate	Not a TEC	34.6	34.6	1.8	PCT Cleared - 90%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50	39
										Subtotal	**39**
										Total	**4568**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits
Delma vescolineata / Hunter Valley Delma (Fauna)									
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	8.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	234
3431_Scattered_Regen	46.5	46.5	38.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	887

3431_Poor_Condition_DNG	16.2	16.2	177.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	1435
4089_DNG	21.8	21.8	0.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	3
								Subtotal	**2559**
Eucalyptus camaldulensis - endangered population / Eucalyptus camaldulensis population in the Hunter catchment (Flora)									
4081_Moderate	34.6	34.6	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	2
4089_DNG	21.8	21.8	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	1
4089_Exotic_Grassland	9.3	9.3	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	2
4089_Low_to_Moderate	29.4	29.4	0.06	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	1
								Subtotal	**6**

Myotis macropus / Southern Myotis (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	25.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	750
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	3.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	105
3431_Plantation_TEC	47.0	47.0	0.6	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	14
3485_Moderate_TEC	88.1	88.1	3.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	137
4089_Moderate_TEC	65.0	65.0	0.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	29
3431_Plantation	47.0	47.0	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	2
3431_Scattered_Regen	46.5	46.5	14.8	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	344

3431_Cooba_Woodland	47.8	47.8	6.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	148
3431_Bulloak_Variant	41.4	41.4	19.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	397
4015_Moderate	69.8	69.8	0.8	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	28
4081_Moderate	34.6	34.6	1.8	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	31
4089_Cooba_Woodland	54.5	54.5	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	3
4089_Low_to_Moderate	29.4	29.4	0.07	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	1
4089_Low_to_Moderate_TEC	29.4	29.4	0.05	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	1
								Subtotal	**1990**

Phascogale tapoatafa / Brush-tailed Phascogale (Fauna)									
3431_Plantation	47.0	47.0	1.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	26
4015_Moderate	69.8	69.8	1.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	59
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	63.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	1850
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	9.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	248
3431_Woodland_Exotic_TEC	22.1	22.1	3.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	38
3431_Plantation_TEC	47.0	47.0	1.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	31
3485_Moderate_TEC	88.1	88.1	7.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	313

4089_Moderate_TEC	65.0	65.0	1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	33
3431_Bulloak_Variant	41.4	41.4	32.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	677
4089_Low_to_Moderate	29.4	29.4	0.07	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	1
4089_Low_to_Moderate_TEC	29.4	29.4	0.05	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	1
								Subtotal	**3277**
Tyto novaehollandiae / Masked Owl (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	4.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	119
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	2.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	65

3431_Woodland_Exotic_TEC	22.1	22.1	1.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	21
3431_Poor_Condition_DNG	16.2	16.2	19.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	157
3431_Exotic_Grassland	12.9	12.9	24.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	157
4081_Moderate	34.6	34.6	0.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	3
4089_DNG	21.8	21.8	0.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	8
4089_Exotic_Grassland	9.3	9.3	4.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	22
								Subtotal	**552**

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

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Proposal Name
HVO North Stage 2 - Amended Project

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Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

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Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
1	3431_Moderate_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	57.9	57.9	0.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		26
2	3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	53.8	50.3	0.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		10
											Subtotal	**36**
Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
3	3431_Cooba_Woodland	Not a TEC	47.8	47.8	0.1	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		2
4	3431_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	12.9	12.9	11.3	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0

										Subtotal	**2**
Central Hunter Riparian Forest											
5	4015_Moderate	Not a TEC	69.8	49.8	0.5	PCT Cleared - 88%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00	12
										Subtotal	**12**
										Total	**50**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits
Delma vescolineata / Hunter Valley Delma (Fauna)									
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	0.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	8
								Subtotal	**8**
Myotis macropus / Southern Myotis (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	0.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	12

3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	3
3431_Cooba_Woodland	47.8	47.8	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	2
4015_Moderate	69.8	69.8	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	17
								Subtotal	**34**
Phascogale tapoatafa / Brush-tailed Phascogale (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	0.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	26
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	0.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	11
4015_Moderate	69.8	69.8	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	17
								Subtotal	**54**

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00054725/BAAS17005/25/00054726

Proposal Name
HVO South - Stage 1 Revised BDAR for Amended Project

BAM data last updated *
05/08/2025

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
20/02/2026

BAM Data version *
Current classification (live - default) (82)

Assessor Number
BAAS17005

BAM Case Status
Finalised

Date Finalised
20/02/2026

Assessment Revision
2

BOS entry trigger

Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
1	3431_Moderate_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	57.9	57.9	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		14
2	3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	Central Hunter Grey Box-Ironbark Woodland in the New South Wales North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	53.8	53.8	1.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00		51
											Subtotal	**65**
Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland												
3	3431_Cooba_Woodland	Not a TEC	47.8	47.8	0.2	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		5
4	3431_Poor_Condition_DNG	Not a TEC	16.2	15.6	7.1	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0

5	3431_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	12.9	12.9	21.7	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		0
8	3431_Plantation	Not a TEC	47	47.0	0.1	PCT Cleared - 86%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.00		2
											Subtotal	**7**
Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest												
6	4089_Cooba_Woodland	Not a TEC	54.5	54.5	0.6	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		20
7	4089_Exotic_Grassland	Not a TEC	9.3	9.3	13.3	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50		0
											Subtotal	**20**
											Total	**92**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits

Delma vescolineata / Hunter Valley Delma (Fauna)									
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	1.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	51
3431_Poor_Condition_DNG	16.2	16.2	6.8	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Ecology or response to management is poorly known	Endangered	Endangered	False	55
								Subtotal	**106**
Eucalyptus camaldulensis - endangered population / Eucalyptus camaldulensis population in the Hunter catchment (Flora)									
3431_Cooba_Woodland	47.8	47.8	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	2
3431_Exotic_Grassland	12.9	12.9	0.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	2
4089_Cooba_Woodland	54.5	54.5	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	3
4089_Exotic_Grassland	9.3	9.3	0.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	1

								Subtotal	**8**
Myotis macropus / Southern Myotis (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	14
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	1.4	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	38
3431_Cooba_Woodland	47.8	47.8	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	2
4089_Cooba_Woodland	54.5	54.5	0.2	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	5
								Subtotal	**59**
Phascogale tapoatafa / Brush-tailed Phascogale (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	14
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	1.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	51

3431_Plantation	47.0	47.0	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	2
								Subtotal	**67**
Tyto novaehollandiae / Masked Owl (Fauna)									
3431_Moderate_TEC	57.9	57.9	0.5	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	14
3431_Thinned_Woodland_TEC	53.8	53.8	1.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	51
3431_Poor_Condition_DNG	16.2	16.2	2.9	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	23
3431_Exotic_Grassland	12.9	12.9	6.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	39
4089_Exotic_Grassland	9.3	9.3	6.7	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Species dependent on habitat attributes	Vulnerable	Not Listed	False	31
								Subtotal	**158**

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064423

Proposal Name
HVO North River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area - Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC

BAM data last updated *
05/08/2025

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
20/02/2026

BAM Data version *
Current classification (live - default) (82)

Assessor Number
BAAS17005

BAM Case Status
Finalised

Date Finalised
20/02/2026

Assessment Revision
0

BOS entry trigger

Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest												
1	4089_Moderate_TEC	Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregions	65	65.0	0.15	Population size	High Sensitivity to Gain	Endangered Ecological Community	Not Listed	2.00	True	5
											Subtotal	**5**
											Total	**5**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits

BAM Credit Summary Report

Proposal Details

Assessment Id
00054717/BAAS17005/26/00064428

Proposal Name
HVO North - Amended Project - RRG Additional Disturbance Area - Eucalyptus camaldulensis credits ONLY

BAM data last updated *
05/08/2025

Assessor Name
Kate Connolly

Report Created
20/02/2026

BAM Data version *
Current classification (live - default) (82)

Assessor Number
BAAS17005

BAM Case Status
Finalised

Date Finalised
20/02/2026

Assessment Revision
0

BOS entry trigger

Assessment Type
Major Projects

* Disclaimer: BAM data last updated may indicate either complete or partial update of the BAM calculator database. BAM calculator database may not be completely aligned with Bionet.

Ecosystem credits for plant communities types (PCT), ecological communities & threatened species habitat

Zone	Vegetation zone name	TEC name	Current Vegetation integrity score	Change in Vegetation integrity (loss / gain)	Area (ha)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Species sensitivity to gain class	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Biodiversity risk weighting	Potential SAII	Ecosystem credits

Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest											
1	4089_Moderate	Not a TEC	65	65.0	0.3	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50	12
2	4089_Low_to_Moderate	Not a TEC	29.4	29.4	0.1	PCT Cleared - 94%	High Sensitivity to Gain			2.50	2
										Subtotal	**14**
										Total	**14**

Species credits for threatened species

Vegetation zone name	Habitat condition (Vegetation Integrity)	Change in habitat condition	Area (ha)/Count (no. individuals)	Sensitivity to loss (Justification)	Sensitivity to gain (Justification)	BC Act Listing status	EPBC Act listing status	Potential SAII	Species credits
Eucalyptus camaldulensis - endangered population / Eucalyptus camaldulensis population in the Hunter catchment (Flora)									
4089_Moderate	65.0	65.0	0.3	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	10
4089_Low_to_Moderate	29.4	29.4	0.1	Biodiversity Conservation Act listing status	Seedbank Persistence	Endangered Population	Not Listed	False	1
								Subtotal	**11**

Annexure C

Detailed PCT and Surveys Figure Set

umwelt



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at A4

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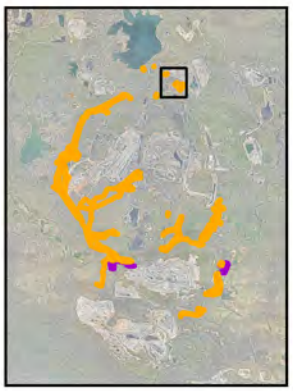
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 11 - 4015 | Moderate



APPENDIX C1-1

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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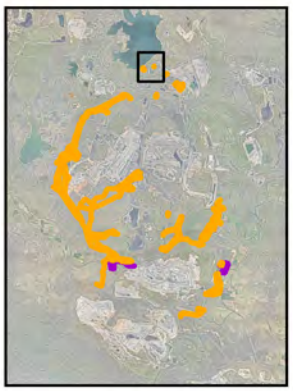
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- Rapid Assessment Location
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

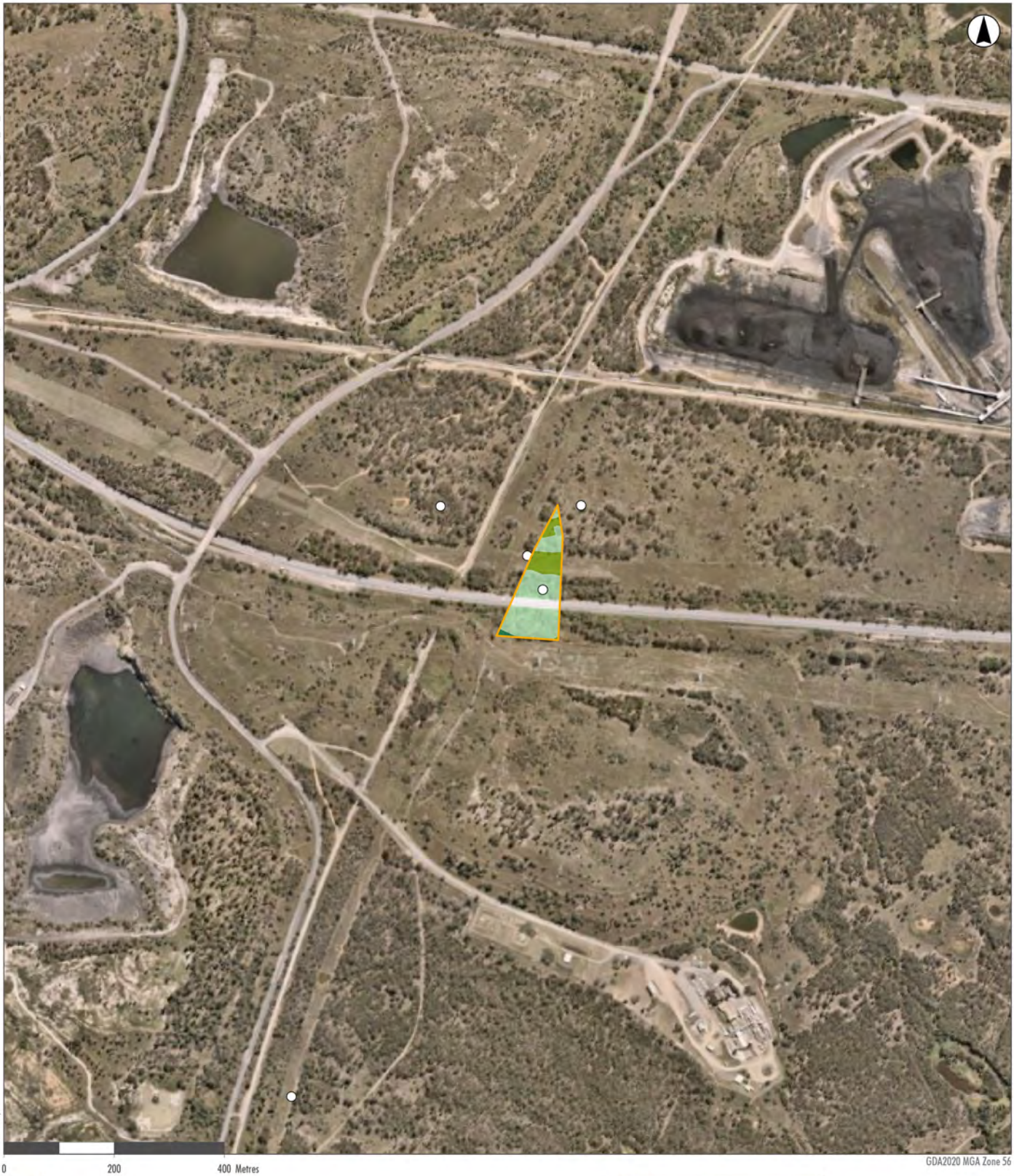
- 0 - 0 I Cleared
- 4 - 3431 I Plantation
- 7 - 3431 I Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 I Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-2

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

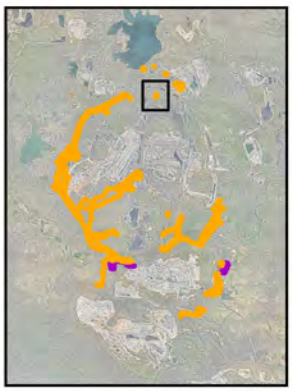
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Rapid Assessment Location

Plant Community Types

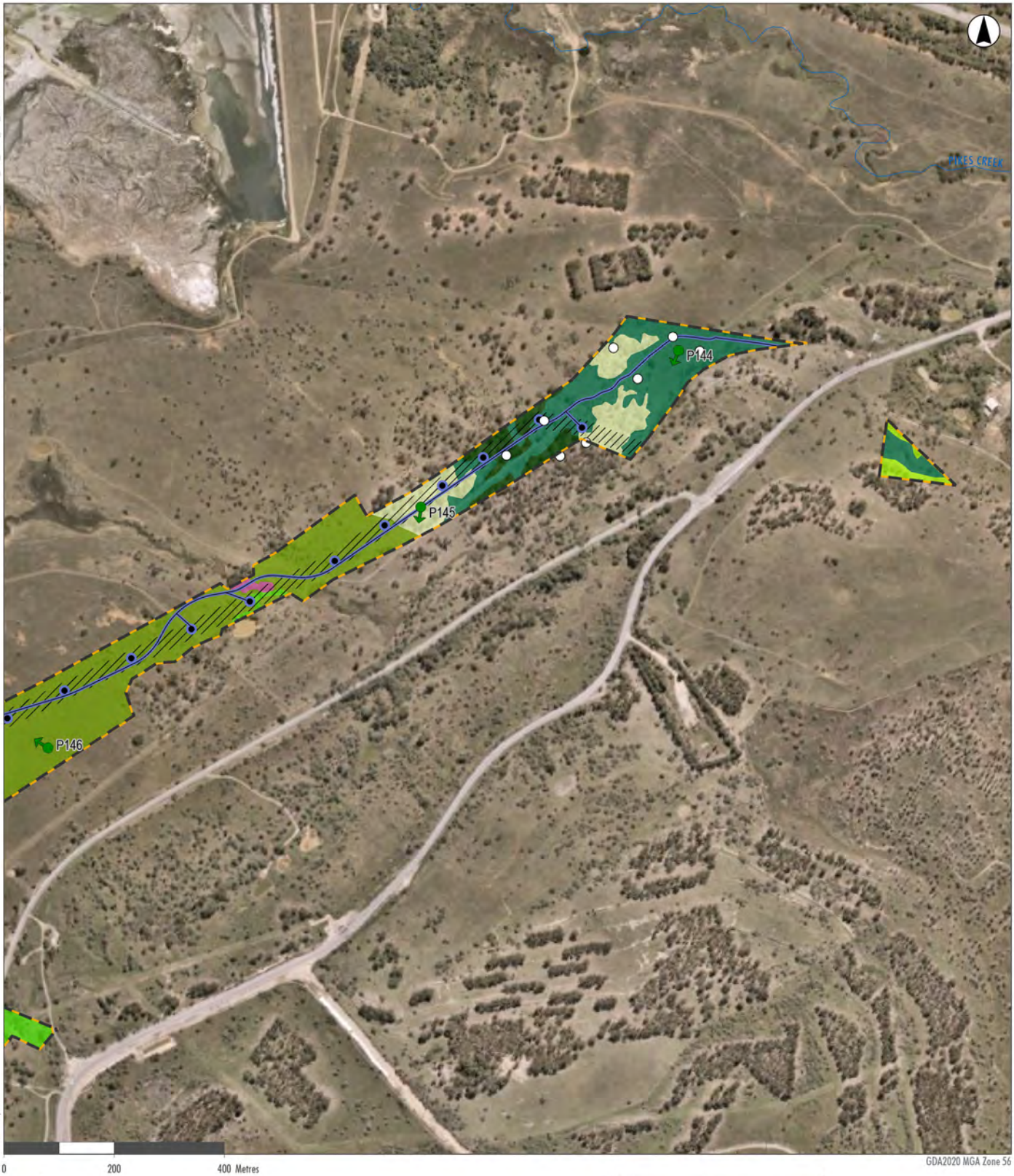
- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-3

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

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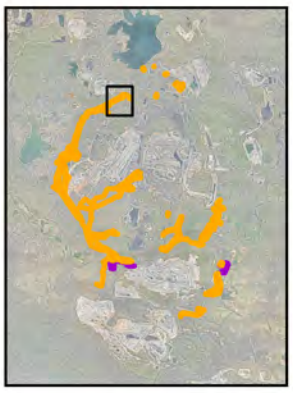
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 11 - 4015 | Moderate



APPENDIX C1-4

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

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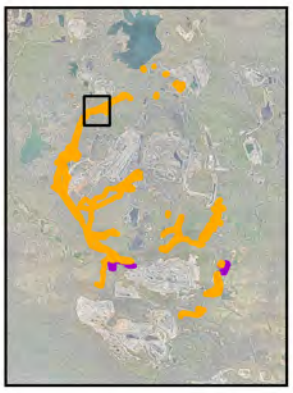
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 I Cleared
- 0 - 0 I Dam
- 2 - 3431 I Thinned Woodland
- 4 - 3431 I Plantation
- 5 - 3431 I Scattered Regeneration
- 7 - 3431 I Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland



APPENDIX C1-5

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

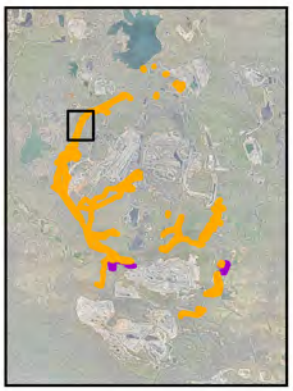


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

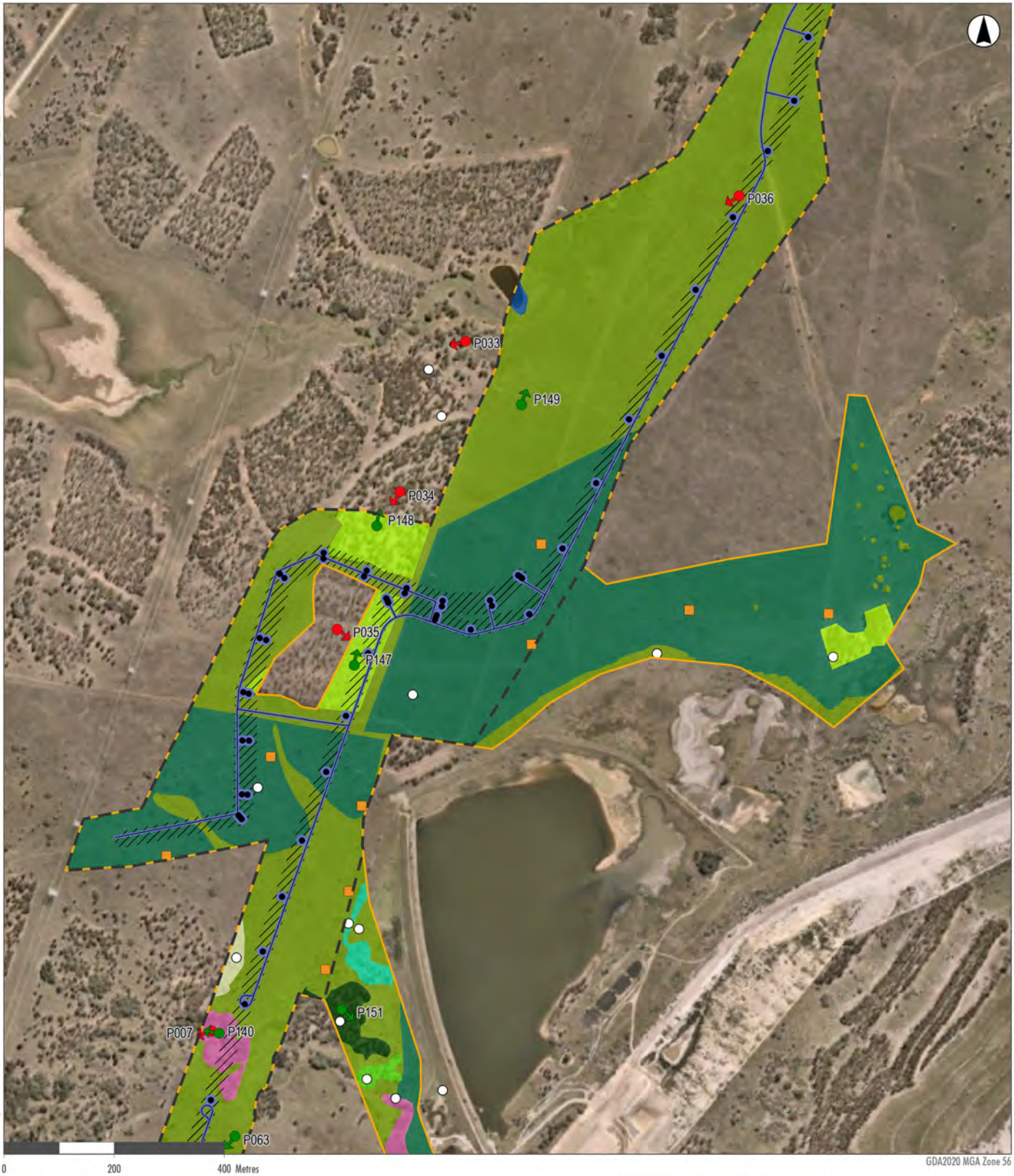
- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland



APPENDIX C1-6

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

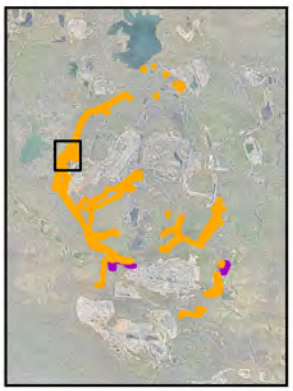


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- IGGAM Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 11 - 4015 | Moderate



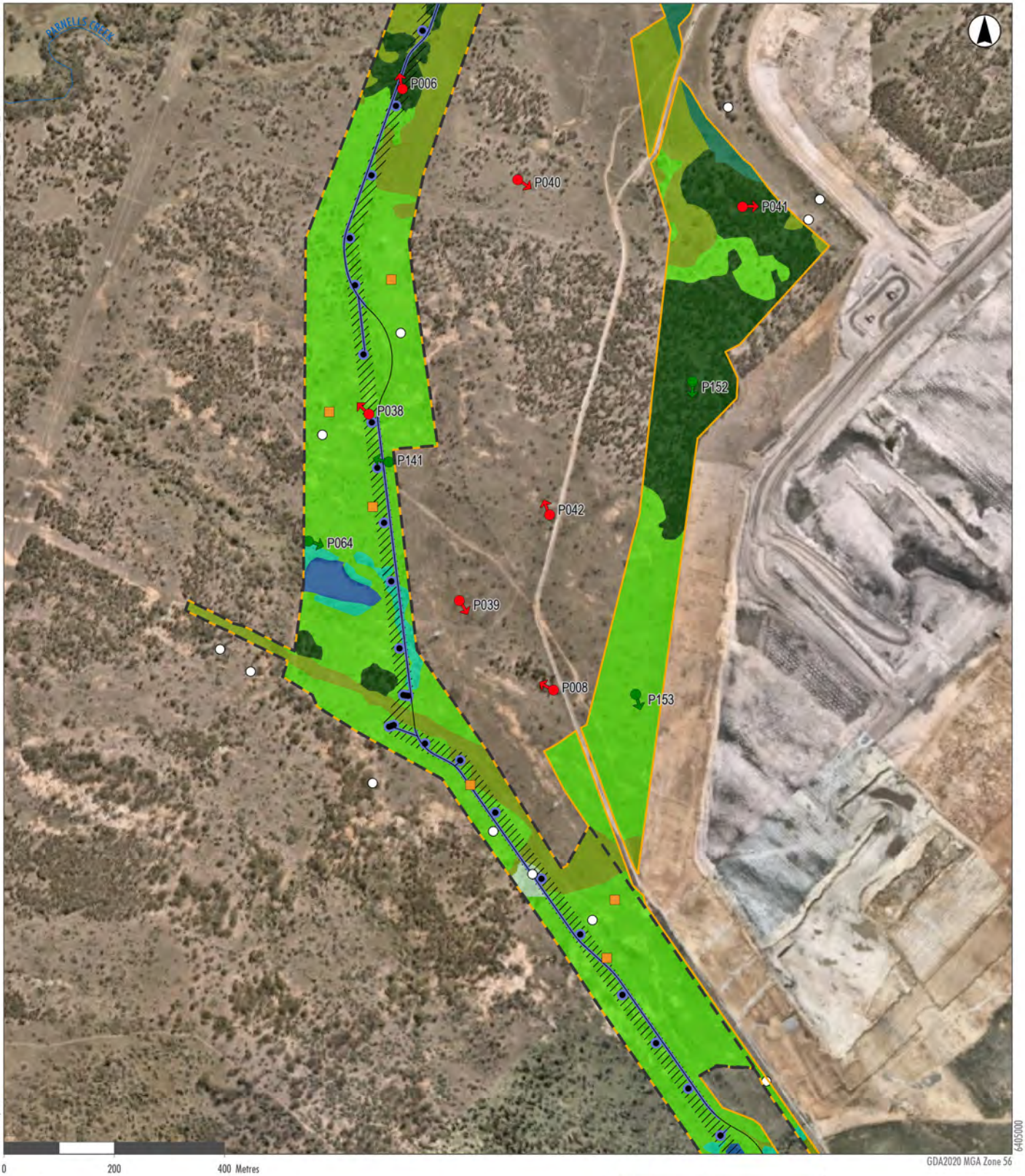
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APPENDIX C1-7

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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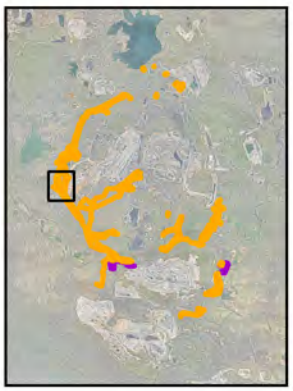
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Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- IGGAM Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

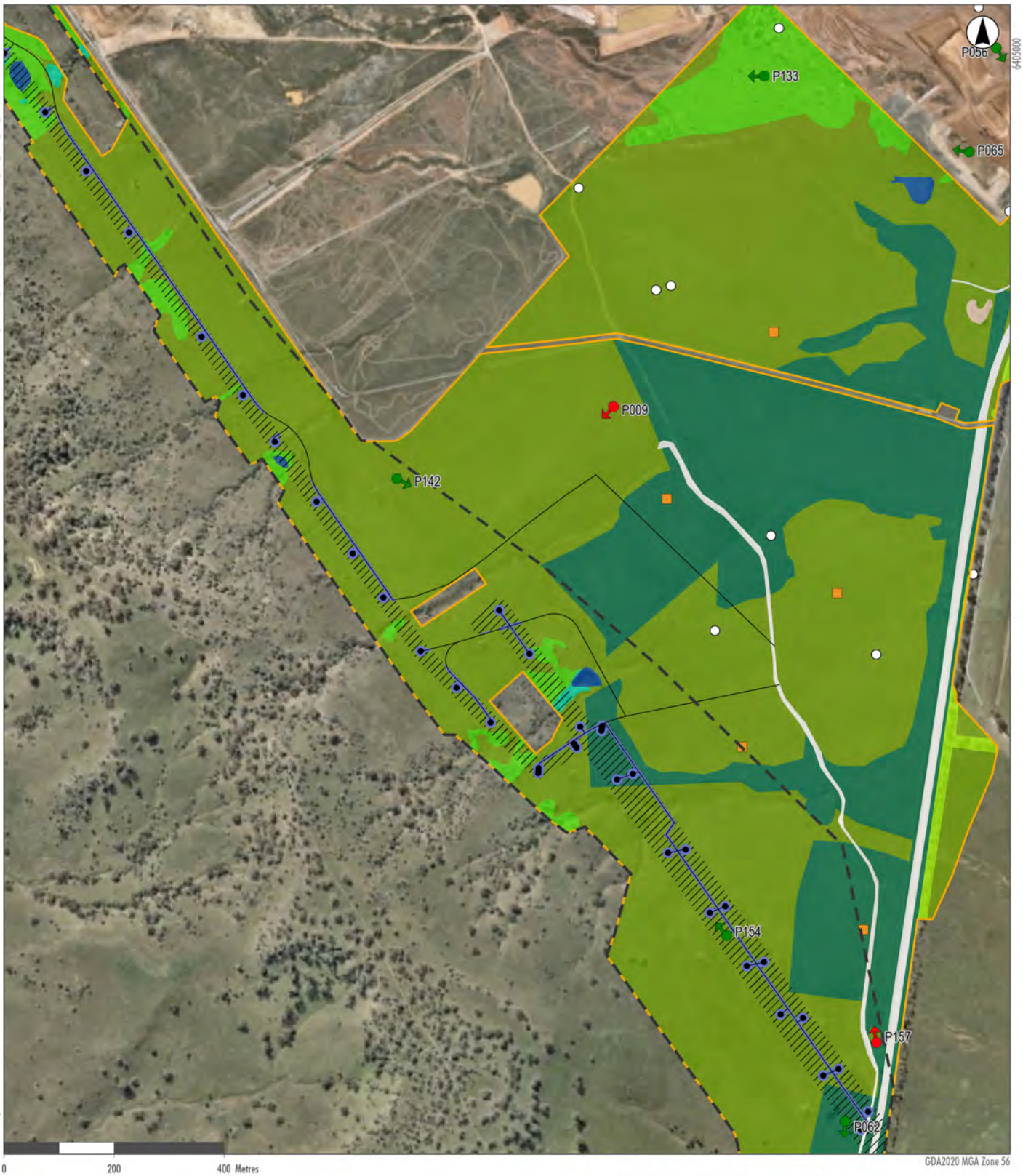
- 0 - 0 I Dam
- 1 - 3431 I Moderate
- 5 - 3431 I Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 I Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 I Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 I Exotic Grassland
- 9 - 3431 I Bullaok Variant



APPENDIX C1-8

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

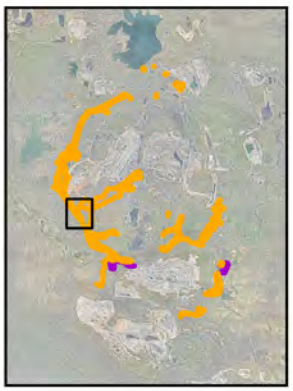


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- IGGAM Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 13 - 4089 | Moderate



APPENDIX C1-9

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

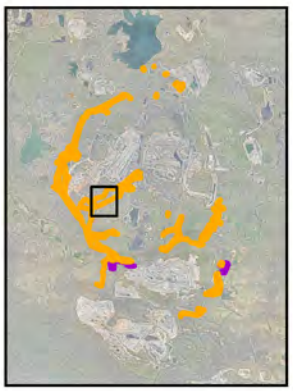


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 10 - 3485 | Moderate
- 13 - 4089 | Moderate



APPENDIX C1-10

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

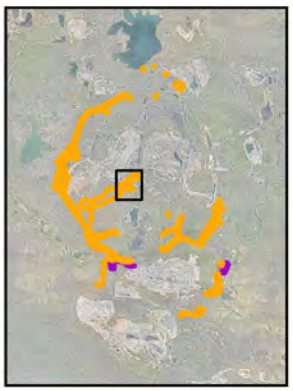


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact

Plant Community Types

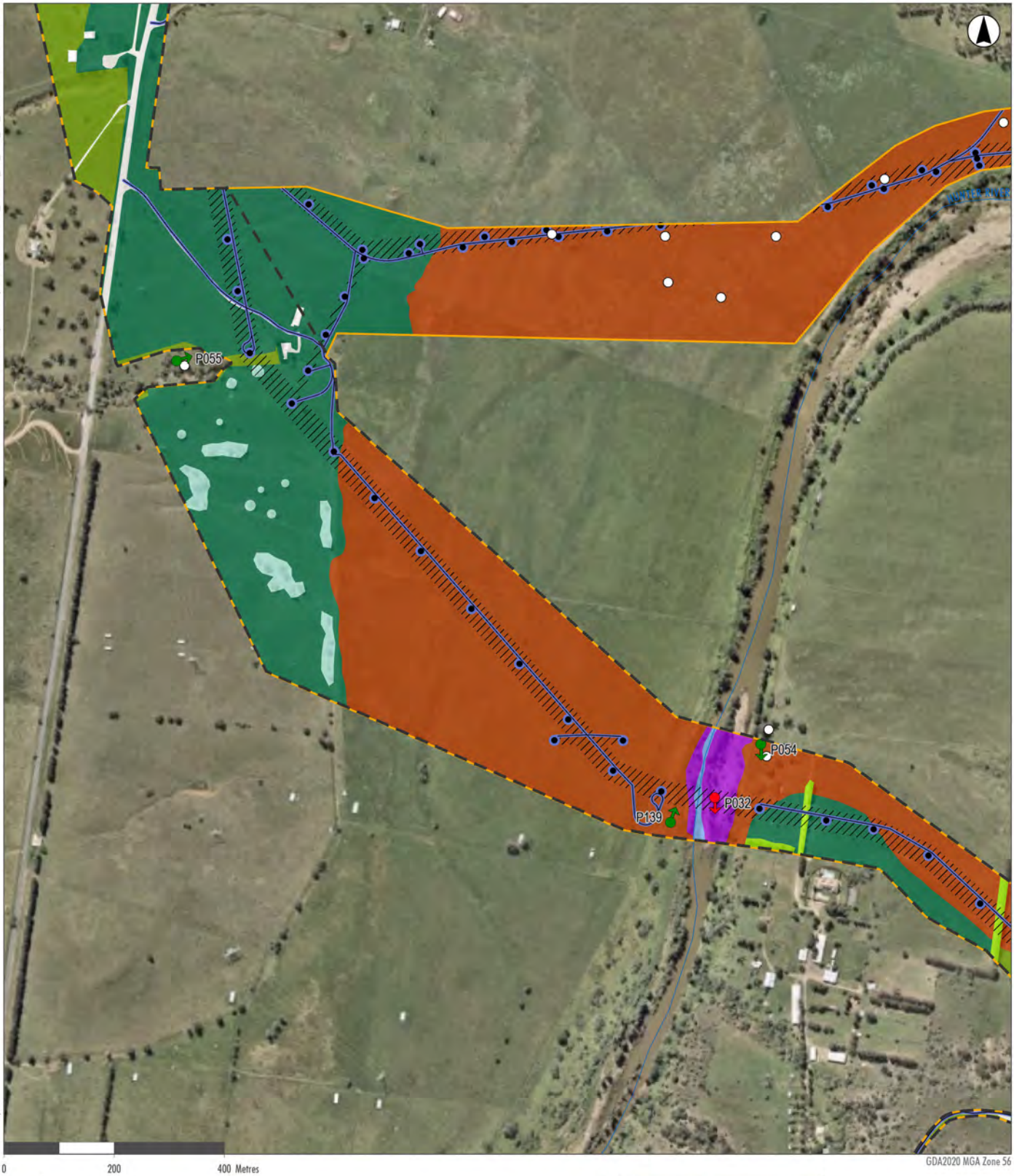
- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant
- 10 - 3485 | Moderate



APPENDIX C1-11

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

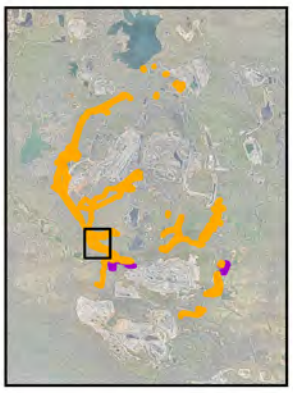
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3 - 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-12

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

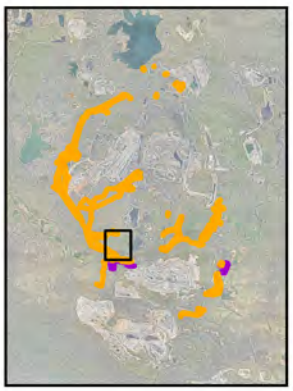


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

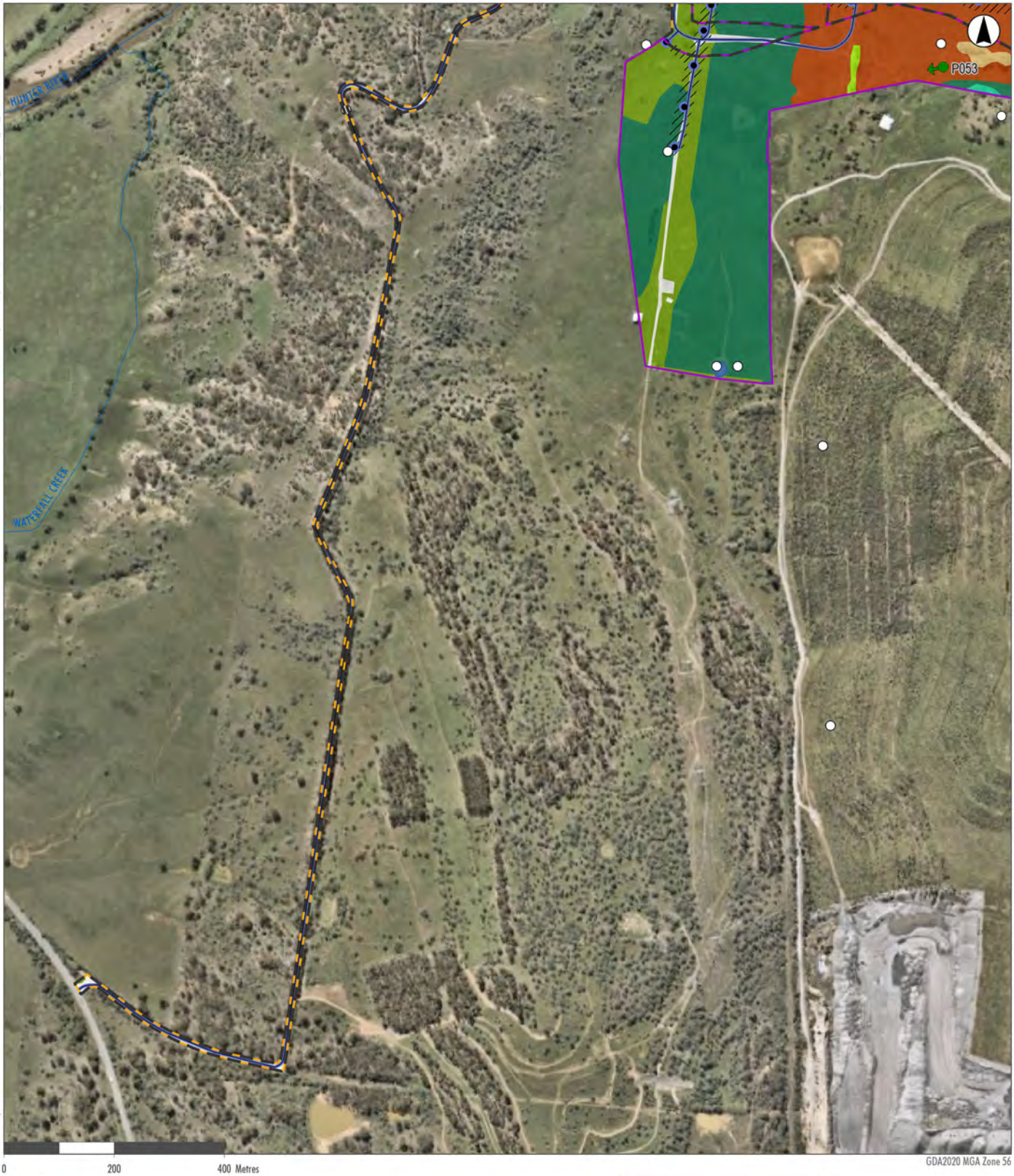
- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 15 - 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 16 - 4089 | Derived Native Grassland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-13

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

0 200 400 Metres

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

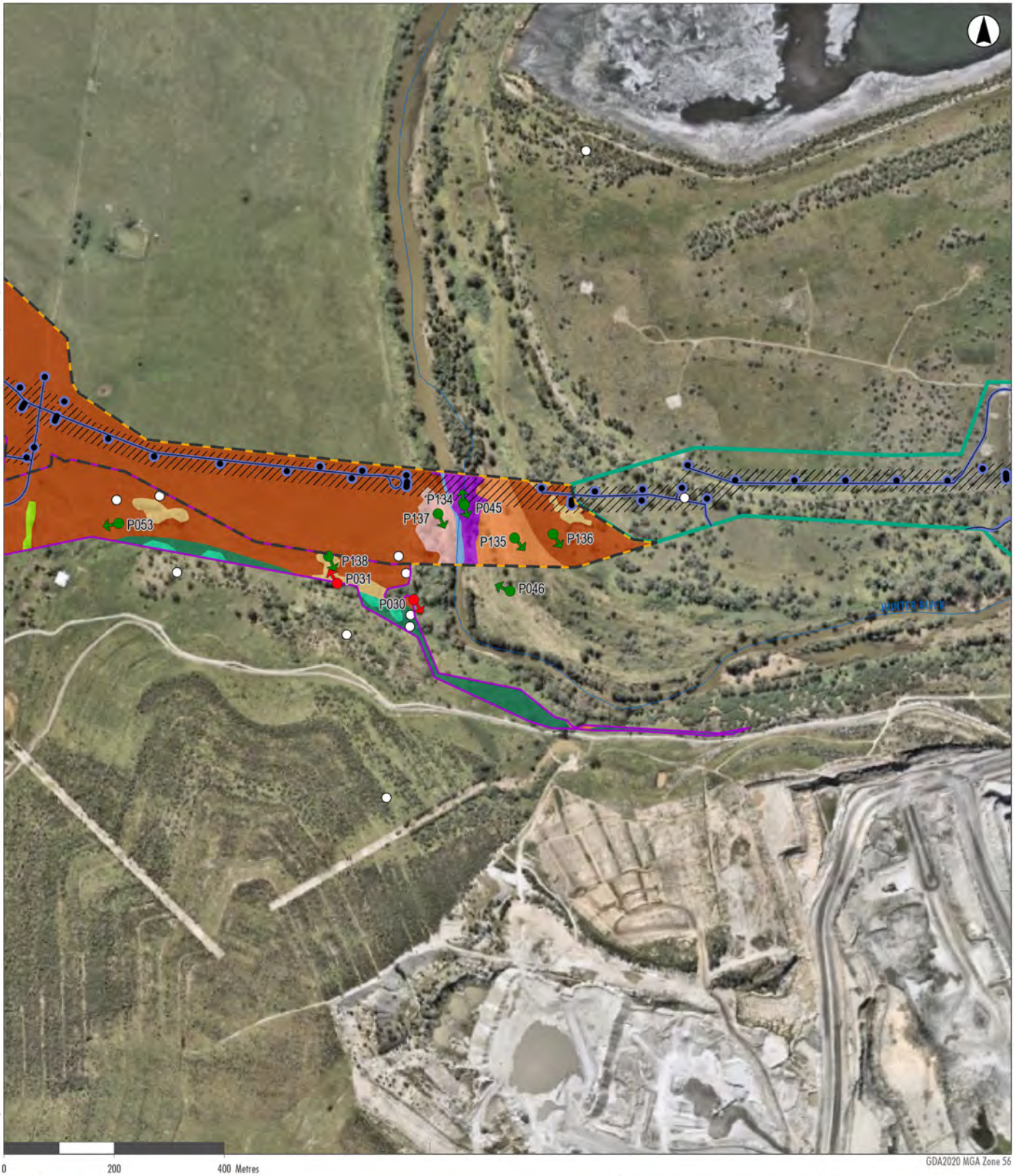
- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 5 - 3431 | Scattered Regeneration
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 15 - 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-14

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

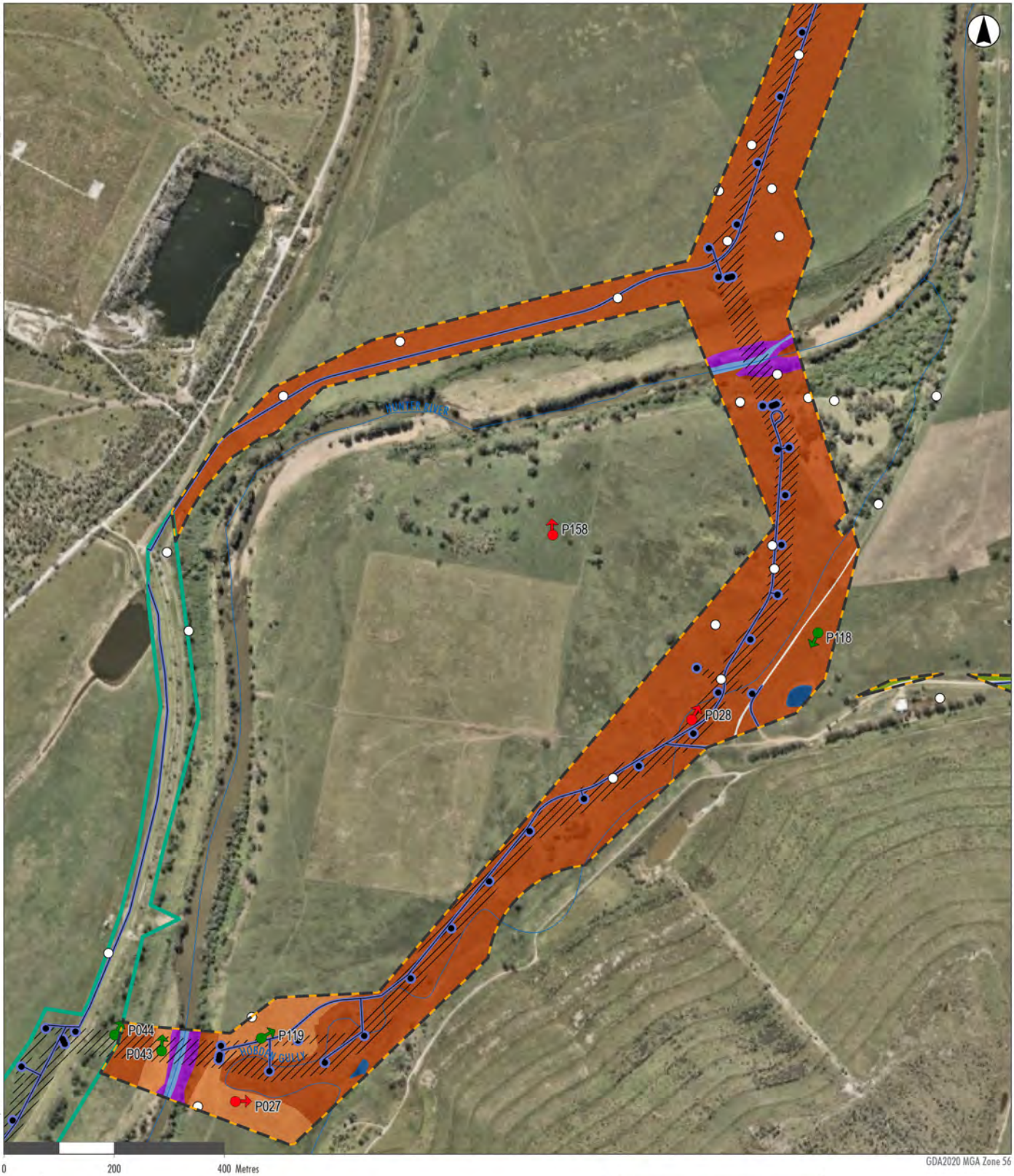
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 4 - 3431 | Plantation
- 6 - 3431 | Cooba Woodland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 14 - 4089 | Low to Moderate
- 15 - 4089 | Cooba Woodland
- 16 - 4089 | Derived Native Grassland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-15

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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at A4

Scale 1:10,000

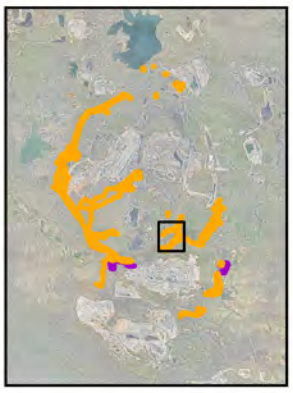
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

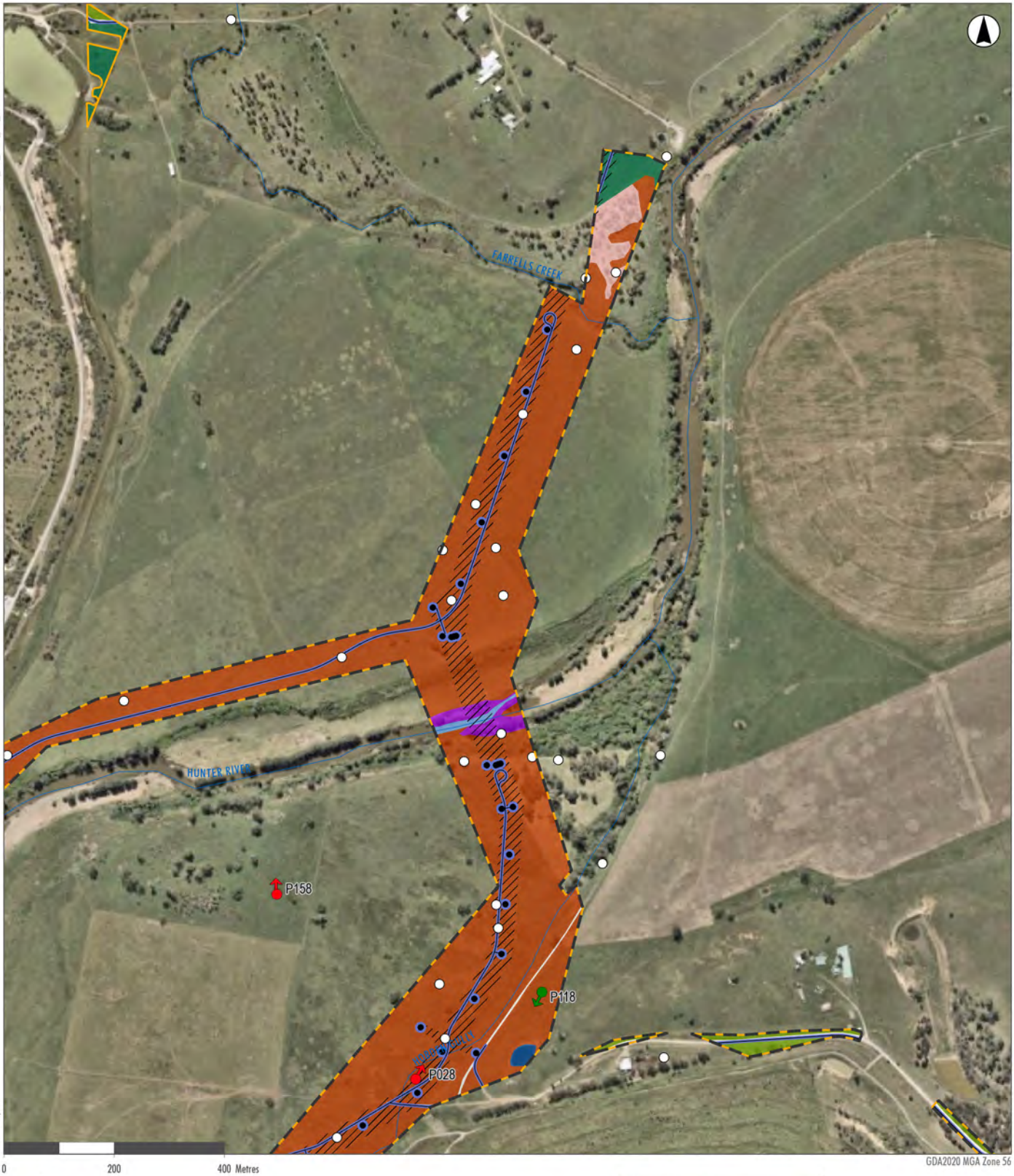
- 0 - 0 I Cleared
- 0 - 0 I Water
- 0 - 0 I Dam
- 7 - 3431 I Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 12 - 4081 I Moderate
- 16 - 4089 I Derived Native Grassland
- 17 - 4089 I Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-16

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

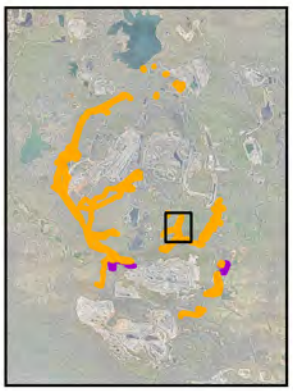
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 14 - 4089 | Low to Moderate
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-17

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Water
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 11 - 4015 | Moderate
- 12 - 4081 | Moderate
- 14 - 4089 | Low to Moderate
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland

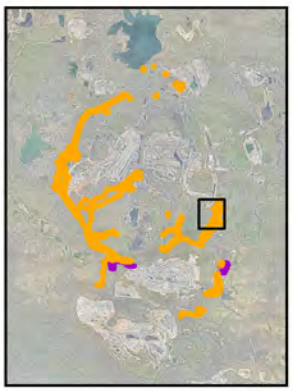
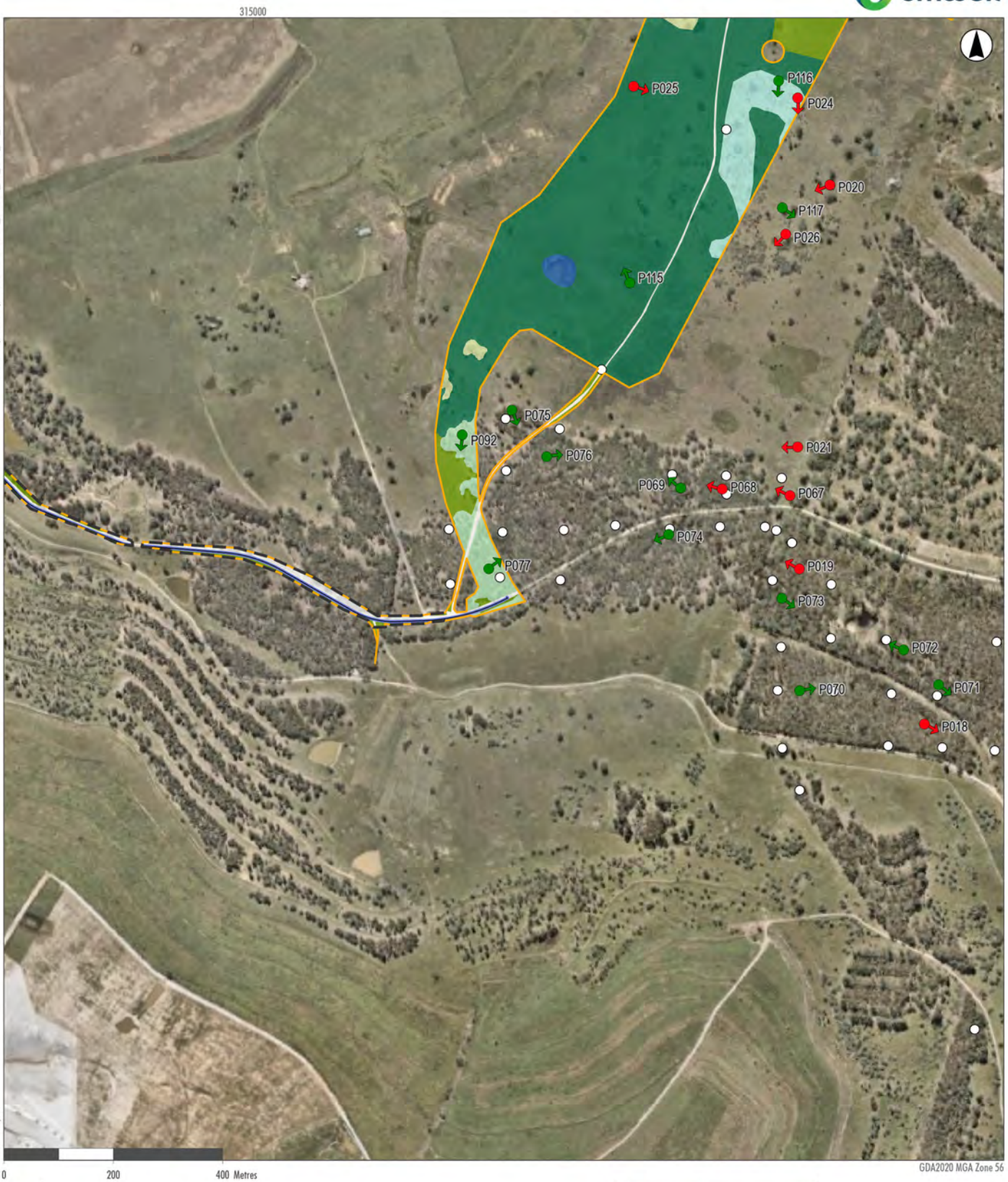


Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

APPENDIX C1-18

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

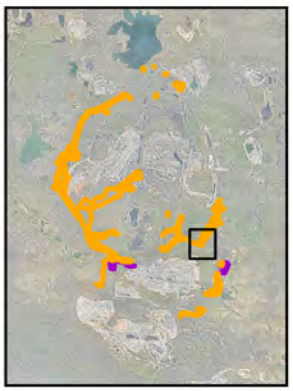
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- Access Track
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

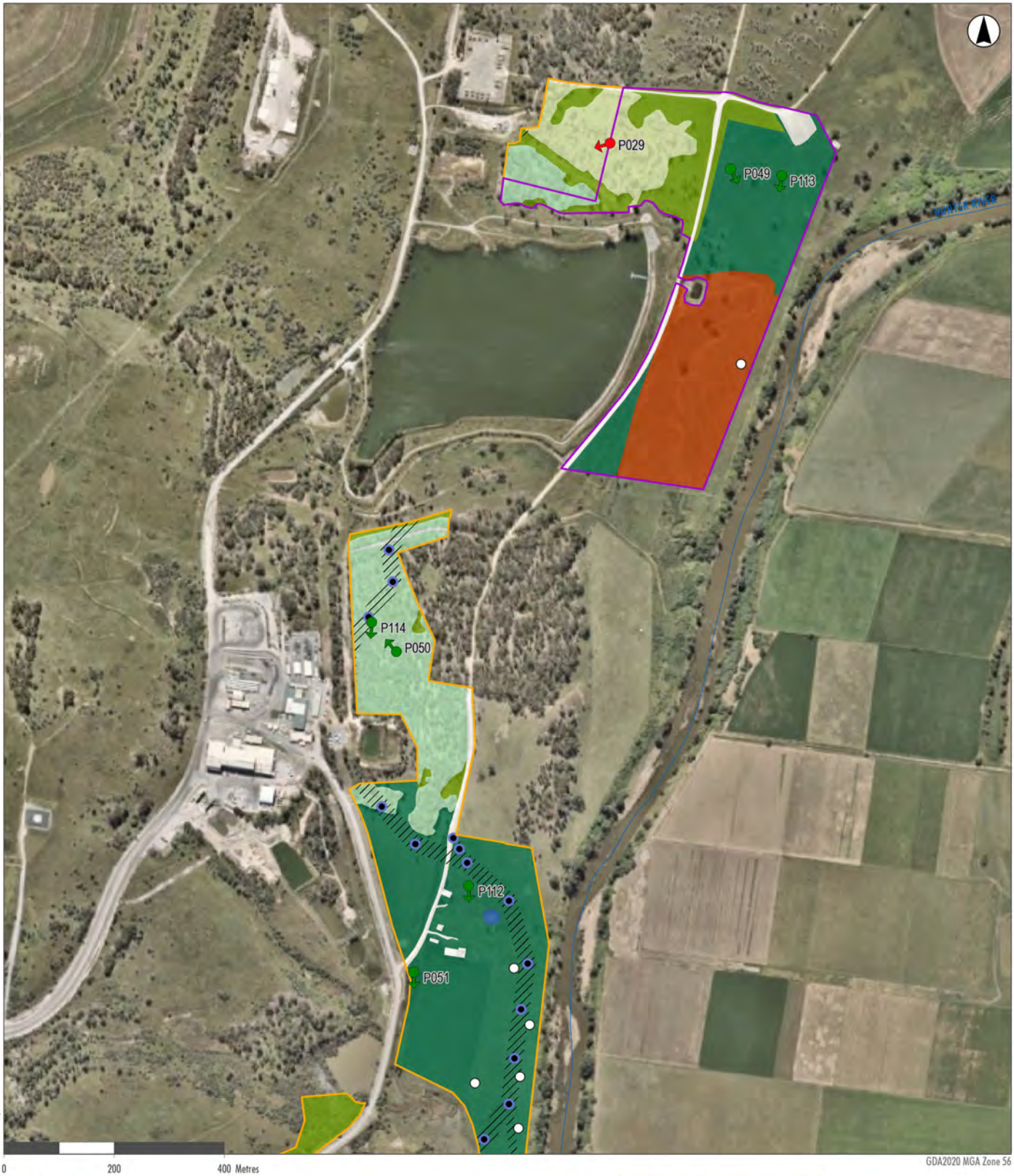
- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3 - 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-19

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

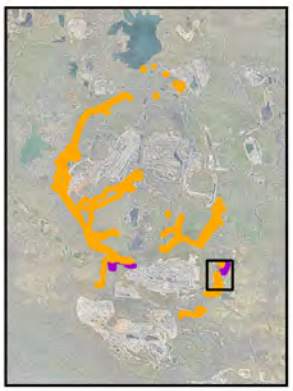


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- BAM Plots (not included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- ETL Power Pole

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 | Cleared
- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 2 - 3431 | Thinned Woodland
- 3 - 3431 | Woodland with Exotic Understorey
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 | Exotic Grassland
- 17 - 4089 | Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-20

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

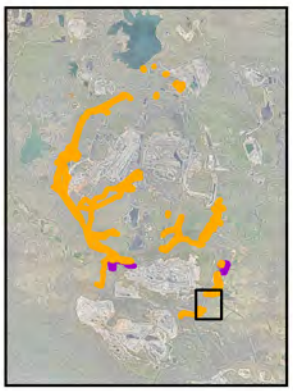


Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location
- ETL MZ1 – full impact
- ETL MZ2 – partial impact
- Access Track
- ETL Power Pole
- Wider Easement Area (no proposed impact outside of MZ1 and MZ2)

Plant Community Types

- 0 - 0 I Cleared
- 0 - 0 I Dam
- 1 - 3431 I Moderate
- 7 - 3431 I Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 8 - 3431 I Exotic Grassland



APPENDIX C1-21

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

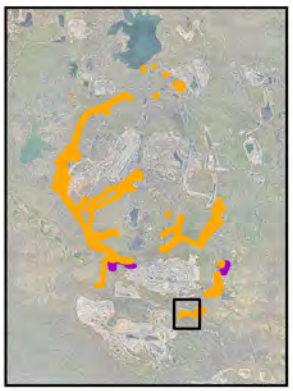
Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Drainage Line
- BAM Plots (included in BAM-C)
- Rapid Assessment Location

Plant Community Types

0 - 0 | Cleared

- 0 - 0 | Dam
- 1 - 3431 | Moderate
- 7 - 3431 | Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland
- 9 - 3431 | Bulloak Variant



APPENDIX C1-22

Vegetation Zones/Plant Community Types in the HVO North and South Development Footprints

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

Legend

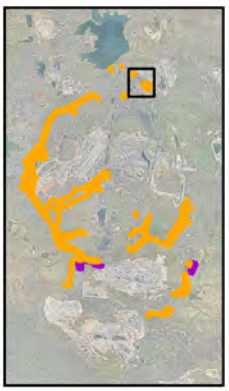
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-23

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

0 200 400 Metres



ANNEXURE C1-24

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

0 200 400 Metres

Legend

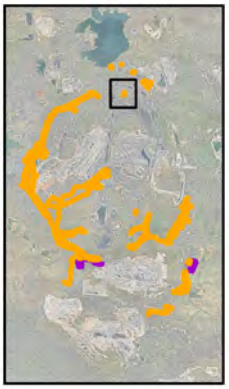
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

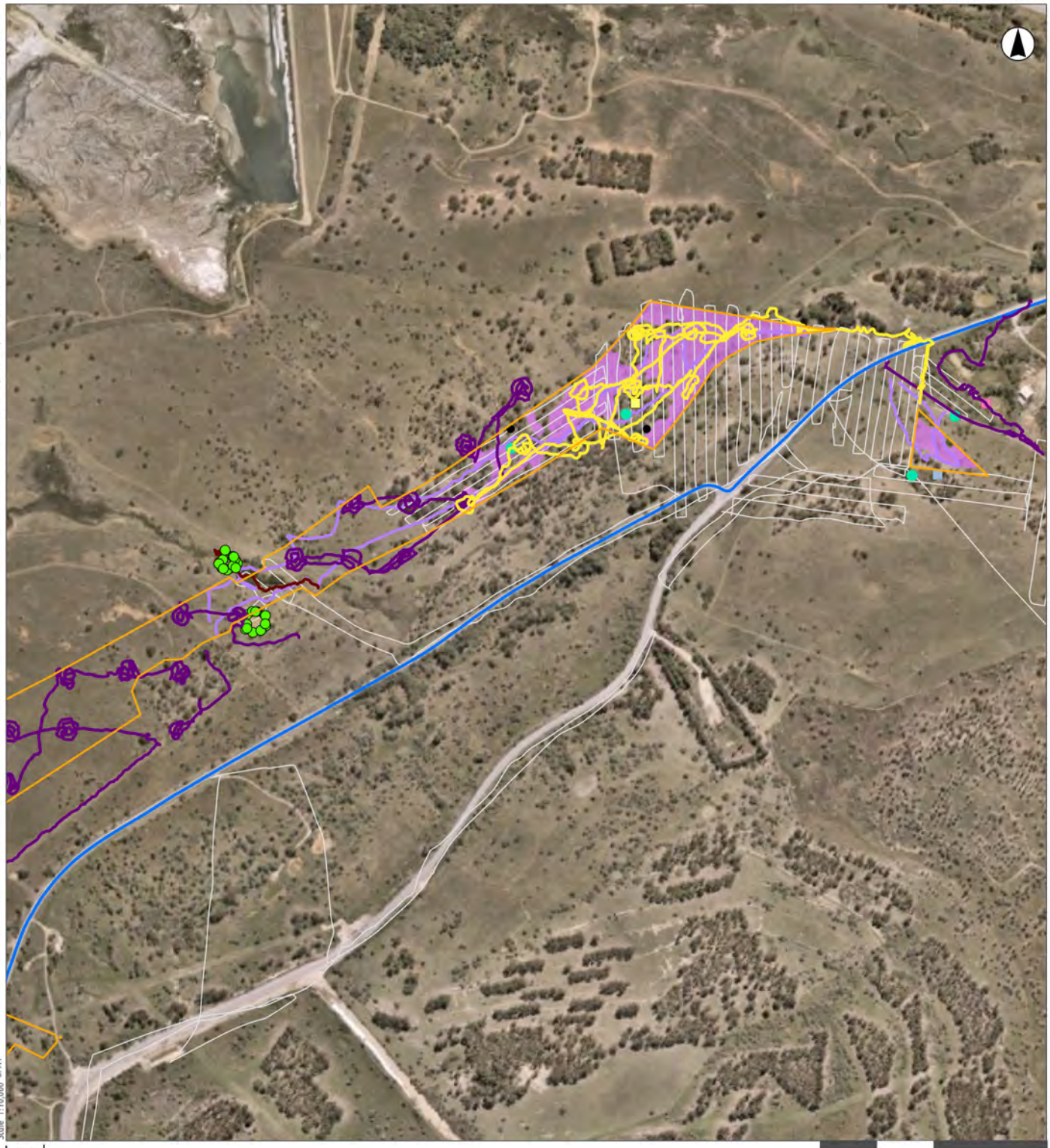


ANNEXURE C1-25

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)

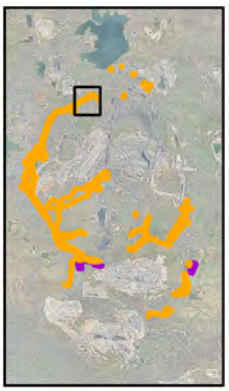
Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

0 200 400 Metres

Scale 1:10,000 at A4

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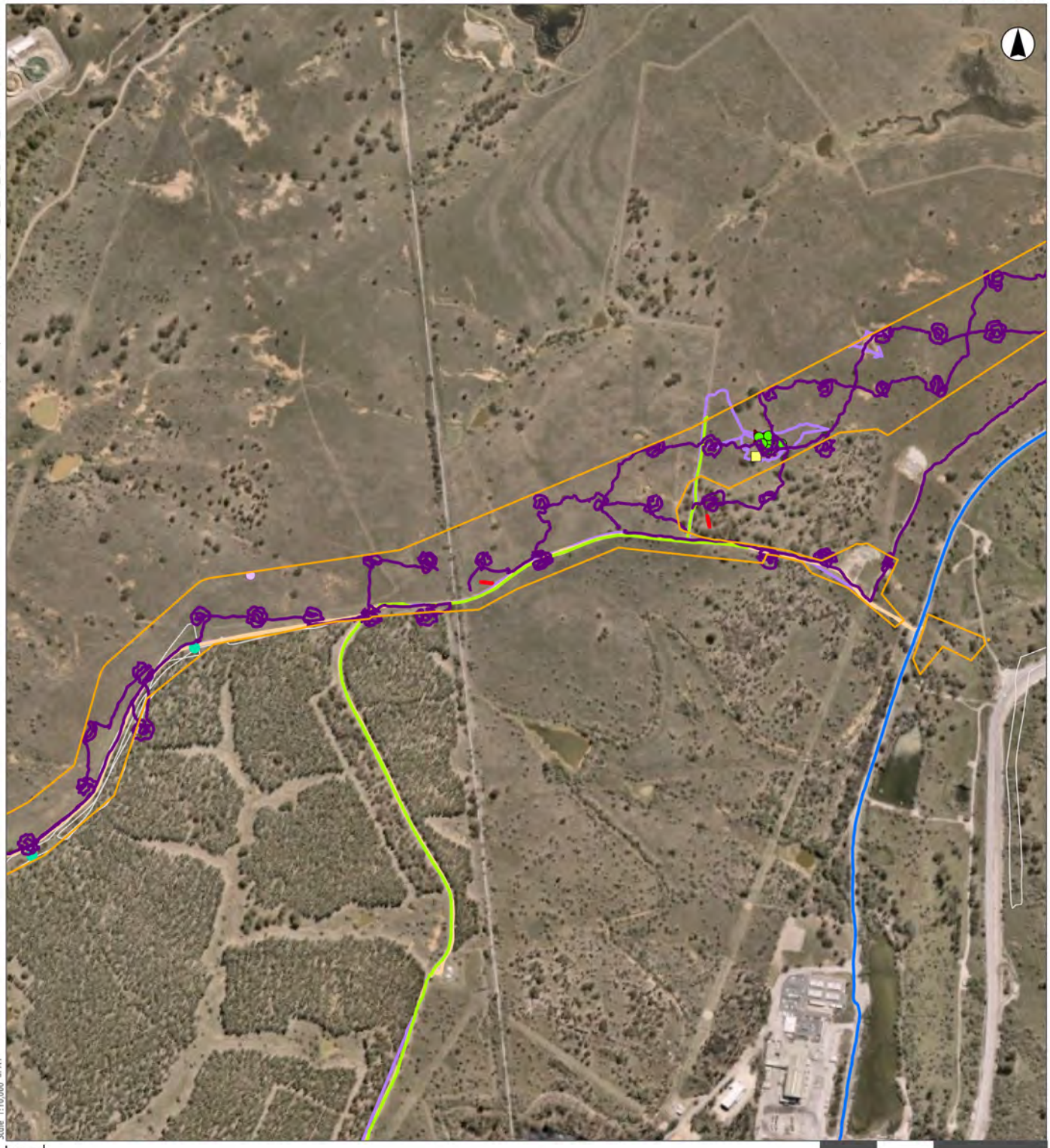


ANNEXURE C1-26

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

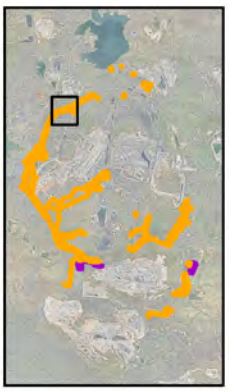
- HVO North Development Footprint

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
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- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-27

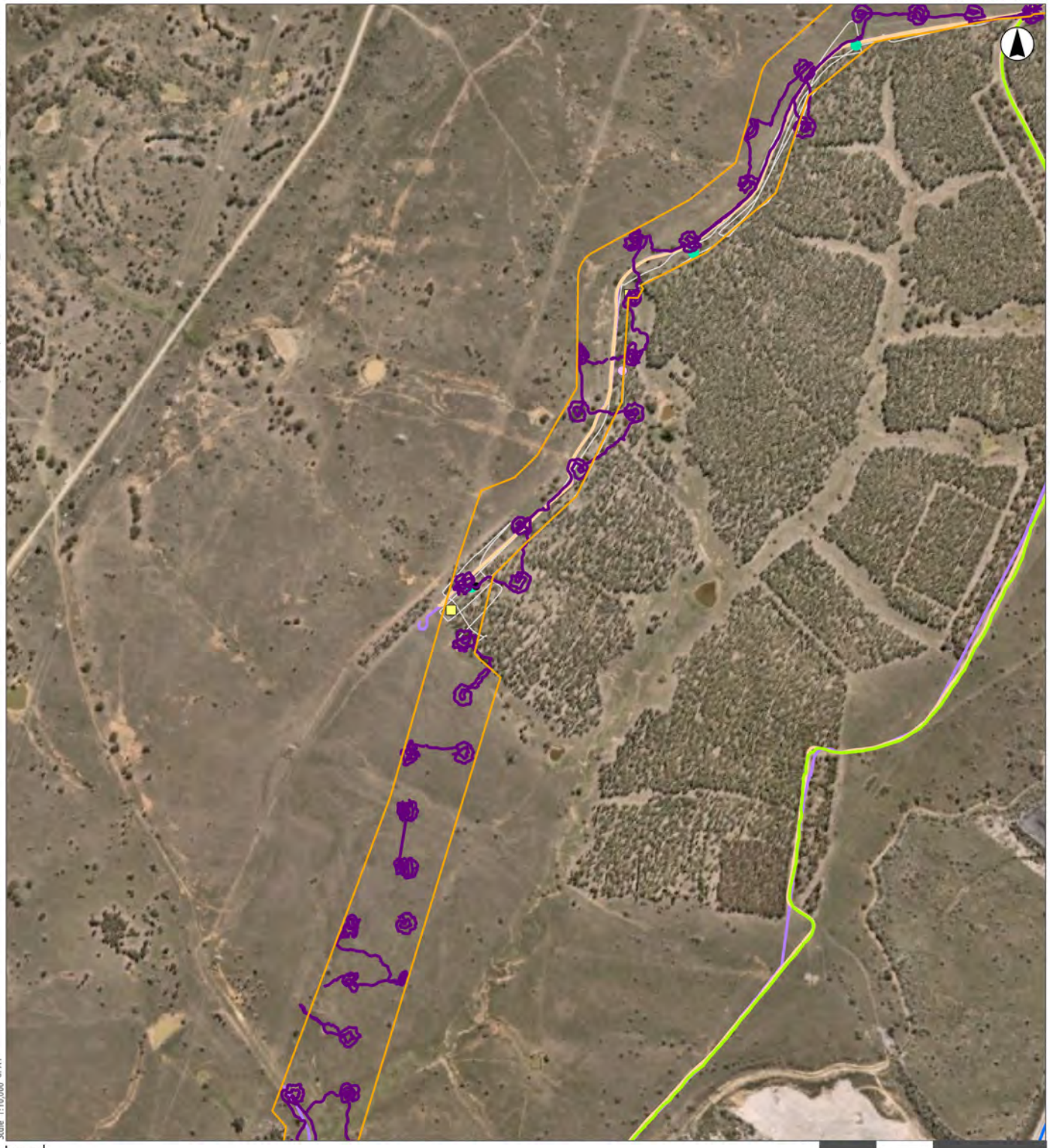
Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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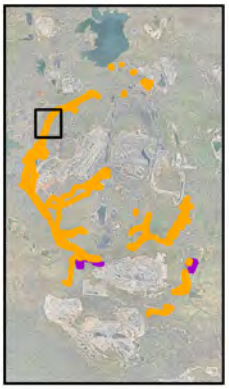
- HVO North Development Footprint

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-28

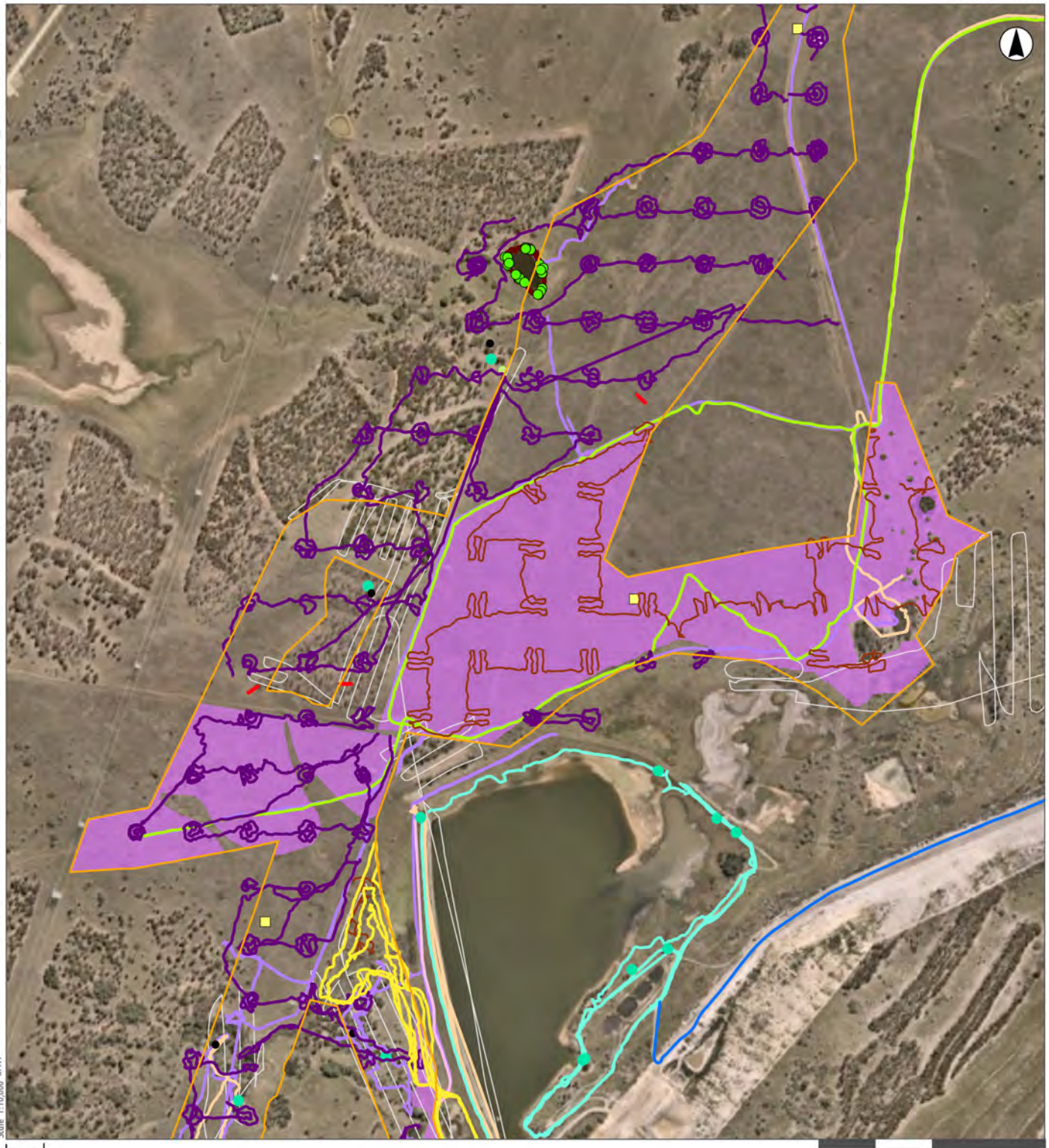
Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

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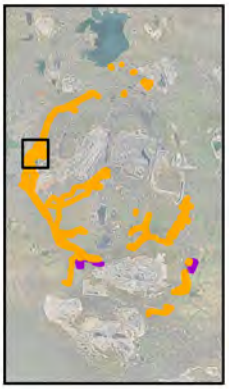
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
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- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Green and golden bell frog call playback and spotlighting surveys for Commonwealth Assessment
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

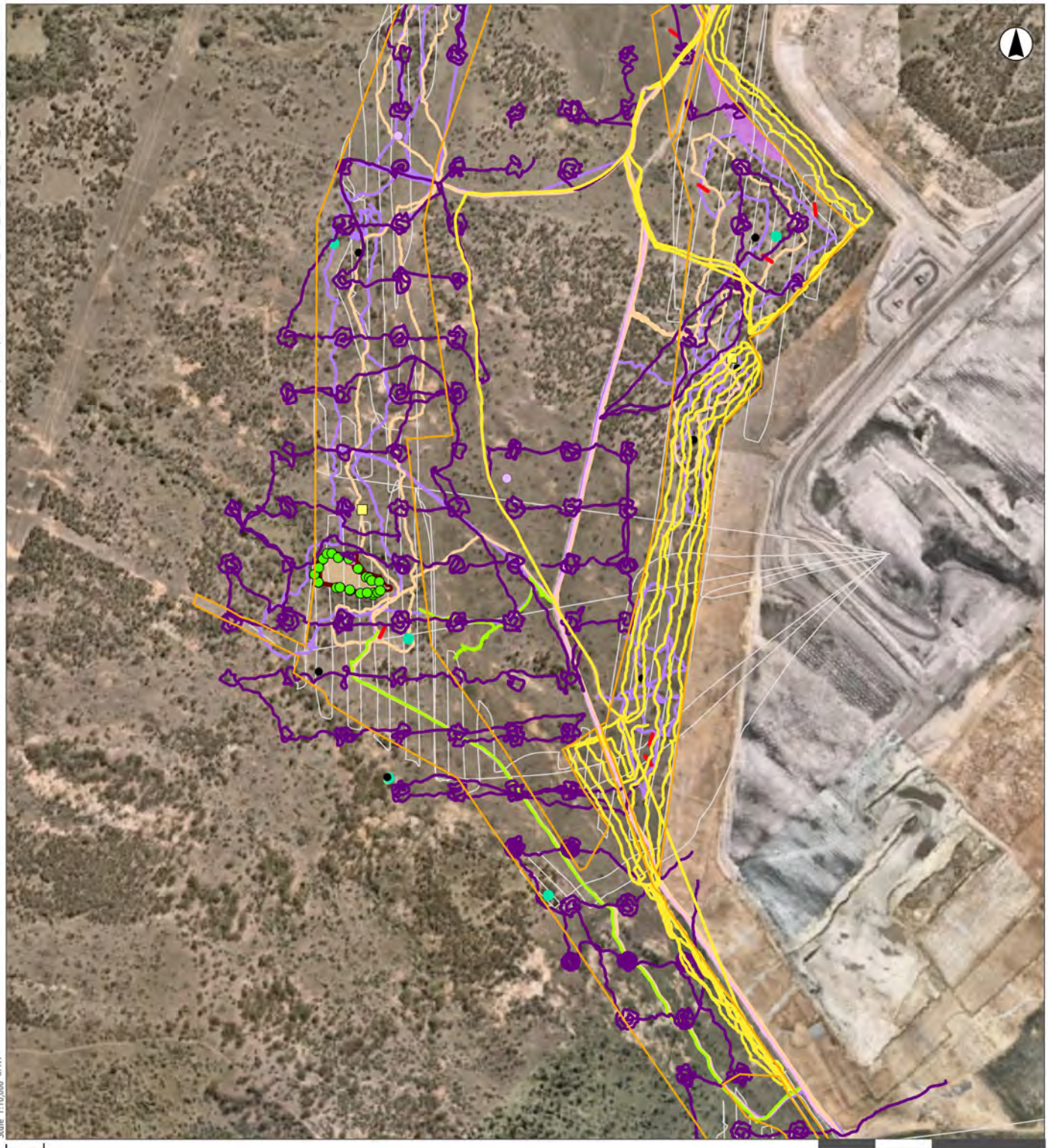


ANNEXURE C1-29

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



0 200 400 Metres

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
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- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-30

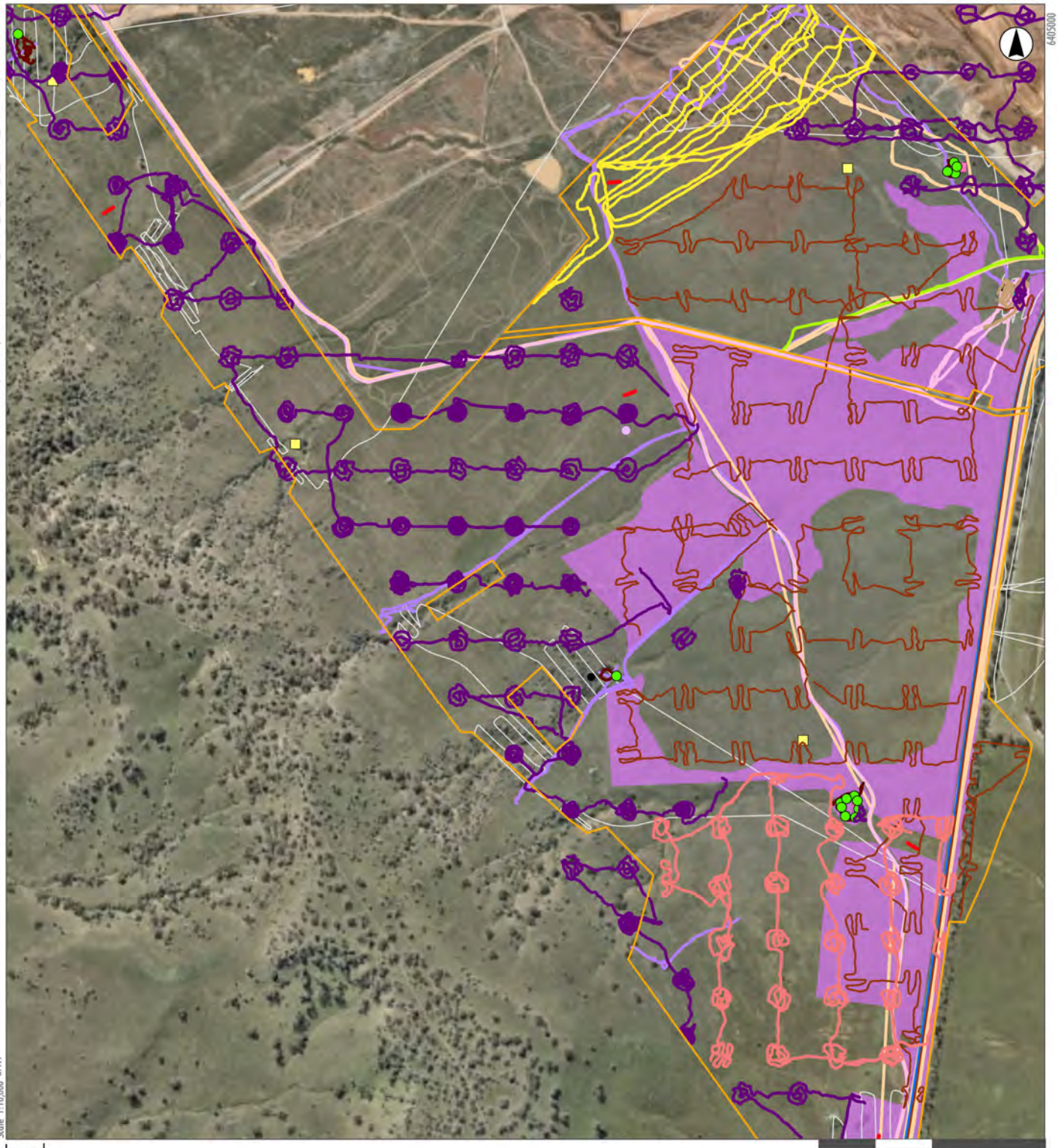
Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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Scale: 1:10,000 at A4

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (September 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
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- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
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- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

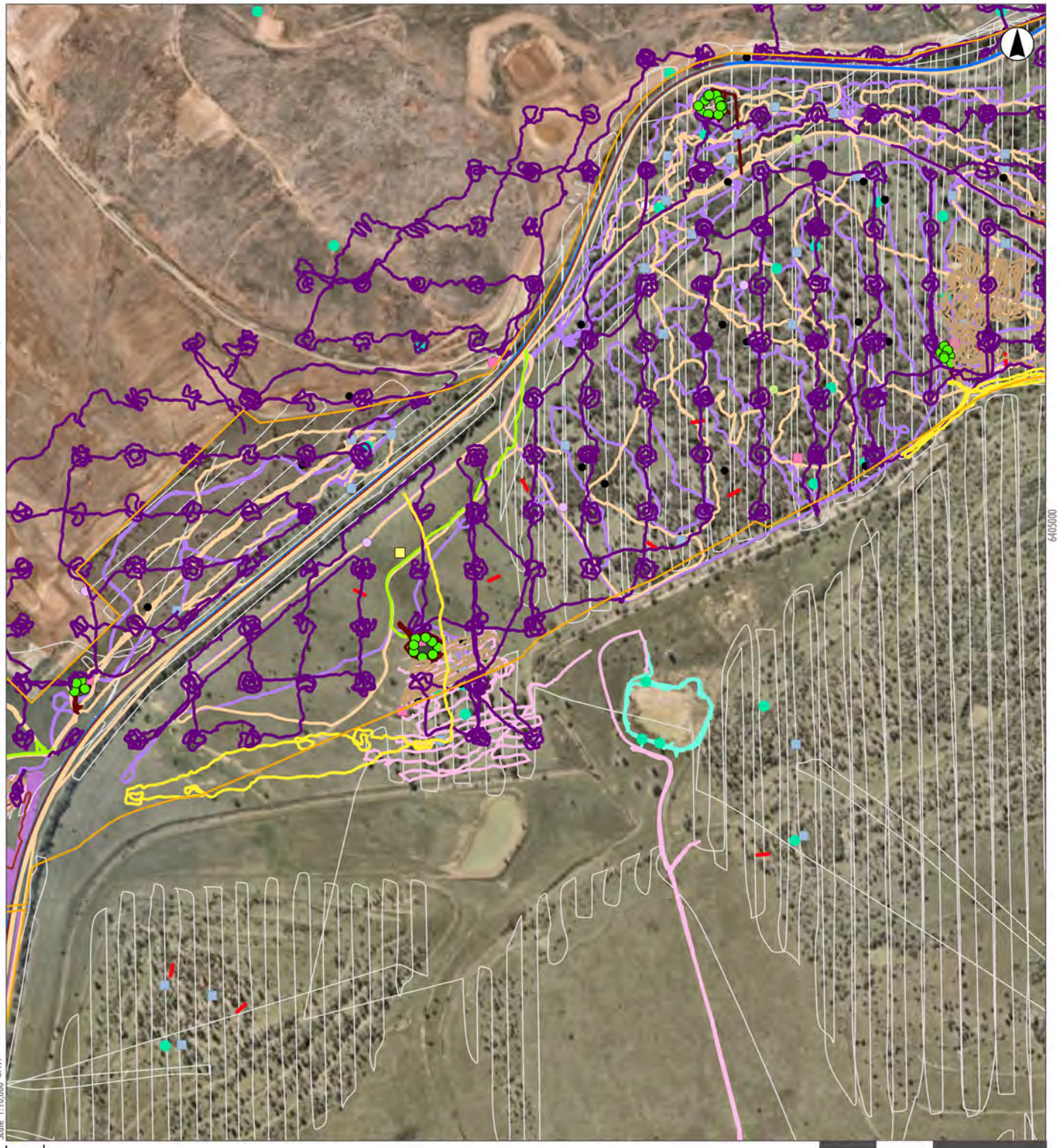


ANNEXURE C1-31

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
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- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Green and golden bell frog call playback and spotlighting surveys for Commonwealth Assessment
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

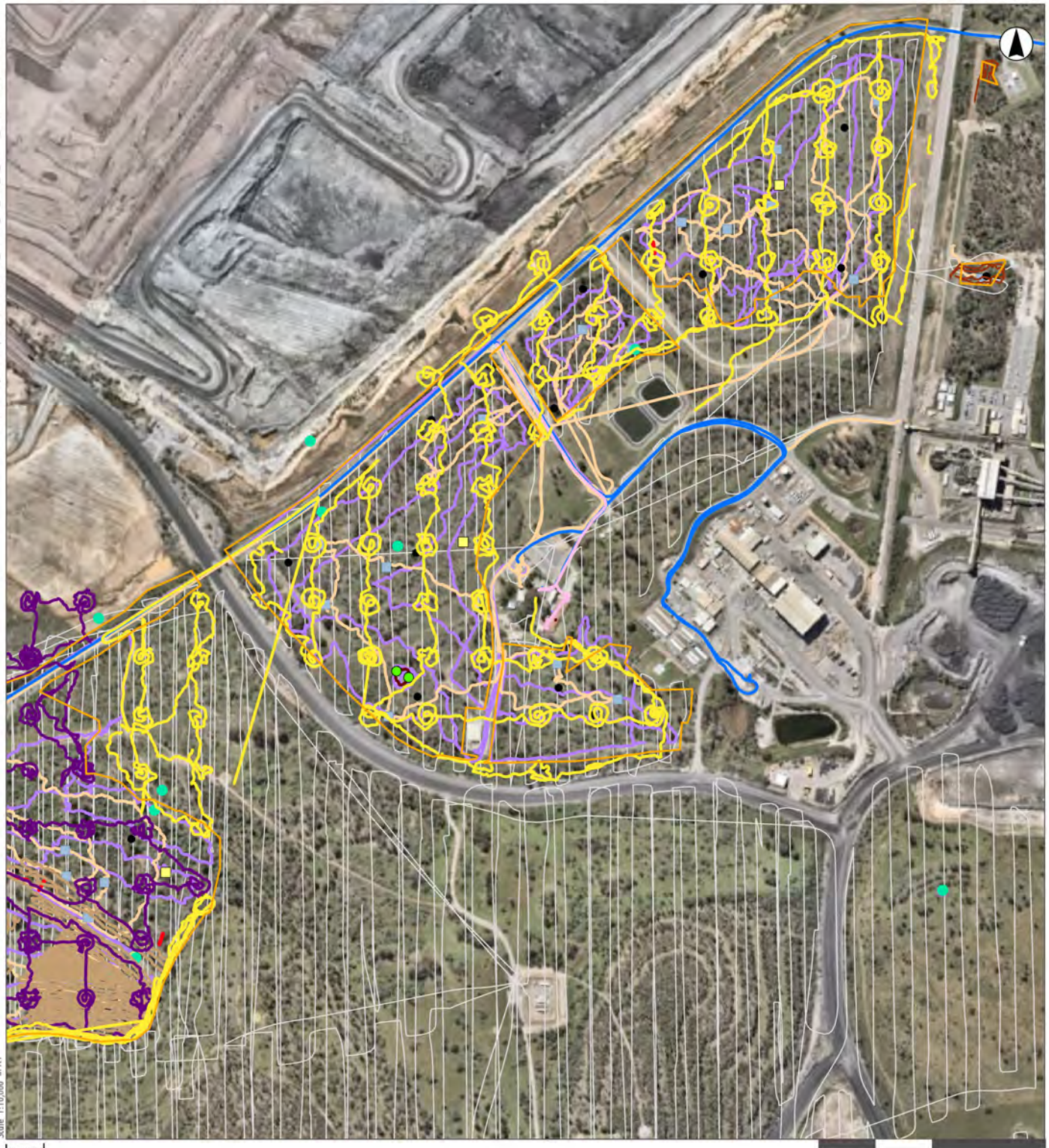


ANNEXURE C1-32

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-33

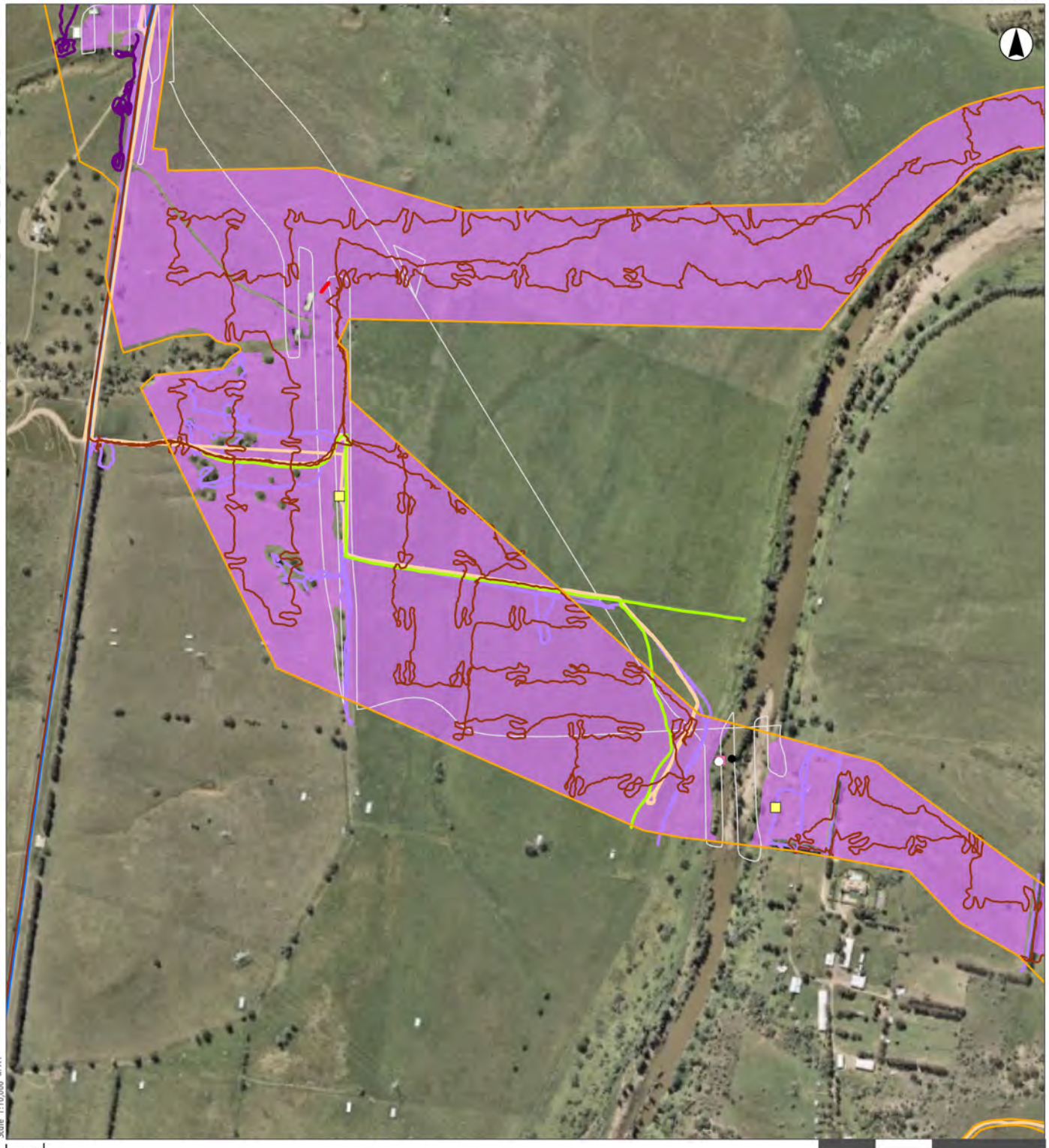
Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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Scale 1:10,000 at A4



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

Legend

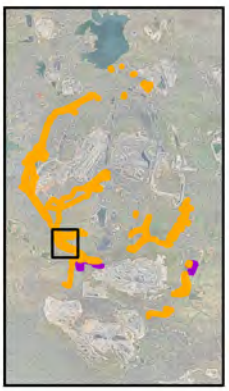
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (February - March 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-34

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

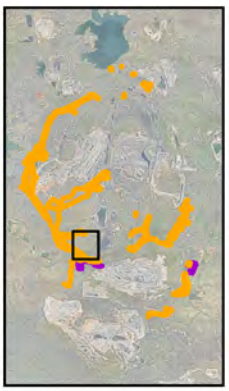
Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

0 200 400 Metres

Scale 1:10,000 at A4

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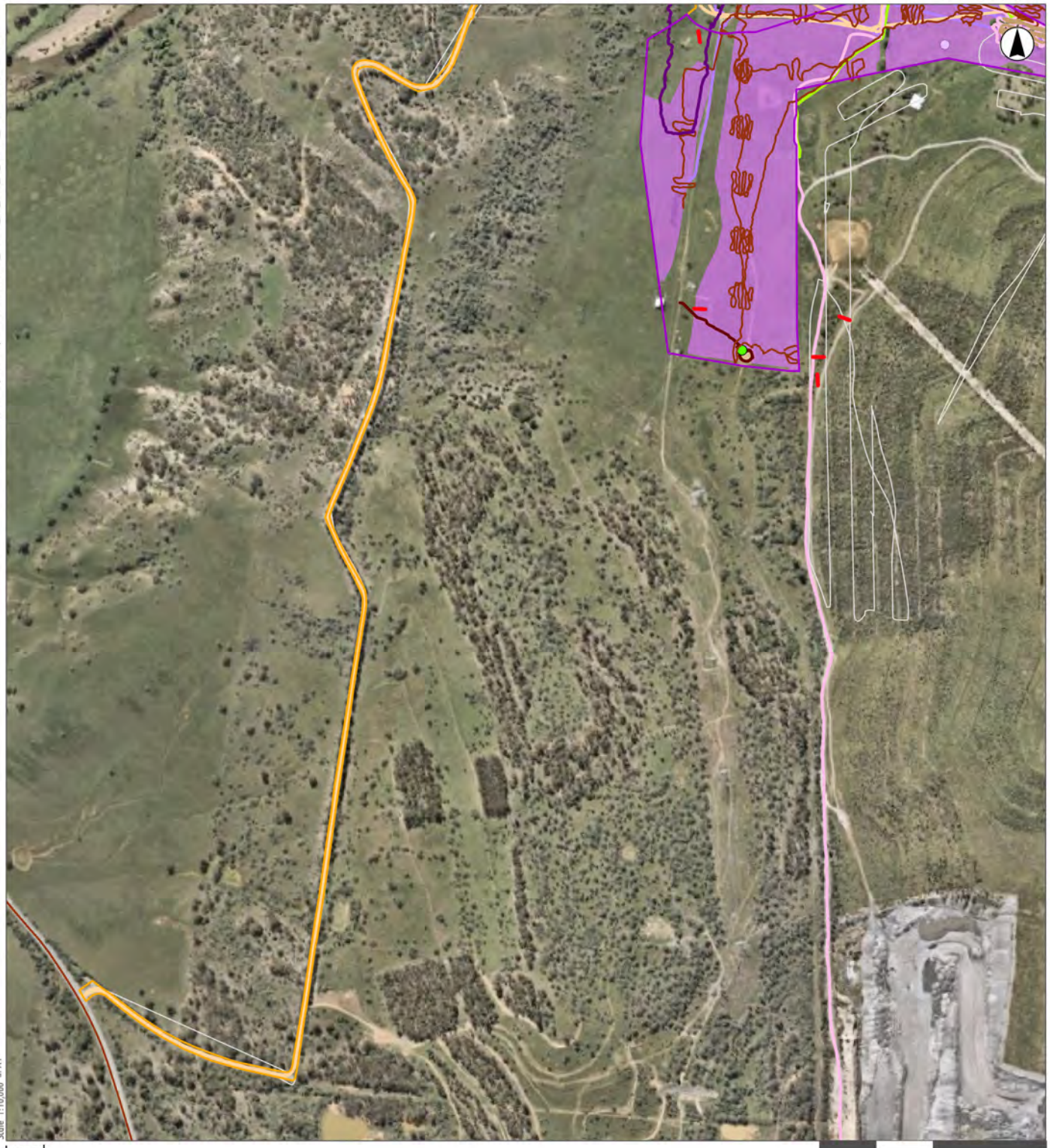


ANNEXURE C1-35

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale: 1:10,000 at A4

Legend

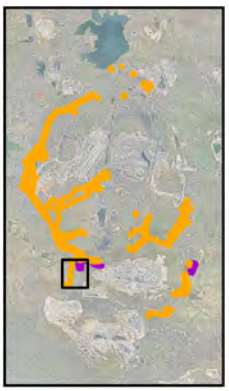
- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
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- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

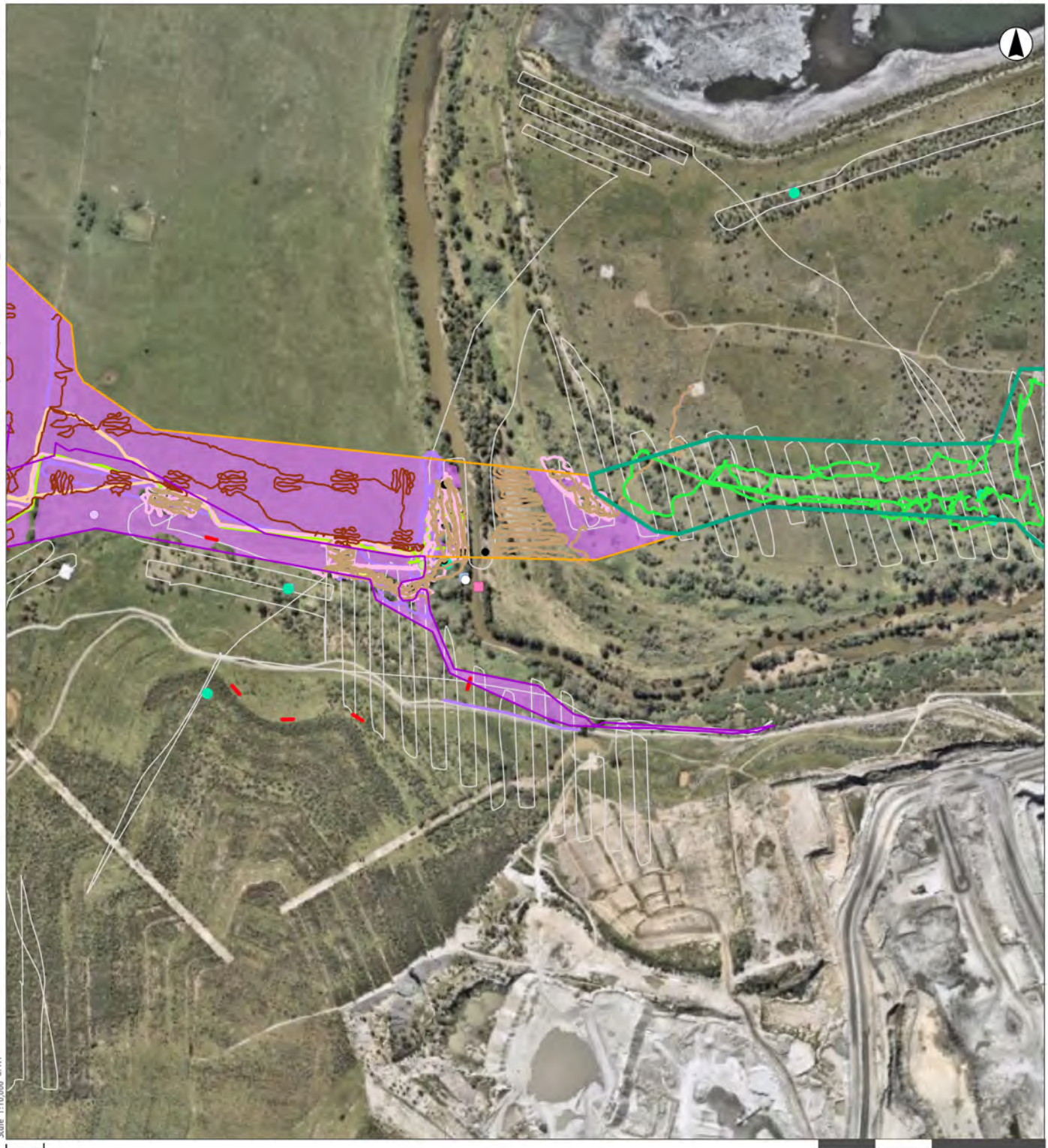


ANNEXURE C1-36

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Scale 1:10,000 at A4

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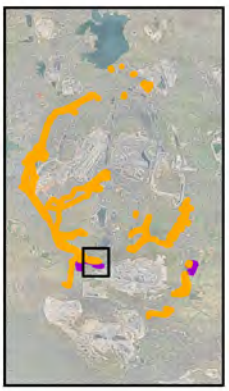
- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted RRG Traverses (August 2022)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
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- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

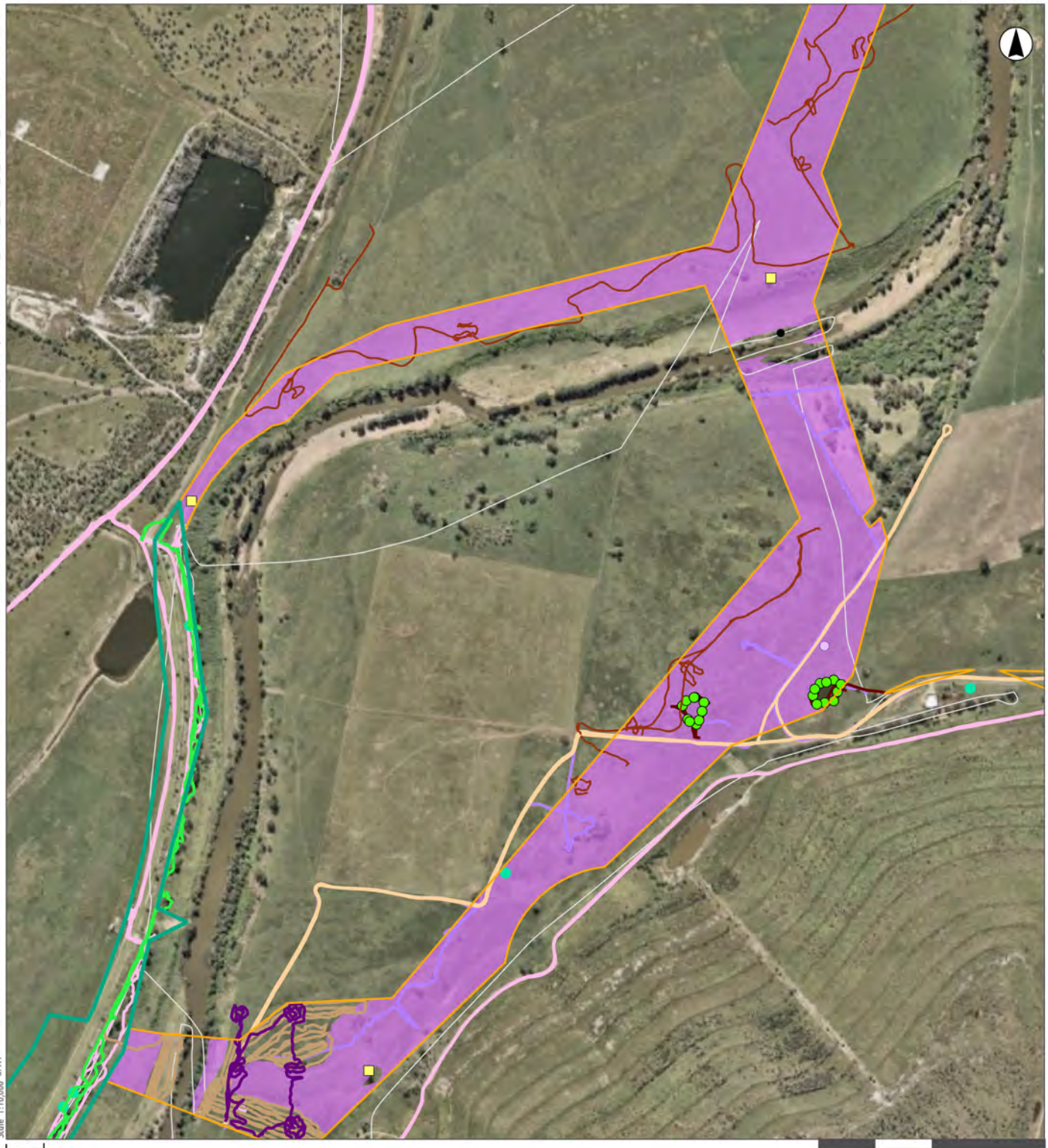


ANNEXURE C1-37

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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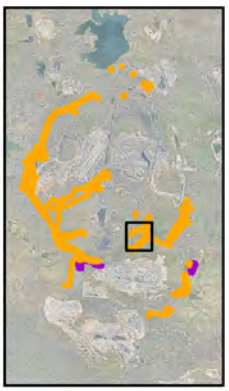
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation
- River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted RRG Traverses (August 2022)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (November 2023)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

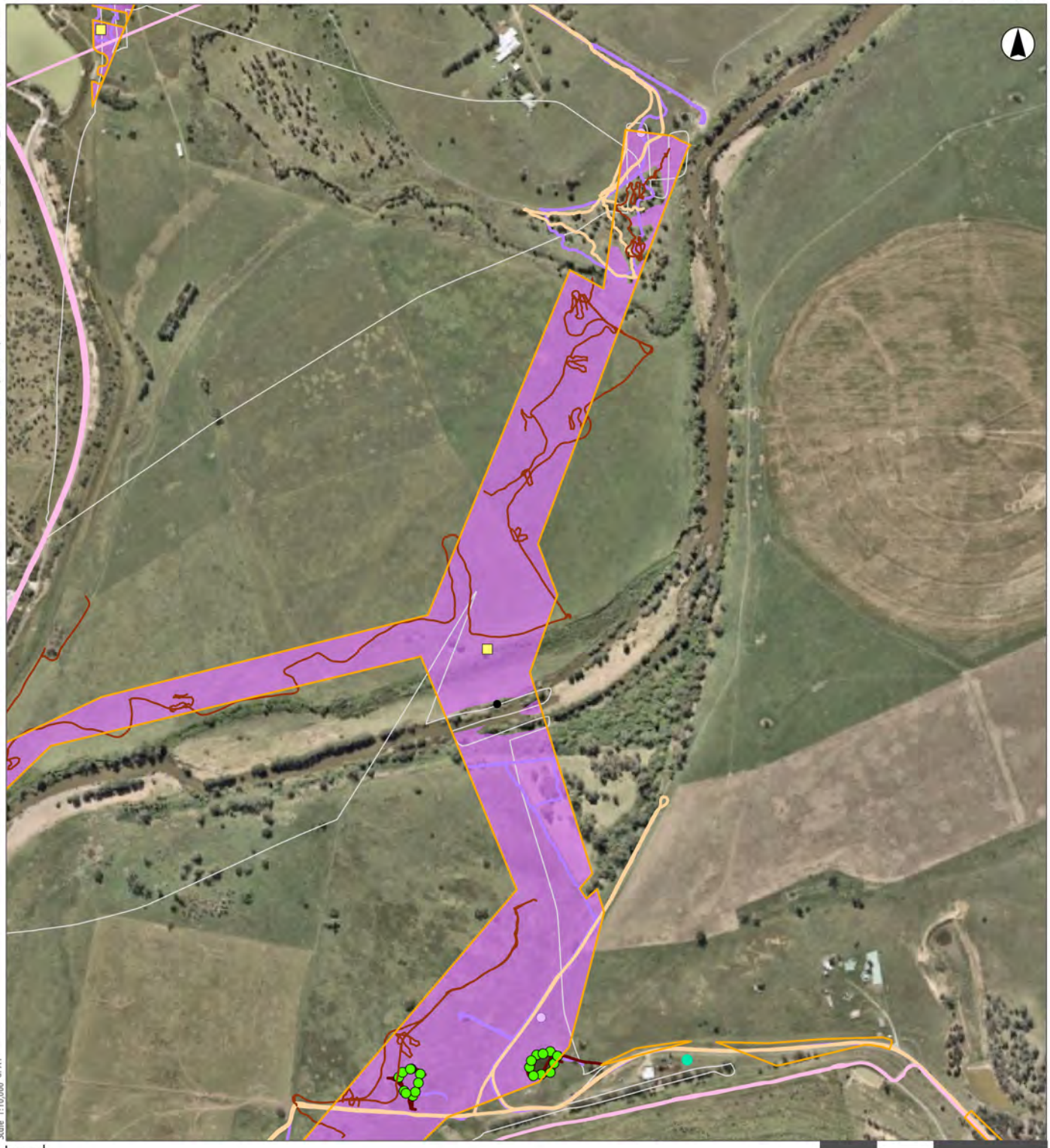


ANNEXURE C1-38

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



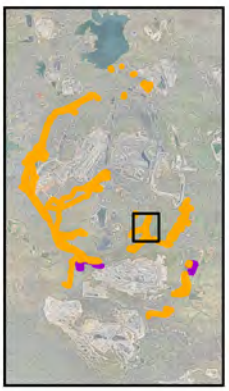
Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

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ANNEXURE C1-39

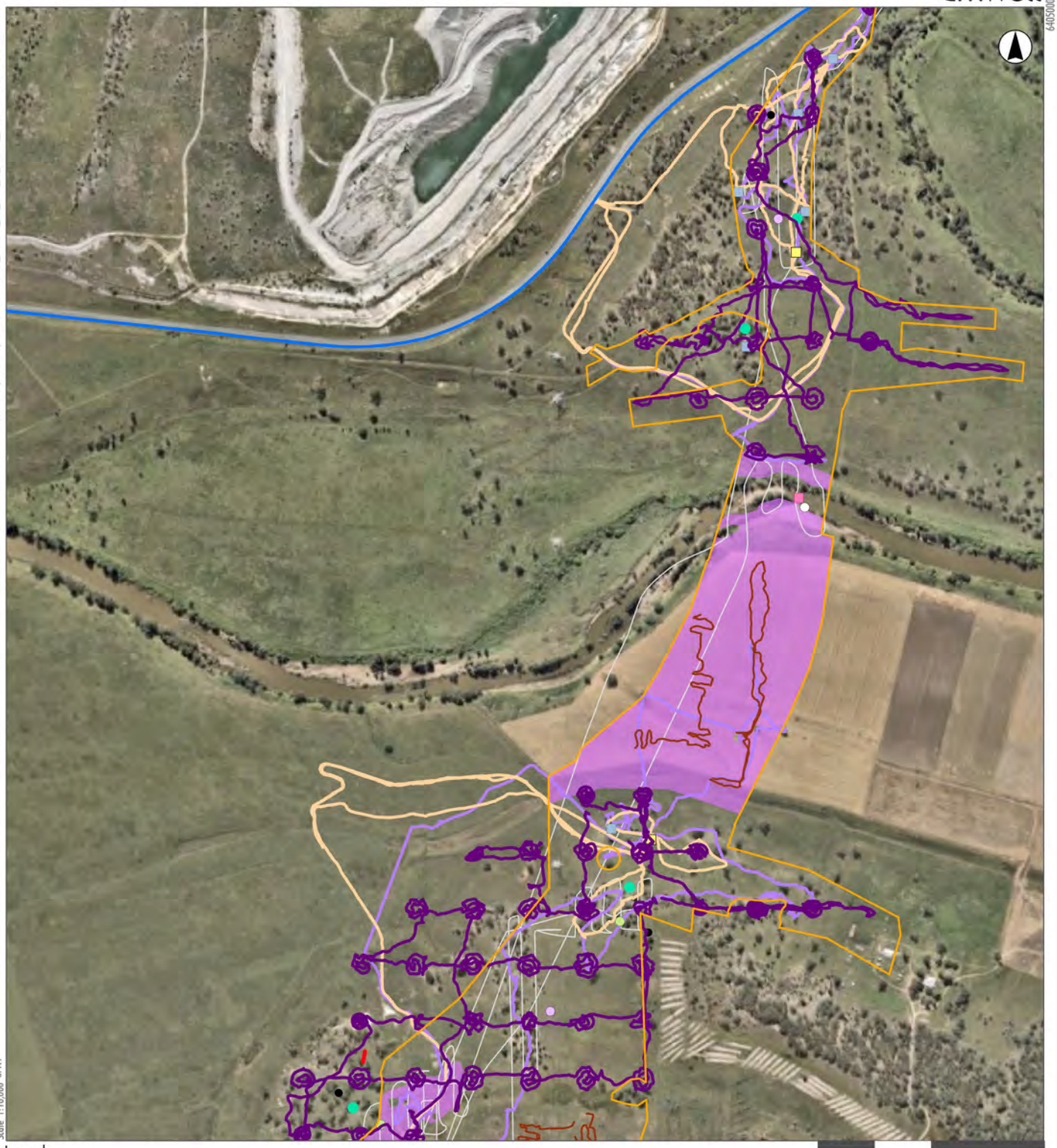
Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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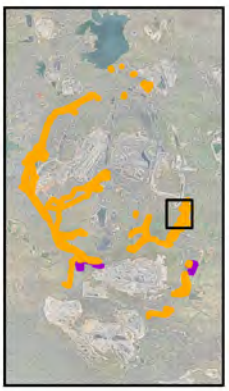
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

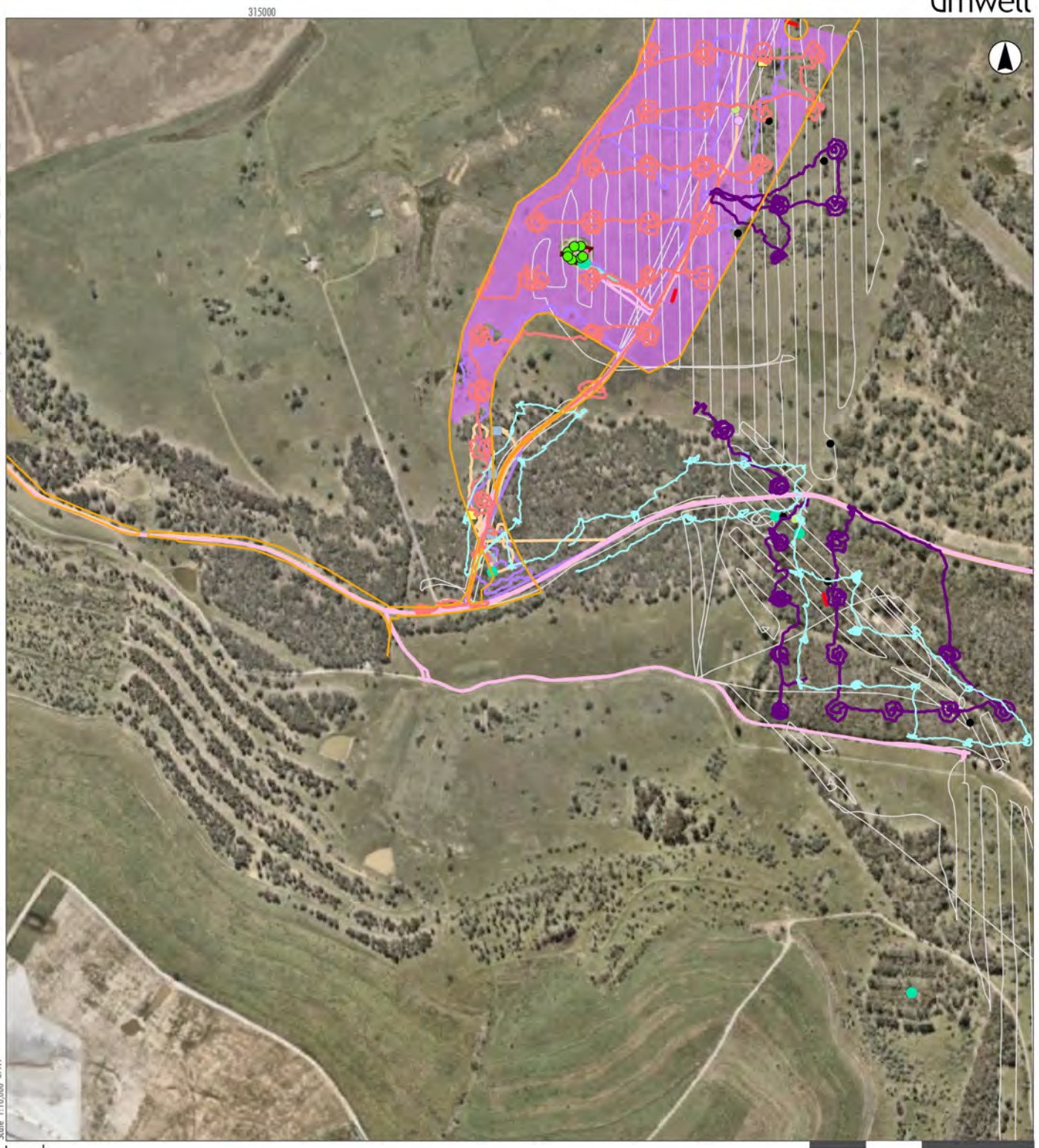


ANNEXURE C1-40

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



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Legend

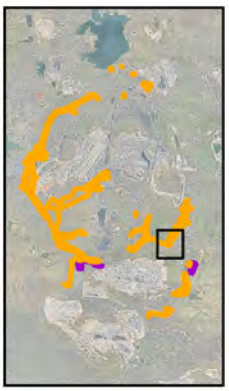
- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (February 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (September 2023)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Green and golden bell frog call playback and spotlighting surveys for Commonwealth Assessment
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)

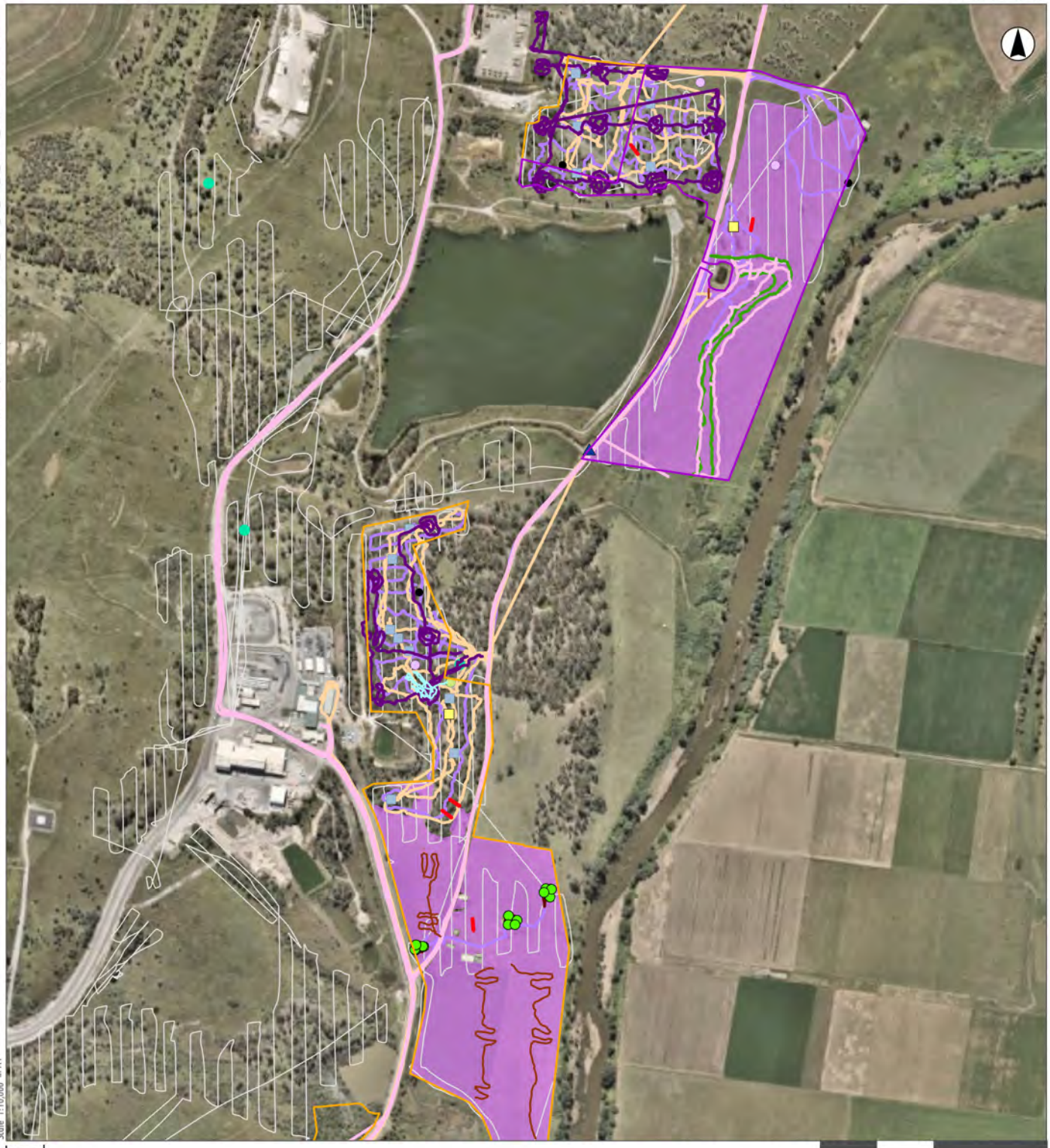


ANNEXURE C1-41

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)



Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- HVO South Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (February 2021)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Search for Microbat Roosting in Culverts (October 2023)
- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- *Delma sp.* Tile Sites (2020 - 2021)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Targeted Arboreal Spotlighting PCT4089 (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-42

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

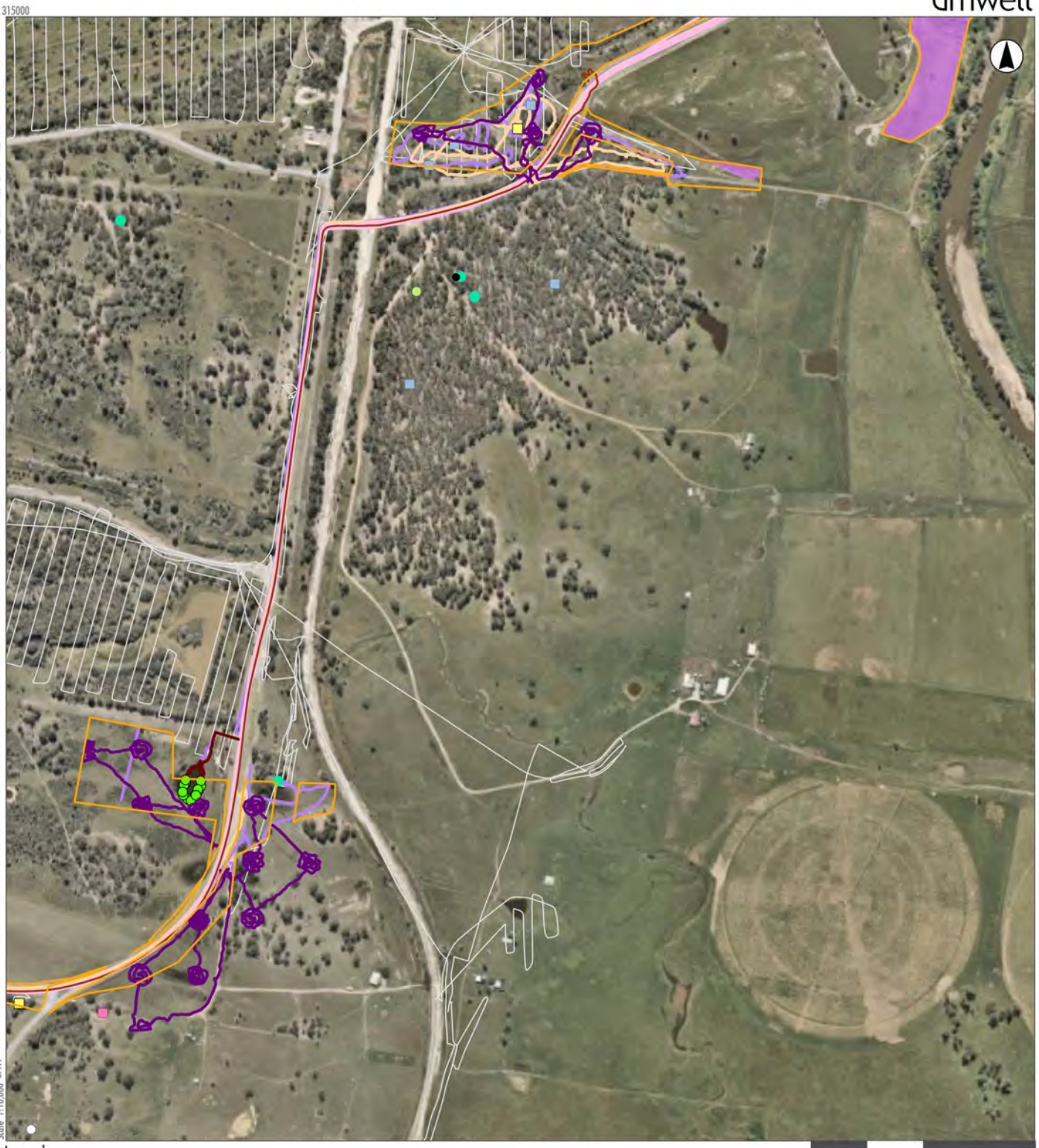
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GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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Legend

- HVO North Development Footprint
- Exotic Vegetation

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Targeted GGBF Call playback and Spotlight Point (February - March 2025)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Mammals - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (July 2020)
- Targeted GGBF Visual and Aural Spotlighting Walking Traverses (February - March 2025)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



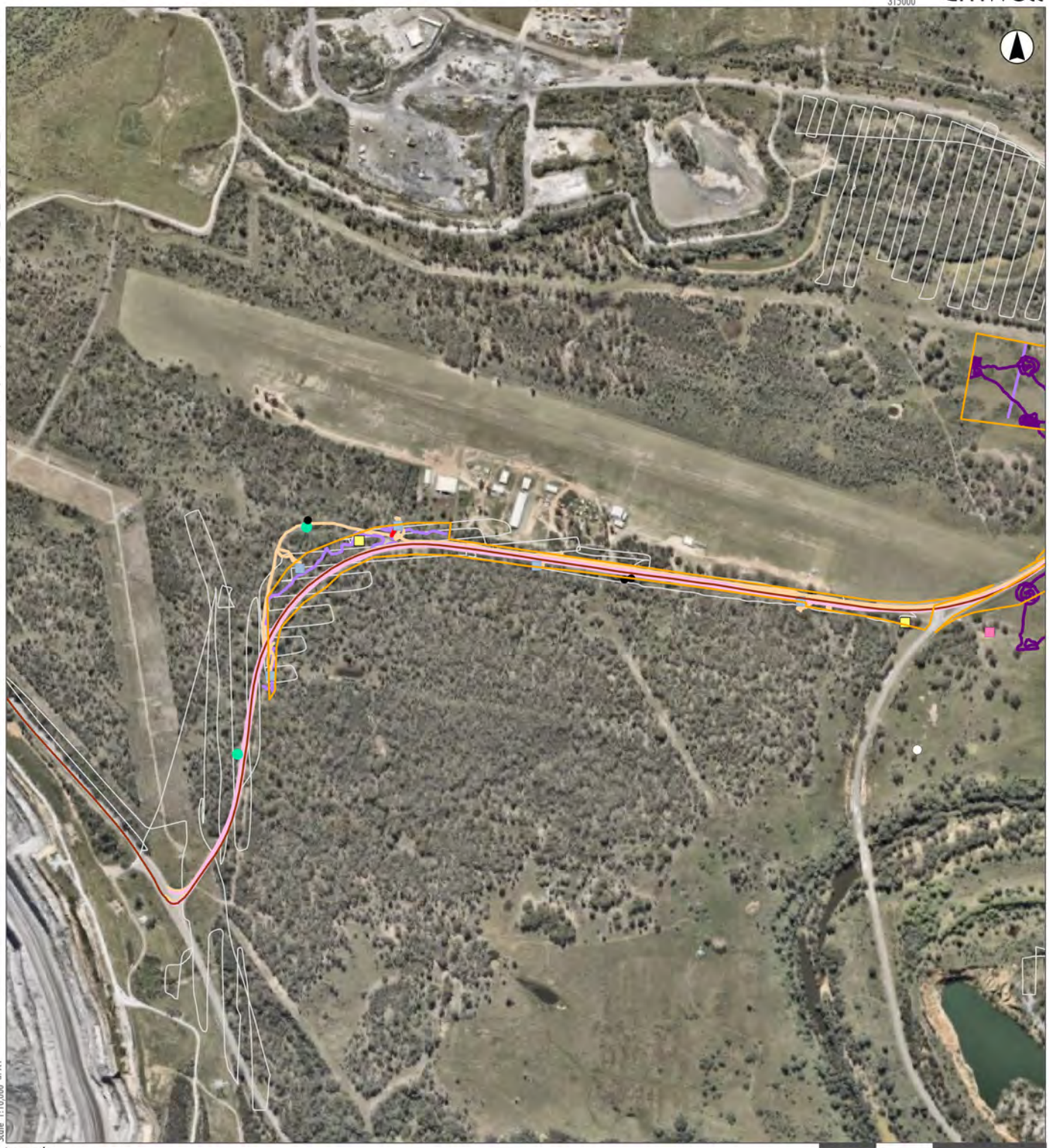
ANNEXURE C1-43

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

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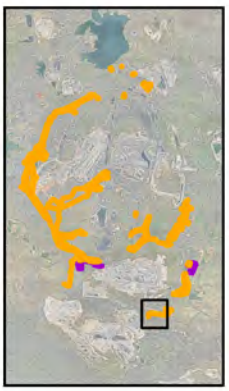
- HVO North Development Footprint

Targeted Threatened Flora Surveys

- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2020)
- Targeted Flora Traverses (October 2025)

Targeted Threatened Fauna Surveys

- Targeted Forest Owl Acoustic Recorder Survey (June-July 2025, January-February 2026)
- Echolocation Detection Survey (March 2020)
- Koala SAT Survey (July 2020; May - June 2023; 2025)
- Diurnal Call-playback and Bird Survey (2019 - 2020; August - October 2023; August 2025)
- Remote Camera Surveys (March 2020; October 2023; October-December 2025)
- Amphibians - nocturnal spotlighting and call playback (March 2020)
- Pitfall Trap Locations (May - August 2023)
- Spotlighting Transects (October - December 2023)
- Opportunistic Driving Spotlighting (October 2023)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (March - April 2025)
- Hollow-bearing Tree and Nest Tree Searches (October-November 2025)
- Thermal Drone Flight Path (July 2023)



ANNEXURE C1-44

Species-Credit Species Survey Effort

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Image Source: Nearmap (April 2015) Data source: DFSI (2024)

Annexure D

Threatened Species Assessment and Survey Methodology



umwelt

D.1 Habitat Suitability Assessment

Table D.1 below provides an evidence-based justification for the exclusion of threatened species from the predicted BAM-C list and literature review due to geographic limitations, habitat constraints, microhabitats or where the species is considered vagrant. The remaining species-credit species that required further assessment (i.e. targeted survey) are outlined in **Table D.1.**

Note: no predicted ecosystem-credit species were excluded from the BAM-C for this assessment.

Table D.1 Threatened Species Excluded from Assessment

Common Name *Scientific Name*	BC Act	EPBC Act	Source	Justification for Exclusion
Flora Species				
North Rothbury persoonia *Persoonia pauciflora*	CE	CE	BAM-C	According to the TBDC, this species has an "extremely restricted distribution; all but one of the plants which make up the only known population occur within a 2.5 km radius of the original specimen at North Rothbury in the Cessnock local government area. Within this range, there are three main sub-populations which comprise approximately 90% of the total population. The other 10% of the population occurs as scattered individuals in what is a relatively disturbed landscape." This population occurs approximately 40 km south-east of the Development Footprint.
Fauna Species (Species-credit)				
brush-tailed rock wallaby *Petrogale penicillata*	E	V	BAM-C, Atlas	The Development Footprint is not within areas that constitute the following habitat constraint as noted in the TBDC: 'Land within 1 km of rocky escarpments, gorges, steep slopes, boulder piles, rock outcrops or clifflines'. The species is highly unlikely to occur in the Development Footprint or be impacted by the Project. No further assessment is required.
regent honeyeater *Anthochaera phrygia*	CE	CE	PMST, BAM-C	This species is a dual ecosystem and species credit species. It only generates credits for impacts in areas specifically mapped as 'important areas' by the DPE. At the time of writing, the Development Footprint was not located within or near any mapped 'important areas' for the regent honeyeater. As this habitat constraint is absent from the Development Footprint, no further assessment is required. Note: targeted surveys were undertaken for the regent honeyeater in August 2019 and July 2020 for the purposes of informing the EPBC Act Referral assessment. This species was not recorded during these surveys or any other surveys undertaken for this assessment.
swift parrot *Lathamus discolor*	E	CE	PMST, BAM-C	This species is a dual ecosystem and species credit species. It only generates credits for impacts in areas specifically mapped as 'important areas' by the DPE. At the time of writing, the Development Footprint was not located within or near any mapped 'important areas' for the swift parrots.

Common Name *Scientific Name*	BC Act	EPBC Act	Source	Justification for Exclusion
				As this habitat constraint is absent from the Development Footprint, no further assessment is required. Note: targeted surveys were undertaken for the swift parrot in August 2019 and July 2020 for the purposes of informing the EPBC Act Referral assessment. This species was not recorded during these surveys or any other surveys undertaken for this assessment.
large-eared pied bat *Chalinolobus dwyeri*	E	E	BAM-C, PMST, Atlas	The Development Footprint is not within areas that constitute the following habitat constraint as noted in the TBDC and the '*Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats survey guide'*: 'within two kilometres of rocky areas containing caves, overhangs, escarpments, outcrops, or crevices, or old mines or tunnels'. The broader HVO mining area is not known to support mine shafts or workings, being an open cut mine, and the Project area is not known to support old buildings that would provide roosting or maternity habitat for this species. Habitat searches undertaken in March and October 2020 did not record the habitat constraints required for the species. Additional habitat constraints surveys across the Development Footprint were undertaken in April 2025, confirming the outcomes of original surveys. Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts in October 2023 (undertaken as part of the Commonwealth assessment for the Project) did not result in the identification of roosting microbats. Further discussion is provided in **Section 6.4.2.1** No further assessment is required.
little bent-winged bat *Miniopterus australis*	V	-	BAM-C, Atlas	The Development Footprint is not within areas that constitute the following habitat constraint as noted in the TBDC and the '*Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats survey guide'*: 'cave, tunnel, mine, culvert or other structure known or suspected to be used for breeding'. The broader HVO mining area is not known to support mine shafts or workings, being an open cut mine, and the Project area is not known to support old buildings that would provide roosting or maternity habitat for this species. Maternity colonies are restricted to specific maternity caves of which only five nursery sites are known in Australia (OEH 2020). Targeted surveys undertaken from 2018 to 2021 of the flood gates and flood pipes in the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme (HVFMS)

Common Name *Scientific Name*	BC Act	EPBC Act	Source	Justification for Exclusion
				recorded *Miniopterus australis* calls and approximately 10 individuals identified in one flood pipe near Woodville NSW, approximately 70 km east of the Development Footprints (Umwelt 2021). Thus, although the targeted surveys did find *Miniopterus australis* roosts, no maternity roosts were identified during the surveys. A BioNet database search revealed numerous records of the species within the Hunter region, although there are no details outlining any maternity roosts for this species among the records (DCCEEW 2025). There is currently no literature which documents known maternity roosts of *Miniopterus australis* within the Hunter. Habitat searches undertaken in March and October 2020 did not record the habitat constraints required for the species. Additional habitat constraints surveys across the Development Footprint were undertaken in April 2025, confirming the outcomes of original surveys. Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts in October 2023 (undertaken as part of the Commonwealth assessment for the Project) did not result in the identification of roosting microbats. Further discussion is provided in **Section 6.4.2.2** No further assessment is required.
large bent-winged bat *Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*	V	-	BAM-C, Atlas	The Development Footprint is not within areas that constitute the following habitat constraint as noted in the TBDC and the '*Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats survey guide'*: 'cave, tunnel, mine, culvert or other structure known or suspected to be used for breeding'. The broader HVO mining area is not known to support mine shafts or workings, being an open cut mine, and the Project area is not known to support old buildings that would provide roosting or maternity habitat for this species. Habitat searches undertaken in March and October 2020 did not record the habitat constraints required for the species. Additional habitat constraints surveys across the Development Footprint were undertaken in April 2025, confirming the outcomes of original surveys. Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts in October 2023 (undertaken as part of the Commonwealth assessment for the Project) did not result in the identification of roosting microbats. No further assessment is required.

Common Name *Scientific Name*	BC Act	EPBC Act	Source	Justification for Exclusion
eastern cave bat *Vespadelus troughtoni*	V	-	BAM-C	The Development Footprint is not within areas that constitute the following habitat constraint as noted in the TBDC and the '*Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats survey guide'*: 'within two kilometres of rocky areas containing caves, overhangs, escarpments, outcrops, crevices or boulder piles, or within two kilometres of old mines, tunnels, old buildings or sheds'. The broader HVO mining area is not known to support mine shafts or workings, being an open cut mine, and the Project area is not known to support old buildings that would provide roosting or maternity habitat for this species. Habitat searches undertaken in March and October 2020 did not record the habitat constraints required for the species. Additional habitat constraints surveys across the Development Footprint were undertaken in April 2025, confirming the outcomes of original surveys. No further assessment is required.
Dromaius novaehollandiae - endangered population Emu population in the New South Wales North Coast Bioregion and Port Stephens local government area	E	-	BAM-C	According to the TBDC, this "species was formerly widespread in north-eastern NSW, but is now restricted to coastal and near-coastal areas between Evans Head and Red Rock and a small isolated population further west in the Bungawalbin area. The range of the species continues to contract in recent years. It now appears to be absent from Broadwater National Park, there are few recent sightings from its former stronghold in Bundjalung National Park and it is not known whether a natural population continues to persist in the Port Stephens area." The Development Footprint does not fall within the known distribution of this population. No further assessment is required.
broad-billed sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*	V	-	BAM-C	This species is a dual ecosystem and species credit species. It only generates credits for impacts in areas specifically mapped as 'important areas' by the DPE. At the time of writing, the Development Footprint was not located within or near any mapped 'important areas' for the broad-billed sandpiper. As this habitat constraint is absent from the Development Footprint, no further assessment is required.

D.2 Flora Species-credit Species Survey Effort

Survey details – *Acacia pendula* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	3
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Within the Hunter catchment the species typically occurs on heavy soils, sometimes on the margins of small floodplains, but also in more undulating locations. It is not known to occur within any conservation areas.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Identification requires voucher confirmation from RBG. Seed pods are to be used to identify, as easily confused with closely related arid Acacia species, and to assess seed alignment. Successful fruiting has never been observed in the Hunter population, and all populations appear sterile. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in **Section 4.4.1**. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 855 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 189 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020

Survey details – *Acacia pendula* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	
	February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025 2 June 2025 <u>Survey effort:</u> Estimate of 140 person hours of sampling within and around 70 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot). Estimate of 172 person hours across all 86 BAM integrity plots (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	Yes
Justification	*Acacia pendula* individuals were recorded near an access track adjacent to Lemington Road, within the Development Footprint. Samples were collected and confirmed as *Acacia pendula* by the NSW Royal Botanic Gardens (refer to **Annexure G**). The recorded individuals are naturally regenerating in a grassy paddock within proximity of known mature planted individuals occurring along the edge of Lemington Road (refer to **Photo 4.2**). It is expected the individuals in the Development Footprint have propagated from these plantings.
Species Polygon Required?	Yes The individuals recorded in the Development Footprint occur outside the impact areas of the proposed realigned easement (i.e. the Wider Easement Area) and are proposed to avoided (refer to **Figure 4.6**).

Survey details – *Cymbidium canaliculatum* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet atlas
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Typically grows in the hollows, fissures, trunks and forks of trees in dry sclerophyll forest or woodland, where its host trees typically occur on Permian Sediments of the Hunter Valley floor. It usually occurs singly or as a single clump, which can form large colonies on trees, between two and six metres from the ground. Recruitment, germination and persistence is reliant on rotting wood and mycorrhizal fungal associations. Within the Hunter Catchment, *Cymbidium canaliculatum* is most commonly found in *Eucalyptus albens* (White Box) dominated woodlands (including those dominated by the intergrade *E. albens-moluccana*, much of which may constitute the endangered ecological community (EEC) 'White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland'. It has been found, less commonly, to grow on *E. dawsonii* (Slaty Box), *E. crebra* (Narrow-leaved Ironbark), *E. moluccana* (Grey Box), *Angophora floribunda* (Rough-barked Apple), *Acacia salicina* (Cooba) and on some other species, including dead stags. It is also known to use man-made structures, such as fence posts and wooden bridges as its host. *Cymbidium canaliculatum* flowers from September to November.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Epiphytic in a range of Eucalypt and Angophora species. Cut stumps or logs on ground.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Plants are usually found between 2 m and 15 m above the ground but can persist on fallen trees if protected from grazing. Recruitment has only been reported in intact vegetation, but plants persist in trees in thinned woodland and in scattered trees in derived grassland. Grazed or otherwise damaged plants can resprout, flower and set seeds, but only if the pseudobulbs are intact. The unit of measure for this species is count of individuals. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**).

Survey details – *Cymbidium canaliculatum* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	
	Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 13 July 2022 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025 Survey effort: Total of 1006 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 220.7 ha.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025 Survey effort: Estimate of 142 person hours of sampling within and around 71 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot). Estimate of 172 person hours across all 86 BAM integrity plots (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – pine donkey orchid *(Diuris tricolor)*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	1.5
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** The Pine Donkey Orchid grows in sclerophyll forest among grass, often with native Cypress Pine (*Callitris* spp.). It is found in sandy soils, either on flats or small rises. Also recorded from a red earth soil in a Bimble Box community in western NSW.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485
Required Survey Period	September - October
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): This species is known to grow in disturbed areas/grassland. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 855 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 189 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 September 2023 Survey effort: Estimate of 32 person hours of sampling within and around 16 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).

Survey details – pine donkey orchid *(Diuris tricolor)*	
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – *Diuris tricolor* – endangered population in the Muswellbrook LGA	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Found in sclerophyll woodland and derived grassland on flats or small rises, on a range of substrates including sandy or loamy soils. The habitat of *Diuris tricolor* in the Muswellbrook LGA has been fragmented by past land clearing.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485
Required Survey Period	September - October
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Flowers are to be used to locate and identify. May require multiple surveys. Surveys should first be conducted in September, and if not found during survey, survey again in October. Flowering usually peaks in early October. The unit of measure for this species is area.
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 855 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 189 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 September 2023 Survey effort: Estimate of 32 person hours of sampling within and around 16 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).

Survey details – *Diuris tricolor* – endangered population in the Muswellbrook LGA	
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** May occur with *Eucalyptus tereticornis, Eucalyptus melliodora, Casuarina cunninghamiana* subsp. *cunninghamiana* and *Angophora floribunda*. Most of the occurrences are on private land and there are no known occurrences in conservation reserves.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Floodplains of watercourses, including rivers, creeks, intermittent streams or billabongs.
Associated PCTs	4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Seeds are spread by floodwaters. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 146 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 31.6 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.

Survey details – *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* – endangered population in the Hunter catchment	
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and March 2025 Survey effort: Estimate of 26 person hours of survey within 13 plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	Yes
Justification	A population of river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) is known to occur along the Hunter River around HVO and Carrington Billabong, to the east near the confluence of Glennies Creek and further south along Wollombi Brook. Where the HVO North Development Footprint intersects the Hunter River east of the Carrington Billabong and north of Cheshunt Pit, individuals of river red gum were recorded on the banks of the Hunter River in association with PCT4089 Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest and PCT4081 Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest. A large number of river red gums were recorded within the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area (refer to **Figure 4.5**). At the time of survey, the stands of river red gum within the Development Footprint and River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area contained mature trees and signs of recruitment.
Species Polygon Required?	Yes The location of the river red gum endangered population and habitat polygon mapping in relation to the HVO North and HVO South Development Footprints (and the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area) is shown in **Figure 4.5**. This was calculated on the direct impacts to the population by buffering all recorded individuals by 30 metres (except where the buffer extended to onto the artificial bund). Direct impacts to the population are expected at the locations where the proposed realignment of the transmission line crosses the Hunter River. Where possible, river red gum individuals will be avoided through careful placement of poles and access tracks, however it is acknowledged that necessary maintenance of the transmission line easement will require trimming of canopy species.

Survey details – slaty red gum *(Eucalyptus glaucina)*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas, PMST
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Grows in grassy woodland and dry eucalypt forest. Grows on deep, moderately fertile and well-watered soils.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Use buds and/or juvenile growth to detect and identify. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 851 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 182.1 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025 Survey effort: Estimate of 130 person hours of survey within 65 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes

Survey details – slaty red gum *(Eucalyptus glaucina)*	
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – Pokolbin mallee *(Eucalyptus pumila)*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	3
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** The single known population occupies north-west-facing slopes derived from sandstone. Present as a mid-canopy species to a height of 6 m within dry sclerophyll woodland which has a canopy comprising *Eucalyptus fibrosa, Callitris endlicheri and*, to a lesser extent, *Corymbia maculata*.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3485
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	There are no survey requirements or additional information noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025). The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
General Species Polygon Requirements	NA
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort:

Survey details – Pokolbin mallee *(Eucalyptus pumila)*	
	Total of 4 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 6.9ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025. Survey effort: Estimate of 8 person hours of survey within 4 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot). Estimate of 172 person hours across all 86 BAM integrity plots (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – *Ozothamnus tesselatus*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	1.5
Source	BAM-C, PMST
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Grows in eucalypt woodland.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431
Required Survey Period	September–October
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Flowers are used to locate. This species can be identified by foliage year-round by a skilled botanist. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).

Survey details – *Ozothamnus tesselatus*	
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 851 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 182.1 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025. Survey effort: Estimate of 130 person hours of survey within 65 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – scant pomaderris *(Pomaderris queenslandica)*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Found in moist eucalypt forest or sheltered woodlands with a shrubby understorey, and occasionally along creeks.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Flowers are useful to identify, as easily confused with *P. intermedia*, however species can be distinguished by leaf morphology; *P. intermedia* generally has a much larger leaf compared to *P. queenslandica*. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 11 August 2022 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 851 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 182.1 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023

Survey details – scant pomaderris *(Pomaderris queenslandica)*	
	February and March 2025 Survey effort: Estimate of 130 person hours of survey within 65 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – Tarengo leek orchid (*Prasophyllum petilum*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Grows in open sites within Natural Temperate Grassland at the Boorowa and Delegate sites. Also grows in grassy woodland in association with River Tussock (*Poa labillardieri*), Black Gum (*Eucalyptus aggregata)* and tea-trees (*Leptospermum* spp.) near Queanbeyan and within the grassy ground layer dominated by Kangaroo Grass under Box-Gum Woodland at Ilford (and Hall, ACT).
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485
Required Survey Period	September–December
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Survey months differ based on location. The Hunter populations are to be surveyed in September to October and the timing may vary depending on season. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**).

Survey details – Tarengo leek orchid (*Prasophyllum petilum*)	
	Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 1 November 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 855 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 189 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025 Survey effort: Estimate of 138 person hours of sampling within and around 69 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – *Prasophyllum* sp. *Wybong*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	3
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Known to occur in open eucalypt woodland and grassland
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485
Required Survey Period	September–October
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Flowers are to be used to identify the species. Flowering usually occurs in early October. May require multiple surveys. Surveys should first be conducted in September, and if not found during survey, it should be surveyed again in October. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 855 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 189 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025

Survey details – *Prasophyllum* sp. *Wybong*	
	Survey effort: Estimate of 138 person hours of sampling within and around 69 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – *Pterostylis chaetophora*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** The preferred habitat is seasonally moist, dry sclerophyll forest with a grass and shrub understorey. The most commonly observed habitat is vegetation characterised by grassy open forests or derived native grasslands of *Eucalyptus amplifolia* and *Eucalyptus moluccana* on gentle flats, or that are dominated by *Corymbia maculata* with any of *Eucalyptus fibrosa, Eucalyptus sideroploia* or *Eucalyptus crebra*.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485
Required Survey Period	September - November
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Flowering material is to be used to identify the species. This species flowers in September to early November. The unit of measure for this species is area. Minimum survey requirements as per the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e).
Targeted Surveys	Survey method: Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Use of 100 m grids with approximate 20 m^2 circle at each intersection point and 5–10 m parallel traverses (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023

Survey details – *Pterostylis chaetophora*	
	22-24 October 2025 30-31 October 2025. Survey effort: Total of 855 grid centre points surveys across predicted PCTs and a total estimate of survey coverage of approximately 189 ha. Refer to **Section 4.1.3.1** for detail.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	Survey method: Sampling and opportunistic observations during floristic and vegetation plot surveys (refer to Figures in **Annexure C**). Survey dates: September 2020 February and April 2021 September 2023 February and March 2025. Survey effort: Estimate of 138 person hours of sampling within and around 69 BAM integrity plots undertaken in predicted PCTs (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot). Estimate of 172 person hours across all 86 BAM integrity plots (based on an average of 2 person hours per plot).
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

D.3 Fauna Species-credit Species Survey Effort

Survey details – bush stone-curlew *(Burhinus grallarius)*	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabits open forests and woodlands with a sparse grassy groundlayer and fallen timber.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Fallen/standing dead timber including logs.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): This species may be easier to detect during breeding season, possibly calls all year, but it is unclear how well it responds to playback. The unit of measure for this species is area. There is no minimum survey requirement for this species.
Targeted Surveys	**Acoustic recorder surveys:** A minimum detector spacing of 800 m covering all associated vegetation zones containing living or dead trees with a hollow >20 cm diameter that occurs >4 metres above the ground, reflecting a 400 m recording radius per detector. Detectors will be set to record from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes after sunrise, every night while deployed. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> June and July 2025. Survey effort TBC. **Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 10–30 minutes and involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species are visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 23–26 March 2020 – 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 6–9 July 2020 – 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 23–26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 – 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats.

Survey details – bush stone-curlew *(Burhinus grallarius)*	
	Diurnal bird surveys. Undertaken during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations in 2019. 14–18 and 29 August 2023 30-31 October 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023. 23-26 June 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 105 person hours in 2025. We note that 2019 surveys do not meet data currency requirements under the BAM however they are included in this summary for context
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Walking traverses during flora surveys**. It is likely that this species would be 'flushed' in the course of walking transects undertaken during the targeted threatened flora surveys. This survey methodology is identified in the *Threatened Biodiversity Survey and Assessment: Guidelines for Developments an Activities* (DEC 2004) which notes that flushing of bush stone-curlews can be achieved during diurnal surveys by walking through suitable habitat (DEC 2004). <u>Survey dates:</u> 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 18 September 2023 1 November 2023. <u>Survey effort:</u> Estimate of 280 person hours over 13 days across the Development Footprints. **Remote camera surveys** were undertaken. At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected. It is acknowledged that this survey method would only detect incidental recordings of this species and is not targeted. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 24 March – 8 July 2020 126 trap nights across 9 locations in 2020. 17–30 October 2023 1381 trap nights in rehabilitation habitat.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded

Survey details – bush stone-curlew *(Burhinus grallarius)*	
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)	
Credit Type	Dual
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** In spring and summer, generally found in tall mountain forests and woodlands, particularly in heavily timbered and mature wet sclerophyll forests. In autumn and winter, the species often moves to lower altitudes in drier more open eucalypt forests and woodlands, particularly box-gum and box-ironbark assemblages, or in dry forest in coastal areas and often found in urban areas. May also occur in sub-alpine Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) woodland and occasionally in temperate rainforests. Favours old growth forest and woodland attributes for nesting and roosting. Nests are located in hollows that are 7 cm in diameter or larger in eucalypts and 3 m or more above the ground.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Eucalypt tree species with hollows at least 3 m above the ground and with hollow diameter of 7 cm or larger
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	October–January
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Assessors should look for signs of breeding on site as follows; (a) lone adult males identified during the breeding season (October to January); or (b) an occupied nest. Where signs of breeding on site are present, potential nest trees should be identified. Potential nest trees are forest and woodland eucalypts containing hollows that are; (i) at least 3 m above the ground and (ii) with hollow diameter of 7 cm or larger. Where potential nest trees are identified on site, monitor for this species during the breeding season (October to January) to confirm the presence of any actual nest trees on site. DPIE is currently developing survey guidance for threatened bird species. In the interim, assessors must undertake a species survey using best practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys (as per the BAM threatened species survey requirements). The unit of measure for this species is area.
Targeted Surveys	**Searches for hollow-bearing trees** with hollows greater than 7 cm in diameter were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found,

Survey details – gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)	
	the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Searches were initially undertaken in March 2020 for suitable tree hollows. Updated targeted searches for suitable hollows were undertaken across the Development Footprint in April 2025, which were followed by targeted in-season surveys in November 2025. All observations of hollows included watching for signs of breeding activity around the potential breeding habitat and observations of any individuals in the locality. Survey dates 23–26 March 2020 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 4-6 November 2025 Survey effort: Approximately 364 person hours across 22 days of survey within associated PCTs in the Development Footprint. **Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates and effort: 14–18 and 29 August 2023 30–31 October 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023. 4-6 November 2025 60 person hours in 2025.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates and effort: 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations in 2019. 23-26 June 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 105 person hours in 2025. **Searches for hollow-bearing trees** Additional hollow tree searches were undertaken on 23, 25, 30, 31 October 2023 and 1 November 2023 to support the Commonwealth assessment for the Project.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No

Survey details – gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)	
Justification	Not recorded – the species has not been recorded on site despite many years of survey, opportunistic observations and no breeding activity has been observed.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*)	
Credit Type	Dual
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabits open forest and woodlands of the coast and the Great Dividing Range where stands of sheoak occur. Black Sheoak (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) and Forest Sheoak (*A. torulosa*) are important foods. In the Riverina, birds are associated with hills and rocky rises supporting Drooping Sheoak, but also recorded in open woodlands dominated by Belah (*Casuarina cristata*).
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Living or dead tree with hollows greater than 15 cm diameter and higher than 8 m above ground.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	April–August
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): The identification of breeding habitat will require survey or an expert report. Assessors should look for signs of breeding on site as follows; (a) begging birds of any age or sex; or (b) lone adult males identified during the breeding season (April to August); or (c) an occupied nest. Where signs of breeding on site are present, potential nest trees should be identified. Potential nest trees contain hollows that are; (i) at least 8 m above the ground; and (ii) in stems with a diameter of at least 30 cm; and (iii) hollow diameter is at least 15 cm; and (iv) stem angle is at least 45 degrees, and may be near-vertical or vertical. Where potential nest trees are identified on site, monitor for this species during the breeding season (April to August) to confirm the presence of any actual nest trees on site. DPIE is currently developing survey guidance for threatened bird species. In the interim, assessors must undertake a species survey using best practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys (as per the BAM threatened species survey requirements). The unit of measure for this species is area. No minimum survey effort for this species.
Targeted Surveys	**Searches for hollow-bearing trees** with hollows greater than 15 cm in diameter were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Targeted searches were undertaken in March 2020, August 2023 and April 2025 with opportunistic searches also undertaken concurrently during the targeted threatened flora surveys in October 2020. Surveys included spending 5 minutes watching for any signs of activity around the potential breeding habitat, followed by diurnal bird surveys consisting of 20 minute meandering transects within proximity to the potential breeding habitat.

Survey details – glossy black-cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*)	
	Survey dates 23–26 March 2020 14–18, 29 August 2023 9–11, 14–15 April 2025. Survey effort: Approximately 304 person hours across 19 days of survey within associated PCTs in the Development Footprint. **Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates and effort: 16–17 and 28–29 August 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates and effort: 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations in 2019. 6–10 July 2020 19 person hours across 19 locations in 2020. 23-26 June 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 4-6 November 2025 165 person hours in 2025. **Searches for hollow-bearing trees** Additional hollow tree searches were undertaken on 23, 25, 30, 31 October 2023 and 1 November 2023 to support the Commonwealth assessment for the Project.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – eastern pygmy-possum (*Cercartetus nanus*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Found in a broad range of habitats from rainforest through sclerophyll (including Box-Ironbark) forest and woodland to heath, but in most areas woodlands and heath appear to be preferred, except in north-eastern NSW where they are most frequently encountered in rainforest. They may occupy small patches of vegetation in fragmented landscapes and although the species prefers habitat with a rich shrub understory, they are known to occur in grassy woodlands and the presence of Eucalypts alone is sufficient to support populations in low densities.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	October–March
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Species is very difficult to detect, especially via spotlighting. The unit of measure for this species is area. No minimum survey for this species. The BOS Helpdesk was contacted in relation to a proposed survey effort for this species. Following consultation with the NSW DCCEEW, remote cameras were installed in suitable habitat areas in 2025. Dr David Sharpe was consulted on refining the likely suitable habitat on the site.
Targeted Surveys	**Remote Camera Surveys** Remote cameras were installed across 78 locations within suitable habitat in the Development Footprints. A ventilated bait canister holding a honey/peanut butter oat ball was nailed to a tree centred on the camera's field of view. Each canister was a standard known length, enabling broad measurements to be taken. A honey and water mixture was generously sprayed on the baited tree above the bait canister. Cameras were set at a minimum height of 2 m and left in place for a minimum of six weeks (42 nights) with cameras checked and baits replaced at the two- and four-week mark. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> Installation: 22 October 2025. Collection: 17 December 2025 4,256 camera trap nights (76 nights x 78 cameras).

Survey details – eastern pygmy-possum (*Cercartetus nanus*)	
	Two remote cameras were stolen during the survey period. These were replaced on 16 December 2025, rebaited at the two- and four-week mark and collected on 3 February 2026, totalling and additional 96 camera trap nights. **Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 10–30 minutes and involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 23–26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Pitfall traps** were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of 10 m of drift-fence with a 20 L bucket with a lid at either end. The lid was elevated 2 cm to 3 cm (using sticks) above the lip of the bucket. Leaf litter and small twigs were placed in the bottom of each bucket to provide shelter for trapped animals. Survey dates and effort: 29 May – 11 August 2023 64 pitfall traps were installed across the Development Footprints including: • 12 in PCT3431 Moderate • 3 in PCT3431 Thinned Woodland • 1 In PCT3431 Plantation • 7 in PCT3431 Scattered Regeneration • 1 in PCT3431 Cooba Woodland • 19 in PCT3431 Poor Condition DNG • 11 in PCT3431 Exotic Grassland • 1 in PCT4089 Exotic Grassland • 9 in mine rehabilitation Totalling 256 trap nights. **Remote camera surveys** were undertaken. At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected. Survey dates and effort: 24 March – 8 July 2020 126 trap nights across 9 locations in 2020.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No.
Justification	Not recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	Not available at the time of writing
Source	-
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Found mainly in Natural Temperate Grassland but has also been captured in grasslands that have a high exotic component. Also found in secondary grassland near Natural Temperate Grassland and occasionally in open Box-Gum Woodland. Habitat is where grassland is dominated by perennial, tussock-forming grasses such as Kangaroo Grass *Themeda australis*, spear-grasses *Austrostipa* spp. and poa tussocks *Poa* spp., and occasionally wallaby grasses *Austrodanthonia* spp. Sometimes present in modified grasslands with a significant content of exotic grasses. Sometimes found in grasslands with significant amounts of surface rocks, which are used for shelter. Sometimes utilises dried cowpats for shelter.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None.
Associated PCTs	Not available at the time of writing (PCTs 3431 and 3485 used as per *Delma impar*)
Required Survey Period	Not available at the time of writing (Sept-Dec used as per *Delma impar*)
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025) and the Threatened reptiles BAM survey guide (2022): Install artificial cover (tile boards) in suitable habitat at least one month prior to the first survey. Place cover boards in areas where grass sward height >10 cm, ideally positioned on a northerly aspect. Cover boards should consist of 50 pale-coloured roof tiles or roof tiles installed pale side up, with 5 m spacing between tiles, arranged in an array of 10 x 5 tiles. For suitable habitat that is: =2 ha, use 2 tile arrays; >2 ha – 30 ha, use 1 tile array per 3 ha of suitable habitat; >30–50 ha, use 10 tile arrays. Check artificial cover boards once per week, for 10 weeks, when ambient temperature is 15–25°C. Commence cover board checks at alternating arrays to ensure each array is surveyed at a range of tile temperatures. Check shelter sites no more than once per week, as this may cause the species to abandon the site.
Targeted Surveys	**Targeted artificial shelter site (i.e. tile grid) surveys** were conducted. Tile grids consisted of 50 tiles, at 5 m spacing between tiles, arranged in a grid of 10 tiles by five. This survey was undertaken in consideration of the methods outlined in the EPBC Act Referral Guidelines for the vulnerable striped legless lizard Delma impar (DSWPC 2011). 2020 Survey Ten sites were checked weekly between 22 September 2020 and 4 November 2020. Following confirmed presence of the species, six sites were moved to new areas within the Development Footprints and four additional sites were installed, totalling 20 locations within the Development Footprints. These were checked for fauna occupation once per week between 12 November 2020 to 2 December 2020.

Survey details – Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	
	2021 Survey 4 additional tile grids installed between 27 and 29 July 2021 in areas of exotic grasslands and checked weekly between 7 October and 20 December 2021. In total 24 tile grids were installed across the Development Footprints. <u>Survey dates and effort (2020):</u> Checks undertaken: 22 and 30 September 2020 9, 16, 23 and 28 October 2020 4 November 2020 10 sites of 50 tiles each were installed on 13 August 2020 in: • 8 sites PCT3431 DNG • 1 site PCT3431 Exotic Grassland • 1 site PCT4089 DNG Checked weekly for 7 weeks. Checks undertaken: 12, 13, 18, 19, 24 and 25 November 2020 2 and 8 December 2020 6 sites of 50 tiles each were relocated on 4 November 2020 in: • 2 sites PCT3431 Moderate • 1 site PCT3431 Plantation • 2 sites PCT3431 Scattered Regeneration • 1 site PCT4089 Moderate Checked weekly for 4 weeks (including 4 tile grids left in situ). <u>Survey dates and effort (2021):</u> Checks undertaken 7, 12, 18, 28 October, 1, 8, 15, 23 November, 1, 6, 15, 20 December 2021. 4 additional sites of 50 tiles each installed on 29 July 2021 in: • 2 sites in PCT3431 Exotic Grassland • 2 sites in PCT4089 Exotic Grassland Checked weekly for 12 weeks. Checks undertaken 7, 12, 18, 28 October, 1, 8, 15, 23 November, 1, 6, 15, 20 December 2021. 4 additional sites of 50 tiles each installed on 29 July 2021 in: • 2 sites in PCT3431 Exotic Grassland • 2 sites in PCT4089 Exotic Grassland Checked weekly for 12 weeks.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	None
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	Yes
Justification	Recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	Yes. The species is not currently predicted by the BAM-C. Striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*) has been used as a surrogate in the BAM-C. The Hunter Valley delma habitat polygon includes all vegetation zones across the Development Footprint where the species was recorded, being:

Survey details – Hunter Valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*)	
	• PCT3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland (*Derived Native Grassland*, *Thinned Woodland*, *Scattered Regeneration* condition). • PCT4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest (*Derived Native Grassland* condition). • No impact to the Hunter Valley delma was assessed for Management Zone (MZ) 2 (New transmission line Easement) for the purposes of the BAM assessment (refer to **Section 6.1** for management zone descriptions). Areas outside the proposed installation disturbance (restricted to tracks and pole pads) for the proposed new easement (MZ2) will be managed in accordance with ISSC 20 Guideline for the Management of Activities within *Electricity Easements and Close to Electricity Infrastructure (ISSC 2012)* and will remain in grassland condition.

Survey details – white-bellied sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)	
Credit Type	Dual
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Habitats are characterised by the presence of large areas of open water including larger rivers, swamps, lakes, and the sea. Occurs at sites near the sea or sea-shore, such as around bays and inlets, beaches, reefs, lagoons, estuaries and mangroves; and at, or in the vicinity of freshwater swamps, lakes, reservoirs, billabongs and saltmarsh. Terrestrial habitats include coastal dunes, tidal flats, grassland, heathland, woodland, and forest (including rainforest). Breeding habitat consists of mature tall open forest, open forest, tall woodland, and swamp sclerophyll forest close to foraging habitat. Nest trees are typically large emergent eucalypts and often have emergent dead branches or large dead trees nearby which are used as 'guard roosts'. Nests are large structures built from sticks and lined with leaves or grass.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Living or dead mature trees within suitable vegetation within 1 km of a rivers, lakes, large dams or creeks, wetlands and coastlines.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	July - December
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Breeding habitat is live large old trees within 1 km of a rivers, lakes, large dams or creeks, wetlands and coastlines and the presence of a large stick nest within tree canopy; or an adult with nest material; or adults observed duetting within breeding period. Due to the similarities in nest structure and use of the same nests by white-bellied sea eagles and wedge-tailed eagles, where a nest is observed without a bird present, searches for prey remains/feathers below the

Survey details – white-bellied sea-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*)	
	structure should be undertaken. The differing diets of both species and distinctive adult feathers, should provide evidence of nest use, however; where prey items/feathers are absent, repeat visits to the nest until a bird is observed should be undertaken. The unit of measure for this species is area.
Targeted Surveys	**Targeted bird of prey nest searches** Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests. Survey dates and effort: 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 23-26 June 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 4-6 November 2025Approximately 293 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates and effort (2021): 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations in 2019. 6–10 July 2020 19 person hours across 19 locations in 2020. 14–18 and 29 August 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Targeted bird of prey nest searches** Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests. Survey dates: 23–26 March 2020 2-4, 9-11, 14-15, 28-29 April 2025
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded – large stick nests containing an active breeding site for this species has not been recorded on site despite many years of survey, opportunistic observations.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*)	
Credit Type	Dual

Survey details – little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*)	
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	1.5
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Occupies open eucalypt forest, woodland or open woodland. Sheoak or Acacia woodlands and riparian woodlands of interior NSW are also used. Nests in tall living trees within a remnant patch, where pairs build a large stick nest in winter.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Nest trees – live (occasionally dead) large old trees within vegetation.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	August–October
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Breeding habitat is live (occasionally dead) large old trees within suitable vegetation AND the presence of a male and female; or any adult with nesting material; or an individual on a large stick nest in the top half of the tree canopy; or pairs displaying (soaring, diving, engaging in chases, or a male observed calling in flight with a female begging from tree).
Targeted Surveys	**Targeted bird of prey nest searches** were undertaken. Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests. <u>Survey dates and effort :</u> 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2-4, 9-11, 14-15, 28-29 April 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 Approximately 364 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations. 14–18 and 29 August 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded.

Survey details – little eagle (*Hieraaetus morphnoides*)	
	Survey dates: 3–6 June 2019 6–10 July 2020
Survey Requirements Met?	Partial. Further updated stick nest surveys to be undertaken in spring 2025 due to data currency of original March 2020 surveys.
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded– large stick nests containing an active breeding site for this species has not been recorded on site despite many years of survey, opportunistic observations.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – Green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2.00
Source	PMST, Bionet Atlas, BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabits marshes, dams and stream-sides, particularly those containing bullrushes (Typha spp.) or spikerushes (Eleocharis spp.). Optimum habitat includes water-bodies that are unshaded, free of predatory fish such as Plague Minnow (*Gambusia holbrooki*), have a grassy area nearby and diurnal sheltering sites available. Some sites, particularly in the Greater Sydney region occur in highly disturbed areas.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	**Habitat Constraints:** Semi-permanent/ephemeral wet areas: Within 1km of wet areas Swamps: Within 1km of swamp Waterbodies: Within 1km of waterbody
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	November–March
Survey Requirements	As noted in the NSW survey guidelines for frogs (DPIE) 2020c: Aural-visual or acoustic recorder surveys can be completed along the edges of suitable breeding habitat or, if feasible, through shallow wetlands. Tadpole surveys can be used to replace up to two of the aural-visual surveys. Tadpole searches should target areas of shallow and open water where the tadpoles are likely to congregate. If the plague minnow (Gambusia holbrooki) is present this method is not recommended. The presence of the plague minnow should be recorded. Surveys should sample the available range of waterbodies on the subject land. Sweep netting should target areas of open water.

Survey details – Green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*)	
	Minimum survey effort comprises aural-visual surveys for 480 minutes per 500 m of suitable breeding habitat for four nights OR 154 recorder days for 14 days OR 10 minutes of dip netting per 50 m2 of surface areas repeating this up to twice (to replace up to two nights of aural-visual surveys) (NSW Survey Guideline for Threatened Frogs, September 2020).
Targeted Survey Effort Post September 2020 (in accordance with the BAM survey requirements)	Survey methods using the NSW survey guidelines for frogs (DPIE) 2020c: **Aural-visual and dip-netting surveys – February – March 2025** ***Aural-visual Surveys*** Quiet listening for 5 minutes (record any species heard) Start call playback with 2 mins of broadcast and then 2 mins of listening and spotlighting. Start visual survey with walking and spotlighting the perimeter of the pond. Repeat steps 2 and 3 approx. every 50 metres of pond/dam. Ensure the correct pro-rated time is spent at the pond as per guidance in table above. ***Dip-netting Surveys*** Walk perimeter of half the ponds for plague minnow. If no plague minnow, undertake dip netting for tadpoles over 10m transect. Revisit ponds without minnow and repeat dip netting for tadpoles. Survey Effort: Aural-visual surveys = 55.5 person hours over 20 nights at 29 dams totalling a perimeter of approximately 2.9 km). Dip netting was carried out at 29 dams, repeated twice at each dam that was not found to have plague minnow Survey Dates: 24–28 February 2025 3–7 March 2025 10–14 March 2025 24–27 March 2025 **Dip netting surveys** were undertaken along a 10 m transect in suitable dam habitat. Survey dates: 24–28 February 2025 3–7 March 2025 10–14 March 2025 24–27 March 2025 Survey effort: Nocturnal call playback and spotlighting was conducted over 55.5 person hours over 20 nights at a total of 29 dams containing potentially suitable habitat (totalling a perimeter of approximately 2.9 km) using the correct pro-rated time at each pond as per guidance. Dip netting was carried out at 29 dams, repeated twice at each dam that was not found to have plague minnow.

Survey details – Green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*)	
Other Notable Surveys	Survey methods pre-NSW survey guidelines for frogs (DPIE) 2020c: **Targeted Amphibian Surveys – March 2020** Nocturnal **call playback surveys** were undertaken for this species. These sessions began with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. *Litoria aurea* calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately 4 minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes. Following call playback sessions, **nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Notes were made on the presence or otherwise of plague minnow. Survey Effort: 8 person hours over 4 consecutive nights across 17 dams, drainage line or river edge locations. Survey Dates: 23-26 March 2020 Survey methods using the Commonwealth survey guidelines (Commonwealth DEWHA 2010): **Targeted surveys for the Commonwealth Assessment – October 2023** Surveys included **call playback**, which consisted of a period of quiet listening for five (5) minutes followed by broadcasting green and golden bell frog calls over a 15-watt directional loud hailer for approximately four (4) minutes. Following call playback, **spotlighting and active searches** of banks with emergent vegetation and overhanging trees were completed. Survey dates: 23–26 October 2023 Survey effort: Targeted green and golden bell frog surveys were completed at seven dams within and surrounding the Development Footprints. Aural-visual surveys = 6.83 person hours over 4 consecutive nights at 7 dams. Each dam or area of deemed suitable habitat was surveyed twice over four consecutive nights, within the seasonal survey period, for a total of 6.83 person hours.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – square-tailed kite (*Lophoictinia isura*)	
Credit Type	Dual
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	1.5
Source	BAM-C

Survey details – square-tailed kite (*Lophoictinia isura*)	
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Found in a variety of timbered habitats including dry woodlands and open forests. Shows a particular preference for timbered watercourses. In arid north-western NSW, has been observed in stony country with a ground cover of chenopods and grasses, open acacia scrub and patches of low open eucalypt woodland.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Nest trees.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	September–January
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Where a breeding site has been identified in accordance with the BAM the species buffer polygon should be established by providing a circular polygon with a 300 m radius around the nest tree and incorporate all woody and non-woody native vegetation within the radius. DPIE is currently developing survey guidance for threatened bird species. In the interim, assessors must undertake a species survey using best practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys (as per the BAM threatened species survey requirements).
Targeted Surveys	**Targeted bird of prey nest searches** Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests. Survey dates and effort: 4-6 November 2025 Approximately 60 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations . 6–10 July 2020 19 person hours across 19 locations in 2020. 14–18 and 29 August 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023. **Targeted bird of prey nest searches** were undertaken. Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 23–26 March 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025

Survey details – square-tailed kite (*Lophoictinia isura*)	
	23-26 June 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 Approximately 405 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes.
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded - large stick nests containing an active breeding site for this species has not been recorded on site despite many years of survey, opportunistic observations.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Generally, roost in groups of 10–15 close to water in caves, mine shafts, hollow-bearing trees, storm water channels, buildings, wharves, bridges and in dense foliage.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Waterbodies with permanent pools/stretches 3 m or wider, including rivers, large creeks, billabongs, lagoons, estuaries, dams and other waterbodies, on or within 200 m of the site.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	October - March

Survey details – southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*)	
Survey Requirements	As noted in the NSW threatened bat survey guidelines (DPIE 2021): Harp trap or mist net are to be placed in areas of potential habitat. Traps or nets should be set beside or preferably over pools of water along creeks or rivers, particularly in flat or areas of low relief if present. The survey may use only mist nets, or a combination of harp traps and mist nets. Any bridges, tunnels, culverts or other structures identified as potential breeding habitat should be searched for bats or signs of bats (guano etc). Passive acoustic detection can be used, with the microphone directed over pools of water along creeks or rivers or other waterbodies or active detection searching over suitable waterbodies in potential habitat using acoustic detectors and visual aids to confirm the presence of southern myotis. Passive detectors or traps are to be set in areas of potential habitat, such as under bridges, culverts or overhanging branches. For larger waterbodies acoustic detection or mist nets may be necessary. Minimum survey effort requires either 16 harp traps for a minimum of four nights OR 16 passive acoustic recorders for a minimum of four nights OR 8 hours of active detection over a minimum of four nights per 2.5 km of potential riparian habitat.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Echolocation recorder surveys** were undertaken. At each site, the Titley Scientific Anabat Express was positioned at an approximate 30 degree angle one metre above the ground in waterproof housing. Each detector was positioned towards potential micro-bat flyaways along areas of suitable habitat. The Anabat detector was programmed to start recording from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise. All recorded calls were analysed by Anna McConville of Echo Ecology using AnalookW (Version 4.2n) software. The identification of calls was undertaken with reference to Pennay et al. (2004) and through the comparison of recorded reference calls from north-eastern NSW and the Sydney Basin. Each call sequence ('pass') was assigned to one of five categories, being definite, probable, possible, species group and unknown. For the purposes of this assessment, definite and probable levels of confidence were treated as positive identifications. Survey dates and effort: 23–27 March 2020 13 recording nights over 4 nights in six locations .
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 - 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights 6–9 July 2020 - 6.4 person hours across 15 locations. Nocturnal spotlighting near farm dams and riparian zones: 23-26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 - 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats.

Survey details – southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*)	
	24–28 February 2025, 3-7 March 2025, 10–14 March 2025, 24–27 March 2025 - 55.5 person hours over 20 nights at a total of 29 dams.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	Yes Assumed present and recorded.
Justification	The southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*) has been assumed present based on the prevalence of records in the local area and region. In particular, the species was recorded near Ravensworth West Mine in 2008 (DPE 2022a). A likely southern myotis was recorded in March 2025 during the nocturnal green and golden bell frog surveys, swooping and fishing over a dam in the western section of the HVO North Development Footprint. See **Section 4.2.2.1** for further details.
Species Polygon Required?	Yes

Survey details – barking owl (*Ninox connivens*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabits woodland and open forest, including fragmented remnants and partly cleared farmland. It is flexible in its habitat use, and hunting can extend in to closed forest and more open areas. Sometimes able to successfully breed along timbered watercourses in heavily cleared habitats (e.g. western NSW) due to the higher density of prey found on these fertile riparian soils.i Roost in shaded portions of tree canopies, including tall midstorey trees with dense foliage such as Acacia and Casuarina species. During nesting season, the male perches in a nearby tree overlooking the hollow entrance.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Living or dead trees with hollows greater than 20 cm diameter and greater than 4 m above the ground.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Acoustic recording (songmeters: e.g. BAR-LT, Audio Moth) (can be undertaken year-round) – evidence of the value of acoustic recording units for monitoring owls is emerging. The Department seeks to build data to support developing a standardised survey effort (survey nights, replicates, and unit densities).

Survey details – barking owl (*Ninox connivens*)	
	For projects proposing to use passive acoustic recording for targeted Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) owl survey, provide a draft survey approach via BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au for information and review by the Department. This is an interim measure and to help contribute to the building of future guidance. The draft survey approach must include: Type of recording unit; A map showing density of recording unit distribution; Justification for proposed recording unit density (including details of previous surveys published or otherwise, where the proposed recorder density has detected owls or birds with similar call volume and pitch)(note: less sensitive recorders like Audio Moths with a smaller recording radius of up to approximately 100 m will need to be more densely distributed than other songmeters where recording radius may be up to 400 m), and the proposed time and recording period each day (e.g. "daily 3 hours before dawn and 3 hours after dusk"); The proposed survey period and minimum total survey duration (e.g. "3 months from March to May 2024" or "90 days over 3 disjunct 30 day periods in April, July and October") and justification for this proposed approach (including details of previous surveys published or otherwise, when owls were detected using the proposed approach) How the recordings will be analysed (e.g. what call recognisers are proposed to be applied). OR Call playback can be undertaken in all months. Playback during the nesting season should be conducted with caution. The conservation benefit of detecting the presence of owls on a site is considered important enough that potential disturbance of nesting pairs is outweighed. Call playback must be conducted at night (preferably around dawn or dusk) during calm (i.e. less than 5 beaufort scale, 29–38 km/hr; at this speed, small trees sway; whitecaps form on waves) and dry weather (see Reference 1 in General Notes field) because responses may be erratic and quiet. Survey as follows; Allow 10 minutes listening and observation time prior to broadcasting. If the target owl(s) is observed or call is heard during this period, call playback is not required. Evenly distribute call playback stations within areas of up to 1000 ha of suitable habitat (as per the Threatened Biodiversity Database Collection (TBDC)) approximately 1000 m apart (I.e.1000 m x 1000 m grid or every 100 ha). This equates to 10 stations for 1000 ha of suitable habitat. Broadcast pre-recorded calls (e.g. single male, single female, duet and for masked owl, screech and chatter) for no more than 15 seconds followed by at least 30 seconds of listening time. Listen for the response or appearance of the target owl(s) during the listening time. Watch/listen for an owl that may be circling overhead. At each station repeat the broadcast and listening sequence for 15 minutes for each target owl, unless the target owl is detected before 15 minutes expires. As a guide, gradually increase the volume from approximately 60 decibels (as measured 1 m from the broadcast device) to 100 decibels with each repeated broadcast. Phone apps are available to help calibrate volume. By analogy, 60 dB equals normal conversation volume at 1 m and 100 dB is roughly equal to the volume of a chainsaw. The intent is start at a low volume which does not frighten nearby owls into silence, and then

Survey details – barking owl (*Ninox connivens*)	
	escalate to elicit a response from distant owls, which can hear calls four times farther away than humans. Search for owls drawn in by the broadcast within a 1 ha circular plot around each broadcast station (radius approximately 57 m) at the end of the 15 minute repeated broadcast and listening sequence. Look and listen for the target species using a spotlight for 15 minutes, unless the target owl is detected before 15 minutes expires. Watch/listen for an owl that may be circling overhead. Record the direction of fly in and time to respond to playback of detected owls, to reduce multiple counts of the same owl at different sample stations. If simultaneously surveying for multiple owl species (e.g. masked owl, sooty owl, powerful owl and barking owl), the playback sequence may include an escalating sequence of calls of these species punctuated with listening periods between each species' call. The masked owl calls should come at the end of the sequence so that if birds respond with a single shriek the response is not obscured by further playback (DSE 2011). Repeatedly sample at each survey station with up to 15 minutes of broadcast calls and listening sequences (as above), until an owl responds, or for at least 6 nights. Survey nights are best spread across multiple weeks. When the area of suitable habitat is 100 hectares or less locate the call playback station as centrally as possible within suitable habitat (as per the TBDC). For areas of suitable habitat greater than 1000 ha, place sampling stations at a density of approximately one every 1500 m (i.e. 1500 m x 1500 m grid or every 225 ha), distributed evenly to cover at least half of the area of suitable habitat.
Targeted Surveys	**Searches for hollow-bearing trees** with hollows greater than 20 cm in diameter were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Targeted searches were undertaken in March 2020, August 2023 and April 2025 and opportunistic searches were also undertaken concurrently during the targeted threatened flora surveys in October 2020. All observations of hollows included watching for signs of breeding activity around the potential breeding habitat and observations of any individuals in the locality. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 Approximately 300 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Acoustic recorder surveys** were undertaken in consultation with the BOS Helpdesk and NSW DCCEEW. A minimum detector spacing of 800 m covering all associated vegetation zones containing hollows was undertaken using 34 acoustic recorders, reflecting a 400 m recording radius per detector. Detectors were set to record from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes after sunrise, every night while deployed. Standard acoustic recording settings were utilised, including sample rate set to 44.1 ksps and gain set to 12 dB. Acoustic recordings were processed using Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope Pro software, with an appropriate frequency filter applied to the data to filter out detections outside

Survey details – barking owl (*Ninox connivens*)	
	the target species' vocal range. Umwelt use a type of cluster analysis employing bait files and have found this to be the most successful method for accurately analysing large datasets of acoustic recordings. Bait files utilised consist of existing recordings of the target species from Umwelt's call library and best available datasets such as 'Australian Bird Calls: Subtropical East' by David Stewart (2002). Survey dates and effort: Installation: 12 June 2025. Collection: 18 July 2025. Installation: 20 January 2026. Collection 10 February 2026 Total survey nights = 1109 **Nocturnal call playback surveys** were undertaken. These sessions began with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. *Ninox connivens* calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations. Following call playback sessions, **nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 - 6.4 person hours across 15 locations.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23-26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 - 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats. **Opportunistic observations during nocturnal surveys for green and golden bell frog** Survey dates and effort: 24–28 February 2025, 3–7 March 2025, 10–14 March 2025, 24–27 March 2025 - 55.5 person hours over 20 nights at a total of 29 dams.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)	
Credit Type	Species

Survey details – powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)	
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabits a range of vegetation types, from woodland and open sclerophyll forest to tall open wet forest and rainforest. Requires large tracts of forest or woodland habitat but can occur in fragmented landscapes as well. The species breeds and hunts in open or closed sclerophyll forest or woodlands and occasionally hunts in open habitats. It roosts by day in dense vegetation comprising species such as *Turpentine Syncarpia glomulifera*, Black She-oak *Allocasuarina littoralis*, Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon*, Rough-barked Apple *Angophora floribunda*, Cherry Ballart *Exocarpus cupressiformis* and a number of eucalypt species.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Living or dead trees with hollows greater than 20 cm diameter and greater than 4 m above the ground.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Acoustic recording (songmeters: e.g. BAR-LT, Audio Moth) (can be undertaken year-round) – evidence of the value of acoustic recording units for monitoring owls is emerging. The Department seeks to build data to support developing a standardised survey effort (survey nights, replicates, and unit densities). For projects proposing to use passive acoustic recording for targeted Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) owl survey, provide a draft survey approach via BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au for information and review by the Department. This is an interim measure and to help contribute to the building of future guidance. The draft survey approach must include: Type of recording unit; A map showing density of recording unit distribution; Justification for proposed recording unit density (including details of previous surveys published or otherwise, where the proposed recorder density has detected owls or birds with similar call volume and pitch)(note: less sensitive recorders like Audio Moths with a smaller recording radius of up to approximately 100m will need to be more densely distributed than other songmeters where recording radius may be up to 400m), and the proposed time and recording period each day (e.g. “daily 3 hours before dawn and 3 hours after dusk”); The proposed survey period and minimum total survey duration (e.g. “3 months from March to May 2024” or “90 days over 3 disjunct 30 day periods in April, July and October”) and justification for this proposed approach (including details of previous surveys published or otherwise, when owls were detected using the proposed approach); How the recordings will be analysed (e.g. what call recognisers are proposed to be applied).

Survey details – powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)

OR

Call playback can be undertaken in all months. Playback during the nesting season should be conducted with caution. The conservation benefit of detecting the presence of owls on a site is considered important enough that potential disturbance of nesting pairs is outweighed. Call playback must be conducted at night (preferably around dawn or dusk) during calm (i.e. less than 5 beaufort scale, 29–38 km/hr; at this speed, small trees sway; whitecaps form on waves) and dry weather (see Reference 1 in General Notes field) because responses may be erratic and quiet. Survey as follows;

- Allow 10 minutes listening and observation time prior to broadcasting. If the target owl(s) is observed or call is heard during this period, call playback is not required.
- Evenly distribute call playback stations within areas of up to 1,000 hectares of suitable habitat (as per the Threatened Biodiversity Database Collection (TBDC)) approximately 1000 m apart (I.e.1,000 m x 1,000 m grid or every 100 ha). This equates to 10 stations for 1,000 ha of suitable habitat.
- Broadcast pre-recorded calls (e.g. single male, single female, duet and for masked owl, screech and chatter) for no more than 15 seconds followed by at least 30 seconds of listening time. Listen for the response or appearance of the target owl(s) during the listening time. Watch/listen for an owl that may be circling overhead.
- At each station repeat the broadcast and listening sequence for 15 minutes for each target owl, unless the target owl is detected before 15 minutes expires. As a guide, gradually increase the volume from approximately 60 decibels (as measured 1 m from the broadcast device) to 100 decibels with each repeated broadcast. Phone apps are available to help calibrate volume. By analogy, 60 dB equals normal conversation volume at 1 m and 100 dB is roughly equal to the volume of a chainsaw. The intent is start at a low volume which does not frighten nearby owls into silence, and then escalate to elicit a response from distant owls, which can hear calls four times farther away than humans.
- Search for owls drawn in by the broadcast within a 1 ha circular plot around each broadcast station (radius approximately 57 m) at the end of the 15 minute repeated broadcast and listening sequence. Look and listen for the target species using a spotlight for 15 minutes, unless the target owl is detected before 15 minutes expires. Watch/listen for an owl that may be circling overhead.
- Record the direction of fly in and time to respond to playback of detected owls, to reduce multiple counts of the same owl at different sample stations.
- If simultaneously surveying for multiple owl species (e.g. masked owl, sooty owl, powerful owl and barking owl), the playback sequence may include an escalating sequence of calls of these species punctuated with listening periods between each species' call. The masked owl calls should come at the end of the sequence so that if birds respond with a single shriek the response is not obscured by further playback (DSE,2011).
- Repeatedly sample at each survey station with up to 15 minutes of broadcast calls and listening sequences (as above), until an owl responds, or for at least 6 nights. Survey nights are best spread across multiple weeks.

When the area of suitable habitat is 100 hectares or less locate the call playback station as centrally as possible within suitable habitat (as per the TBDC).

Survey details – powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)	
	For areas of suitable habitat greater than 1000 ha, place sampling stations at a density of approximately one every 1500 m (i.e. 1,500 m x 1,500 m grid or every 225 ha), distributed evenly to cover at least half of the area of suitable habitat.

Survey details – powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)	
Targeted Surveys	**Searches for hollow-bearing trees** with hollows greater than 20 cm in diameter were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Targeted searches were undertaken in March 2020, August 2023 and April 2025 and opportunistic searches were also undertaken concurrently during the targeted threatened flora surveys in October 2020. All observations of hollows included watching for signs of breeding activity around the potential breeding habitat and observations of any individuals in the locality. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 Approximately 300 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Acoustic recorder surveys** were undertaken in consultation with the BOS Helpdesk and NSW DCCEEW. A minimum detector spacing of 800 m covering all associated vegetation zones containing hollows was undertaken using 34 acoustic recorders, reflecting a 400 m recording radius per detector. Detectors were set to record from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes after sunrise, every night while deployed. Standard acoustic recording settings were utilised, including sample rate set to 44.1 ksps and gain set to 12 dB. Acoustic recordings were processed using Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope Pro software, with an appropriate frequency filter applied to the data to filter out detections outside the target species' vocal range. Umwelt use a type of cluster analysis employing bait files and have found this to be the most successful method for accurately analysing large datasets of acoustic recordings. Bait files utilised consist of existing recordings of the target species from Umwelt's call library and best available datasets such as 'Australian Bird Calls: Subtropical East' by David Stewart (2002). Survey dates and effort: Installation: 12 June 2025. Collection: 18 July 2025. Installation: 20 January 2026. Collection 10 February 2026 Total survey nights = 1109 **Nocturnal call playback surveys** were undertaken. These sessions began with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. *Ninox strenua* calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 - 6.4 person hours across 15 locations. Following call playback sessions, **nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 - 6.4 person hours across 15 locations.

Survey details – powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)	
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23-26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 - 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats. **Opportunistic observations during nocturnal surveys for green and golden bell frog** Survey dates and effort: 24-28 February 2025, 3-7 March 2025, 10-14 March 2025, 24-27 March 2025 - 55.5 person hours over 20 nights at a total of 29 dams.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes.
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – eastern osprey (*Pandion cristatus*)	
Credit Type	Dual
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	1.5
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Favour coastal areas, especially the mouths of large rivers, lagoons and lakes.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Presence of stick-nests in living and dead trees (>15 m) or artificial structures within 100 m of a floodplain for nesting.
Associated PCTs	3481 4015 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	April–November
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): This species can nest in isolated trees. Nests are distinctive but easiest to identify when birds are in attendance. No further details of survey requirements are provided in the TBDC.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Targeted bird of prey nest searches** were undertaken. Suitable nest trees and stags were recorded and inspected for large nests. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020

Survey details – eastern osprey (*Pandion cristatus*)	
	14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 23-26 June 2025 15, 18, 19, 26, 27 August 2025 4-6 November 2025 Approximately 465 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates and effort: 14–18 and 29 August 2023 42 person hours across 42 locations in 2023.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Diurnal bird surveys** were carried out during morning and afternoon periods (peak times for bird activity). A 15–20 minute survey with two observers using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars was completed at each site. All bird species observed or heard were recorded. Survey dates: 3–6 June 2019 12–15 August 2019 24 person hours across 40 locations in 2019. 6–10 July 2020
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – southern greater glider (*Petauroides volans*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Feeds exclusively on eucalypt leaves, buds, flowers and mistletoe. Shelter during the day in tree hollows and will use up to 18 hollows in their home range.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Hollow-bearing trees.
Associated PCTs	3485 4015
Required Survey Period	All year

Survey details – southern greater glider (*Petauroides volans*)	
Survey Requirements	As noted in the survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals: Survey requirements for this species includes daytime searches for presence of potentially suitable habitat resources for nests and burrows, and signs of the species' presence. It also includes spotlighting surveys in suitable vegetation types, stag watching, and call detection and/or call playback surveys.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Thermal Drone Surveys** Thermal drone flight paths were undertaken in areas of suitable habitat for the species. Detection methods included hot spot alert, shape detection, characteristic trait, drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight. Survey times were between 21:00–06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures. Survey dates and effort: 12–20 July 2023 - Over 900 km of survey transects were undertaken across areas of predicted and other potential habitat for southern greater glider. **Searches for hollow-bearing trees** were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Targeted searches were undertaken in March 2020, August 2023, and April 2025 with opportunistic searches also undertaken concurrently during the targeted threatened flora surveys in October 2020. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 Approximately 300 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 10–30 minutes and involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 - 19.8 person hours across 16 locations. 6–9 July 2020 - 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 23-26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 - 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats. **Remote camera surveys** were undertaken. At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected. Survey dates and effort: 24 March – 8 July 2020 126 trap nights across 9 locations.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	None
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes

Survey details – southern greater glider (*Petauroides volans*)	
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabits mature or old growth Box, Box-Ironbark woodlands and River Red Gum forest west of the Great Dividing Range and Blackbutt-Bloodwood forest with heath understorey in coastal areas. Prefers mixed species stands with a shrub or Acacia midstorey.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Survey year round for this species, but sites with bipinnate *Acacia*, autumn winter flowering trees and shrubs such as *Eucalyptus robusta* and *Banksia* sp. (*integrifolia* etc) should be subject to a more retracted survey period of between March-August. Relies on large old trees with hollows for breeding and nesting. These trees are also critical for movement and typically need to be closely-connected (i.e. no more than 50 m apart). The BOS Helpdesk was contacted in relation to a proposed survey effort for this species. Following consultation with the NSW DCCEEW, remote cameras were installed in suitable habitat areas in 2025. Dr David Sharpe (approved expert for the species) was consulted on refining the likely suitable habitat on the site.
Targeted Surveys	<u>Survey methods:</u> **Remote Camera Surveys** Remote cameras were installed across 78 locations within suitable habitat in the Development Footprints. A ventilated bait canister holding a honey/peanut butter oat ball was nailed to a tree centred on the camera's field of view. Each canister was a standard known length, enabling broad measurements to be taken. A honey and water mixture was generously sprayed on the baited tree above the bait canister. Cameras were set at a minimum height of 2 m and left in place for a minimum of six weeks (42 nights) with cameras checked and baits replaced at the two- and four-week mark. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u>

Survey details – squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*)	
	Installation: 22 October 2025. Collection: 17 December 2025 4,256 camera trap nights (76 nights x 78 cameras). Two remote cameras were stolen during the survey period. These were replaced on 16 December 2025, rebaited at the two- and four-week mark and collected on 3 February 2026, totalling and additional 96 camera trap nights. **Nocturnal call playback surveys** were undertaken. These sessions began with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. *Petaurus norfolcensis* calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights. Following call playback sessions, **nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights. **Remote camera surveys** were undertaken. At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected. Survey dates and effort: 24 March–8 July 2020 126 trap nights across 9 locations.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Thermal Drone Surveys** Thermal drone flight paths were undertaken in areas of suitable habitat for the species. Detection methods included hot spot alert, shape detection, characteristic trait, drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight. Survey times were between 21:00–06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures. Survey dates and effort: 12–20 July 2023 - Over 900 km of survey transects were undertaken across areas of predicted and other potential habitat for squirrel glider
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes.
Present?	No.
Justification	Not recorded.
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Prefer dry sclerophyll open forest with sparse groundcover of herbs, grasses, shrubs or leaf litter. Also inhabit heath, swamps, rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4015 4089
Required Survey Period	December - June
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Low population densities, large home range size, annual male die-off and fluctuating local abundance make Brush-tailed Phascogales difficult to detect reliably. It may be more appropriate to seek an expert report to determine presence or absence. Survey Dec – Jun, noting that Dec – Feb is the main juvenile dispersal period and May – Jun is the peak mating season, when males are most likely to be detected (particularly towards the end of the season, as deceased individuals). Survey must be undertaken using baited cameras. Cameras should be set at head height, or above, facing the branch or tree trunk where a honey-based bait has been placed. Cameras must be evenly spaced across the site. Cameras must remain in place for a minimum of 4 weeks with cameras checked and baits replaced after 2 weeks. A minimum of 4 cameras, independent of the size of the subject land, must be used for sites up to 1 ha, then an additional 2 cameras for every ha of suitable habitat thereafter. That is, at least 22 working, baited, evenly spaced camera traps are required for the first 10 ha of suitable habitat.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 10–30 minutes and involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights. **Remote camera surveys** were undertaken. At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter, honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected. Survey dates and effort:

Survey details – brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*)	
	24 March – 8 July 2020 126 trap nights across 9 locations.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Thermal Drone Surveys** Thermal drone flight paths were undertaken in areas of suitable habitat for the species. Detection methods included hot spot alert, shape detection, characteristic trait, drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight. Survey times were between 21:00–06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures. Survey dates and effort: 12–20 July 2023 - Over 900 km of survey transects were undertaken across areas of predicted and other potential habitat for species.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	Yes – recorded and assumed present across the site.
Justification	The species has been recorded annually at the Ashton Coal Mine offset site between 2015 and 2024 located approximately 1.8 km from the eastern extent of the HVO North Development Footprint. The species was recorded in three locations within and in proximity to the HVO North Development Footprint near the Hunter River and Bowmans Creek in PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland during the surveys undertaken for this assessment. Noting the species populations are known to fluctuate and the species' ability to occupy a range of PCTs, for the purposes of this assessment all associated PCTs (in accordance with the TBDC) in woody condition have been included in the species polygon (refer to **Figure 4.8**).
Species Polygon Required?	Yes

Survey details – koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas, PMST
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Inhabit eucalypt woodlands and forests. Feed on the foliage of more than 70 eucalypt species and 30 non-eucalypt species, but in any one area will select preferred browse species.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Presence of koala use trees.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the koala BAM survey guide (DPE 2022a): The minimum survey effort to detect koala presence on the subject land requires the total effort for two standard survey methods to be met. A scat

Survey details – koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)	
	detection method, which may indicate past occupancy, must be paired with a non-scat detection method as follows: Spot Assessment Technique (SAT) or detection dogs, and Spotlighting or passive acoustic or drones.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Thermal Drone Surveys** Thermal drone flight paths were undertaken in areas of suitable koala habitat in accordance with the BAM (2020). Detection methods included hot spot alert, shape detection, characteristic trait, drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight. Survey times were between 21:00–06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures. Survey dates and effort: 12–20 July 2023 Over 900 km of survey transects were undertaken across areas of suitable habitat for koala. Searches for signs of the presence of koalas were undertaken using the **Spot Assessment Technique (SAT).** The koala SAT was undertaken in eucalypt dominated sites only as per the technique outlined in Phillips and Callaghan (2011) and DPE (2022a). Searches were undertaken on and around the base of 30 trees at each survey site. The searches focused on signs of presence including scats at the base of trees and characteristic scratches on tree trunks. Surveys focused on areas containing koala feed trees according to the Approved Recovery Plan for the Koala (DECC 2008). Survey dates and effort: 6–10 July 2020 29 May – 9 June 2023 February and March 2025 57 SAT locations targeting koala feed trees in areas of suitable habitat (refer to **Table D3**). **Nocturnal call playback surveys** were undertaken. These sessions began with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. koala calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights. Following call playback sessions, **nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Remote camera surveys** were undertaken. At each site, a Bushnell Trophy Cam HD remote camera was mounted approximately one metre above the ground on a tree trunk and positioned towards a bait station containing peanut butter,

Survey details – koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)	
	honey and tuna. Cameras were set to take three photos in quick succession when movement was detected. Survey dates and effort: 24 March – 8 July 2020 126 trap nights across 9 locations
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – common planigale (*Planigale maculata*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Common Planigales inhabit rainforest, eucalypt forest, heathland, marshland, grassland and rocky areas where there is surface cover, and usually close to water.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	None
Associated PCTs	3431
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2024): Survey any time of the year, noting that males are more active during winter, and juvenile dispersal usually occurs between December and January. Survey must be undertaken using pitfall traps where the substrate allows. Occasionally, the substrate may be too rocky, hard or inundated to allow the use of pitfall traps. In these circumstances, we strongly advise that an expert report should be obtained. Pitfall trap design: Ideally, each pitfall trap array should comprise 10 m of drift-fence with a 20 L or larger bucket with a lid at either end. Survey placement: Target the placement of traps in suitable habitat within about 200 m of the ecotonal boundary of adjoining PCTs, in or adjacent to dense grass cover, deep leaf litter and/or abundant logs. Traps must remain in place for a minimum of four consecutive nights. Survey effort: A minimum of three pitfall trap arrays must be used for an area of suitable habitat up to 1 ha. For suitable habitat >1–10 ha, one additional pitfall trap array must be used for every additional hectare, with a maximum of 10 pitfall trap arrays for any one patch of suitable habitat. Where suitable habitat patches are separated by 200 m or greater, the same survey effort must be applied in each patch.

Survey details – common planigale (*Planigale maculata*)	
	Polygon: the species polygon is drawn to 500 m either side of the PCT ecotonal boundary, or to the other PCT boundary, whichever is smaller.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Pitfall traps** were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of 10 m of drift-fence with a 20 L bucket with a lid at either end. The lid was elevated 2 cm to 3 cm (using sticks) above the lip of the bucket. Leaf litter and small twigs were placed in the bottom of each bucket to provide shelter for trapped animals. Consultation with the BCD was undertaken to determine the survey effort required across the Development Footprints which is considered 'large-scale'. The conclusion was where "total suitable habitat > 50 ha: 22 arrays plus one additional for every 10 ha of suitable habitat above 10 ha. For example, 60 ha of suitable habitat will require 23 arrays." The Development Footprints contain approximately 420 ha of potentially suitable habitat subject to impacts in accordance with the predicted vegetation zones in the TBDC. Based on this advice, it was calculated that a total of 59 pitfall trap arrays should be established to adequately survey for the common planigale. Survey dates and effort: 29 May–11 August 2023 61 pitfall traps were installed across the Development Footprints including: • 12 in PCT3431 Moderate • 3 in PCT3431 Thinned Woodland • 1 In PCT3431 Plantation • 7 in PCT3431 Scattered Regeneration • 1 in PCT3431 Cooba Woodland • 19 in PCT3431 Poor Condition DNG • 11 in PCT3431 Exotic Grassland • 1 in PCT4089 Exotic Grassland • 9 in mine rehabilitation Totalling 256 trap nights. The final location of the pitfalls were often located in proximity to, and straddling, another vegetation zone/PCT as this is in accordance with the survey information for the species in the TBDC. As such, the definite number of traplines per vegetation zone is accurate to the point of what PCT the trapline was established in relative to the vegetation mapping for the site.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Collapsible funnel traps** were installed in suitable habitat. Each trap array comprised of a 10 m drift fence with 10 collapsible funnel traps positioned equidistantly along each side of the drift fence. Collapsible funnels were positioned so that they were flush with the ground and checked daily for 4 consecutive days. No evidence of chew marks or holes were detected in the traps following installation. Funnel traps were used in conjunction with pitfall trapping where the substrate was too hard to dig. Subsequent advice from BCD noted that this survey method was not acceptable and further efforts for pitfall trapping was employed (see below), however the effort and results of these surveys should not be discounted from informing the assessment. Survey dates and effort: 29 May – 2 June 2023 17 funnel traps were installed across the Development Footprints including:

Survey details – common planigale (*Planigale maculata*)	
	• 2 in PCT3485 Moderate • 3 in PCT3431 Moderate • 4 in PCT3431 Thinned Woodland • 2 in PCT3431 Scattered Regeneration • 4 in PCT3431 Poor Condition DNG • 2 in PCT4089 Moderate Totalling 68 trap nights. **Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species are visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 March 2020 7 person hours across 16 locations over 4 consecutive nights. 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations over 4 consecutive nights.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)	
Credit Type	Dual
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C, Bionet Atlas, PMST
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Occur in subtropical and temperate rainforests, tall sclerophyll forests and woodlands, heaths and swamps as well as urban gardens and cultivated fruit crops. Roosting camps are generally located within 20 km of a regular food source and are commonly found in gullies, close to water, in vegetation with a dense canopy.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Breeding camps
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	October–December
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025): Breeding camps will need to be identified by survey, as per OEH Guidelines. The initial search for camps should encompass any recorded camps and roosting habitat likely to occur on the subject land.

Survey details – grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)	
	If a camp is located the survey only needs to take place in the camp (that is the area occupied by the target species) to identify breeding females. Camps used for breeding must be mapped. Use GPS to map outer perimeter of the camp to create the species polygon. Surveys must be undertaken as per the Threatened Bat Survey Guide to confirm breeding habitat.
Targeted Surveys	Survey methods: **Daytime searches for camps** were conducted concurrently with threatened flora surveys undertaken comprehensively across the Development Footprint, including most recently in March and April 2025. Survey dates and effort: 12–23 October 2020 14 October 2021 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 300 person hours over 18 days.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	All other surveys undertaken within and around the Development Footprint provide opportunistic observations as flying-fox breeding camps are highly detectable.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes
Present?	No
Justification	Not recorded
Species Polygon Required?	No

Survey details – masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)	
Credit Type	Species
Biodiversity Risk Weighting	2
Source	BAM-C
Potential Habitat Description	**TBDC:** Lives in dry eucalypt forests and woodlands from sea level to 1.100 m. A forest owl, but often hunts along the edges of forests, including roadsides.
Habitat Constraints or Geographic Limitations	Living or dead trees with hollows greater than 20 cm diameter and greater than 4 m above ground.
Associated PCTs	3431 3485 4081 4089
Required Survey Period	All year
Survey Requirements	As noted in the TBDC (DCCEEW 2025):

Survey details – masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)	
	Acoustic recording (songmeters: e.g. BAR-LT, Audio Moth) (can be undertaken year-round) – evidence of the value of acoustic recording units for monitoring owls is emerging. The Department seeks to build data to support developing a standardised survey effort (survey nights, replicates, and unit densities). For projects proposing to use passive acoustic recording for targeted Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) owl survey, provide a draft survey approach via BOS.helpdesk@environment.nsw.gov.au for information and review by the Department. This is an interim measure and to help contribute to the building of future guidance. The draft survey approach must include: Type of recording unit; A map showing density of recording unit distribution; Justification for proposed recording unit density (including details of previous surveys published or otherwise, where the proposed recorder density has detected owls or birds with similar call volume and pitch)(note: less sensitive recorders like Audio Moths with a smaller recording radius of up to approximately 100 m will need to be more densely distributed than other songmeters where recording radius may be up to 400m), and the proposed time and recording period each day (e.g. “daily 3 hours before dawn and 3 hours after dusk”); The proposed survey period and minimum total survey duration (e.g. “3 months from March to May 2024” or “90 days over 3 disjunct 30 day periods in April, July and October”) and justification for this proposed approach (including details of previous surveys published or otherwise, when owls were detected using the proposed approach); How the recordings will be analysed (e.g. what call recognisers are proposed to be applied). OR Call playback can be undertaken in all months. Playback during the nesting season should be conducted with caution. The conservation benefit of detecting the presence of owls on a site is considered important enough that potential disturbance of nesting pairs is outweighed. Call playback must be conducted at night (preferably around dawn or dusk) during calm (i.e. less than 5 beaufort scale, 29–38 km/hr; at this speed, small trees sway; whitecaps form on waves) and dry weather (see Reference 1 in General Notes field) because responses may be erratic and quiet. Survey as follows; Allow 10 minutes listening and observation time prior to broadcasting. If the target owl(s) is observed or call is heard during this period, call playback is not required. Evenly distribute call playback stations within areas of up to 1000 ha of suitable habitat (as per the Threatened Biodiversity Database Collection (TBDC)) approximately 1,000 m apart (I.e.1,000 m x 1,000 m grid or every 100 ha). This equates to 10 stations for 1,000 ha of suitable habitat. Broadcast pre-recorded calls (e.g. single male, single female, duet and for masked owl, screech and chatter) for no more than 15 seconds followed by at least 30 seconds of listening time. Listen for the response or appearance of the target owl(s) during the listening time. Watch/listen for an owl that may be circling overhead. At each station repeat the broadcast and listening sequence for 15 minutes for each target owl, unless the target owl is detected before 15 minutes expires. As a guide, gradually increase the volume from approximately 60 decibels (as measured 1 m from the broadcast device) to 100 decibels

Survey details – masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)	
	with each repeated broadcast. Phone apps are available to help calibrate volume. By analogy, 60 dB equals normal conversation volume at 1 m and 100 dB is roughly equal to the volume of a chainsaw. The intent is start at a low volume which does not frighten nearby owls into silence, and then escalate to elicit a response from distant owls, which can hear calls four times farther away than humans. Search for owls drawn in by the broadcast within a 1 ha circular plot around each broadcast station (radius approximately 57 m) at the end of the 15 minute repeated broadcast and listening sequence. Look and listen for the target species using a spotlight for 15 minutes, unless the target owl is detected before 15 minutes expires. Watch/listen for an owl that may be circling overhead. Record the direction of fly in and time to respond to playback of detected owls, to reduce multiple counts of the same owl at different sample stations. If simultaneously surveying for multiple owl species (e.g. masked owl, sooty owl, powerful owl and barking owl), the playback sequence may include an escalating sequence of calls of these species punctuated with listening periods between each species' call. The masked owl calls should come at the end of the sequence so that if birds respond with a single shriek the response is not obscured by further playback (DSE,2011). 8. Repeatedly sample at each survey station with up to 15 minutes of broadcast calls and listening sequences (as above), until an owl responds, or for at least 6 nights. Survey nights are best spread across multiple weeks. When the area of suitable habitat is 100 ha or less locate the call playback station as centrally as possible within suitable habitat (as per the TBDC). For areas of suitable habitat greater than 1,000 ha, place sampling stations at a density of approximately one every 1,500 m (i.e. 1,500 m x 1,500 m grid or every 225 ha), distributed evenly to cover at least half of the area of suitable habitat.
Targeted Surveys	<u>Survey methods:</u> **Searches for hollow-bearing trees** with hollows greater than 20 cm in diameter were undertaken across the Development Footprint. Where hollows were found, the tree species, hollow size and location (spout, trunk, branch) were recorded. Targeted searches were undertaken in March 2020, August 2023 and April 2025 and opportunistic searches were undertaken concurrently during the targeted threatened flora surveys in October 2020. All observations of hollows included watching for signs of breeding activity around the potential breeding habitat and observations of any individuals in the locality. <u>Survey dates and effort:</u> 23–26 March 2020 12–16 October 2020 19–23 October 2020 14–18 and 29 August 2023 2–4, 9–11, 14–15, 28–29 April 2025 Approximately 300 person hours of survey across the Development Footprint. **Acoustic recorder surveys** were undertaken in consultation with the BOS Helpdesk and NSW DCCEEW. A minimum detector spacing of 800 m covering all associated vegetation zones containing hollows was undertaken using 34 acoustic recorders, reflecting a 400 m recording radius per detector. Detectors were set to record from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes after sunrise,

Survey details – masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)	
	every night while deployed. Standard acoustic recording settings were utilised, including sample rate set to 44.1 ksps and gain set to 12 dB. Acoustic recordings were processed using Wildlife Acoustics Kaleidoscope Pro software, with an appropriate frequency filter applied to the data to filter out detections outside the target species' vocal range. Umwelt use a type of cluster analysis employing bait files and have found this to be the most successful method for accurately analysing large datasets of acoustic recordings. Bait files utilised consist of existing recordings of the target species from Umwelt's call library and best available datasets such as 'Australian Bird Calls: Subtropical East' by David Stewart (2002). Survey dates and effort: Installation: 12 June 2025. Collection: 18 July 2025. Installation: 20 January 2026. Collection 10 February 2026 Total survey nights = 1109 **Nocturnal call playback surveys** were undertaken. These sessions began with a period of quiet listening for approximately 5 minutes. *Tyto novaehollandiae* calls were played using a 15 watt directional loud hailer for approximately four minutes, followed by a listening period of five minutes. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations. Following call playback sessions, **nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 6–9 July 2020 6.4 person hours across 15 locations.
Opportunistic and other Notable Surveys	**Nocturnal spotlighting searches** were conducted at each site for between 15–30 minutes. This involved walking a meandering transect and recording any fauna species seen or heard calling. Species were visually identified using 10 x 40 magnification binoculars or by call recognition. Survey dates and effort: 23–26 October, 27 November, 5, 11 December 2023 - 16 person hours across 7 nights targeting riparian habitats. **Opportunistic observations during nocturnal surveys for green and golden bell frog** Survey dates and effort: 24-28 February 2025, 3-7 March 2025, 10-14 March 2025, 24-27 March 2025 - 55.5 person hours over 20 nights at a total of 29 dams.
Survey Requirements Met?	Yes.
Present?	Yes
Justification	Masked owl was confirmed in five acoustic recorder locations near the Archerfield Road and Lake James locality.
Species Polygon Required?	Yes

D.4 Suitable Habitat Assessment for Koala

Umwelt reviewed the PCTs associated with the koala in the Threatened Biodiversity Database Collection (TBDC) and the data collected through the vegetation integrity assessments (i.e. BAM plots) across the HVO North and South disturbance areas. **Table D.2** below outlines the results of this review and recommendations on whether additional surveys are required in accordance with the new survey guide (DPE 2022).

Table D.2 Suitable Habitat Assessment for Koala

Plant Community Type	Associated PCT for Koala	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Koala Use Trees Present^	Tree Growth Form Present	Surveys Required?
3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	Yes	1. Moderate	*Eucalyptus blakelyi* *Eucalyptus crebra* *Eucalyptus moluccana* *Angophora floribunda*	Yes	Yes
		2. Thinned Woodland	*Eucalyptus blakelyi* *Eucalyptus crebra* *Eucalyptus moluccana* *Angophora floribunda*	Yes	Yes
		3. Woodland with Exotic Understorey	*Eucalyptus crebra*	Yes	Yes
		4. Plantation	*Casuarina glauca* *Corymbia maculata* *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* *Eucalyptus saligna* *Eucalyptus grandis*	Yes	Yes
		5. Scattered Regeneration	No	Yes - *Allocasuarina luehmannii, Geijera salicifolia, Notelaea macrocarpa* and *Acacia salicina* only	**Yes** – surveys targeted on isolated trees only
		6. Cooba Woodland	No	Yes - *Allocasuarina luehmannii, Brachychiton populneus, Geijera salicifolia, Notelaea macrocarpa* only	**Yes** – surveys targeted on isolated trees only
		7. Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland	No	Yes - *Acacia salicina* only	No

Plant Community Type	Associated PCT for Koala	Vegetation Zone and Condition	Koala Use Trees Present^	Tree Growth Form Present	Surveys Required?
		8. Exotic Grassland	*Eucalyptus blakelyi* <--> *tereticornis*	Yes	**Yes** – surveys targeted on isolated trees only
		9. Bulloak Variant	*Angophora floribunda* *Eucalyptus blakelyi* *Eucalyptus crebra*	Yes	**Yes**
3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest	Yes	10. Moderate	*Eucalyptus moluccana*	Yes	Yes
4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	No	11. Moderate	*Casuarina glauca*	Yes	No
4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	Yes	12. Moderate	None	Yes - *Acacia salicina* only	No
4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	Yes	13. Moderate	*Eucalyptus melliodora* *Eucalyptus moluccana*	Yes	Yes
		14. Low to Moderate	*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*	Yes	Yes
		15. Cooba Woodland	None	Yes - *Acacia salicina* only	No
		16. Derived Native Grassland	None	Yes - *Acacia salicina* only	No
		17. Exotic Grassland	None	No	No

^Central Coast Koala Modelling Region - Koala Use Trees recorded in BAM plots.

D.5 Weather Conditions

Table D.3 below outlines the weather conditions for all survey periods. Data is derived from the Singleton (Defence) weather station (061430) from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM 2023) or site met data supplied by HVO.

Table D.3 Weather Conditions for Surveys

Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
3 June 2019	11.2–17.1	1.6	42	7.5–18.5	9.4	51
4 June 2019	4.0–14.8	0.2	54			
5 June 2019	7.9–15.3	1.2	55			
6 June 2019	3.7–19.3	0	30			
12 August 2019	4.4–17.9	0	38	7.1–20.7	22.0	32
13 August 2019	1.7–20.3	0	19			
14 August 2019	2.0–20.7	0	14			
15 August 2019	1.4–21.8	0	17			
23 March 2020	18.3–23.9	0	61	16.0–25.5	79.4	61
24 March 2020	15.9–25.9	0	54			
25 March 2020	14.4–24.9	0	93			
26 March 2020	16.4–17.9	21.2	87			
27 March 2020	25.3–22.9	3.4	55			
11 May 2020	5.4–18.9	0	33	9.2–19.9	22.2	55
12 May 2020	3.5–20.8	0	45			
13 May 2020	6.0–21.8	0.2	39			
14 May 2020	6.9–19.2	0	56			
15 May 2020	9.8–17.5	0	65			
10 June 2020	12.9–16.6	8.8	94	7.7–18.0	36.6	59
11 June 2020	12.9–20.2	4.0	54			
6 July 2020	3.5–18.3	0	45	7.1–17.7	98.6	56
7 July 2020	4.8–17.9	0	51			
8 July 2020	7.2–16.5	0	62			
9 July 2020	5.1–19.1	0.2	56			
10 July 2020	8.8–15.5	0.2	89			
10 August 2020	6.9–16.8	25.4	69	7.0–18.5	44.8	45
11 August 2020	9.8–18.8	4.2	55			
12 August 2020	8.4–18.9	0	66			
13 August 2020	9.8–22.8	2.0	41			
14 August 2020	7.9–15.9	0.2	86			

Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
31 August 2020	11.6–24.9	0	31			
1 September 2020	10.3–19.2	0	46	10.7–22.8	37.0	44
2 September 2020	5.9–23.8	0	38			
3 September 2020	12.4–26.9	0	38			
4 September 2020	18.8–26.5	0	40			
22 September 2020	15.7–26.3	3.6	24			
30 September2020	9.2–20.1	0	54			
9 October 2020	12.3–24.9	0	28	13.1–26.2	93.6	44
12 October 2020	11.2–28.8	0	28			
13 October 2020	11.5–30.7	0	24			
14 October 2020	12.6–25.6	0	48			
15 October 2020	12.9–30.8	0	30			
16 October 2020	16.6–27.3	0	55			
19 October 2020	14.9–21.2	7.6	65			
20 October 2020	12.5–24.9	0	52			
21 October 2020	11.3–27.6	0	36			
22 October 2020	14.3–29.4	0	36			
23 October 2020	13.6–31.5	0	33			
28 October 2020	11.7–20.7	1.2	69			
4 November 2020	11.0–28.8	0	28	15.8–27.7	66.2	47
6 November 2020	NR–22.5	26.2	39			
12 November 2020	NR–30.8	0	36			
13 November 2020	17.4–27.4	3.6	83			
18 November 2020	15.7–25.3	0.2	50			
19 November 2020	13.8–29.2	0	46			
24 November 2020	16.2–25.1	0	55			
25 November 2020	15.3–26.7	0	46			
2 December 2020	20.8–23.6	15.4	71	17.2–27.0	158.8	60
4 December 2020	18.3–35.5	0	31			
8 December 2020	15.9–26.4	0	-			
17 December 2020	21.0–31.7	1.2	87			
2 February 2021	17.9–26.5	18.0	56	17.5–27.3	91.8	60
3 February 2021	16.4–25.7	0	57			
8 April 2021	15.7–24.9	6.2	65	10.9–23.4	20.6	49
12 April 2021	6.3–20.6	0	32			
13 April 2021	5.5–22.7	0	37			

Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
14 April 2021	8.9–26.6	0	28			
15 April 2021	12.1–26.6	0	32			
29 July 2021	7.4–18.2	2.0	47	6.1–17.7	23.4	77
7 October 2021	11.1–29.0	0	65	12.0–25.3	75.4	65
12 October 2021	11.3–15.3	8.0	95			
14 October 2022	11.3–28.7	1.4	81			
18 October 2021	8.7–26.4	0	62			
28 October 2021	14.5–30.9	0	64			
1 November 2021	9.7–23.3	0	67	14.7–24.1	231.0	75
8 November 2021	17.0–28.3	11.0	95			
15 November 2021	11.1–22.9	0.8	47			
23 November 2021	15.6–24.2	1.0	78			
1 December 2021	18.1–24.9	4.0	81	16.8–28.1	91.4	72
6 December 2021	15.4–22.5	0	62			
15 December 2021	13.4–31.7	0	74			
20 December 2021	18.1	0	73			
13 July 2022	5.7–14.9	5.0	53	7.3–16.7	11.0	62
11 August 2022	7.9–16.2	0	61	7.8–19.4	55.4	87
15 May 2023	11.3–20.6	0	64	6.9–20.4	13.2	42
16 May 2023	8.4–21.5	0	35			
17 May 2023	10.8–17.2	0	60			
18 May 2023	9.0–18.7	0	49			
19 May 2023	5.5–18.3	2.4	44			
22 May 2023	4.8–20.2	0	31			
23 May 2023	3.9–22.1	0	22			
24 May 2023	4.0–23.1	0	16			
25 May 2023	5.6–23.5	0	19			
26 May 2023	11.2–20.9	0	91			
6 June 2023	11.7–19.7	0.2	57	6.9–18.8	11.8	46
7 June 2023	7.8–19.9	0	60			
8 June 2023	7.2–17.8	0	91			
9 June 2023	8.1–19.2	1.0	43			
11 July 2023	3.5–17-9	0	38	7.0–19.8	9.4	44
12 July 2023	2.8–19.6	0	45			
13 July 2023	3.4–21.5	0	32			
14 July 2023	6.5–22.0	0	34			

Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
17 July 2023	10.2–21.2	0	48			
18 July 2023	6.4–22.5	0	33			
19 July 2023	6.7–17.4	0	26			
20 July 2023	1.2–18.6	0	26			
21 July 2023	6.0–17.5	0	58			
24 July 2023	7.8–18.0	1.4	59			
25 July 2023	4.8–20.2	0	47			
26 July 2023	5.9–21.0	0.2	41			
27 July 2023	5.5–22.0	0	35			
28 July 2023	6.9–23.2	0	34			
29 July 2023	11.8–24.9	0	33			
7 August 2023	10.7–19.4	0.4	58	7.8–21.5	28.0	39
8 August 2023	8.3–18.9	0	50			
9 August 2023	6.2–21.2	0	39			
10 August 2023	6.0–24.7	0.2	24			
11 August 2023	6.8–20.4	0	27			
12 August 2023	5.2–24.7	0	24			
13 August 2023	11.1–20.1	0.4	77			
14 August 2023	9.7–16.2	5.2	100			
15 August 2023	10.1–18.3	10	47			
16 August 2023	8.7–19.4	0	35			
17 August 2023	5.1–22.9	0.2	28			
18 August 2023	8.0–18.6	9.4	34			
29 August 2023	7.6–25.2	0	24.3			
18 September 2023	11.4–34.9	0	9	4.6–34.9	30.2	59
23 October 2023	13.7 - 28.7	0	11	12.5–26.1	34.6	28.1
24 October 2023	12.2 - 34.3	0	11			
25 October 2023	18.1 - 32.4	0	12			
26 October 2023	10.2 - 17.5	17	91			
27 October 2023	9.9 - 16.4	3.8	71			
30 October 2023	14.4 - 31.5	0	15			
31 October 2023	15.9 - 30.3	0	11			
1 November 2023	13.7 - 23.5	0	30	15.7–26.9	45.2	42.7
11 December 2023	19.7 - 25.2	0	34	18.7–31.0	69.6	36.4
19 February 2024		0				
11 April 2024	9.5-31.0	0	37	13.2–24.6	37.6	53

Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
24 February 2025	18.6-37.9	0	26	17.9–24.6	51.0	49
25 February 2025	21.0-26.8	0	67			
26 February 2025	18.9-31.7	0.2	46			
27 February 2025	19.1-34.6	3.2	39			
28 February 2025	19.2-39.2	0.6	25			
3 March 2025	20.8-27.9	0	55	18.7–28.3	110.0	59
4 March 2025	18.4-28.7	0.8	53			
5 March 2025	18.6-28.6	4.4	49			
6 March 2025	19.1-25.9	2.8	69			
7 March 2025	18.4-24.6	0	70			
10 March 2025	20.3-23.1	0	77			
11 March 2025	20.0-25.1	0.2	76			
12 March 2025	19.5-26.4	0	89			
13 March 2025	18.0-31.4	2.0	52			
14 March 2025	17.3-35.9	0	31			
17 March 2025	18.4-37.6	0	34			
20 March 2025	16.8-33.9	0	35			
21 March 2025	17.6-24.4	0	100			
24 March 2025	19.9-27.5	0.4	70			
25 March 2025	19.7-26.1	0	69			
26 March 2025	18.8-26.3	4.6	59			
27 March 2025	18.2-26.5	0	48			
2 April 2025	15.2-20.6	0	67	14.1–25	86.0	50
3 April 2025	13.3-27.2	0	30			
4 April 2025	11.2-n/a	0	n/a			
9 April 2025	13.2-25.2	0	48			
10 April 2025	12.1-26.2	0	50			
11 April 2025	12.8-28.7	0	40			
14 April 2025	12.3-27.8	0	43			
15 April 2025	17.1-22.9	0	51			
16 April 2025	14.3-21.4	2.0	55			
17 April 2025	15.8-24.7	0	45			
12 June 2025	3.3 - 16.2	0	49	6.1–17.3	12	53
13 June 2025	7.3 - 15.7	0	57			
14 June 2025	7.9 - 17.3	0	55			
15 June 2025	6.2 - 17.6	0	52			

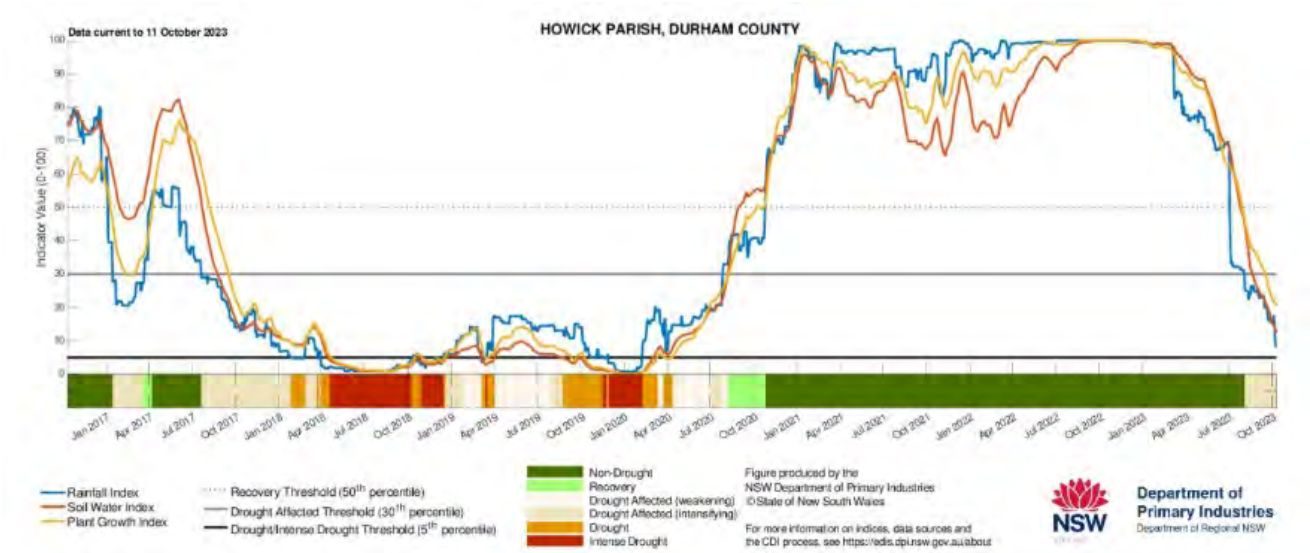
Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
16 June 2025	3.4 - 17.7	0	47			
17 June 2025	5.0 - 16.3	0.2	49			
18 June 2025	3.0 - 15.7	0	46			
23 June 2025	7.0 - 22.1	0.2	50			
24 June 2025	7.9 - 19.1	0	76			
25 June 2025	10.6 - 16.7	10	44			
26 June 2025	4.3 - 15.0	0	40			
15 August 2025	10.7 - 18.9	0	57	8.5–18.2	140	62
18 August 2025	4.7 - 16.2	0	66			
19 August 2025	6.3 - 16.6	1	83			
26 August 2025	8.6 - 24.6	0	43			
27 August 2025	12.1 - 22.6	0	46			
22 October 2025	16.4 - 37.7	0	23	13.6–28.2	25	37
23 October 2025	17.1 - 25.5	0	47			
24 October 2025	15.6 - 29.8	0	24			
25 October 2025	12.2 - 21.2	0	58			
26 October 2025	12.1 - 27.6	0	33			
27 October 2025	16.4 - 29.3	0	21			
28 October 2025	11.5 - 15.3	0	97			
29 October 2025	11.0 - 20.3	18.4	70			
30 October 2025	13.1 - 25.7	0.2	47			
31 October 2025	13.4 - 27.7	0	46			
1 November 2025	16.6 - 24.6	2.6	74	15.5–30.8	23.2	34
2 November 2025	16.5 - 25.9	3.4	71			
3 November 2025	18.5 - 34.3	0	46			
4 November 2025	15.2 - 25.0	1	26			
5 November 2025	9.2 - 28.1	0	23			
6 November 2025	10.1 - 28.6	0	25			
7 November 2025	14.6 - 32.7	0	29			
8 November 2025	17.8 - 33.3	0	35			
9 November 2025	16.7 - 27.9	0	20			
10 November 2025	12.1 - 26.8	0	32			
11 November 2025	11.6 - 29.7	0	12			
12 November 2025	9.5 - 25.6	0	18			
13 November 2025	8.1 - 30.8	0	13			
14 November 2025	15.9 - 30.4	0	45			

Date	Daily Data			Monthly Data		
	Min-Max Temp. (°C)	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (%)	Min-Max Temp (mean) (°C)	Rainfall (total) (mm)	Relative Humidity (3pm) (mean) (%)
15 November 2025	16.2 - 33.0	0	47			
16 November 2025	17.9 - 33.4	1.8	19			
17 November 2025	17.3 - 28.5	0	11			
18 November 2025	12.4 - 29.7	0	22			
19 November 2025	13.8 - 34.6	0	17			
20 November 2025	18.2 - 36.7	0	28			
21 November 2025	18.1 - 21.9	1.8	69			
22 November 2025	16.7 - 26.5	0.2	59			
23 November 2025	18.3 - 35.3	5.8	28			
24 November 2025	16.9 - 30.8	0	47			
25 November 2025	17.0 - 38.9	0	22			
26 November 2025	22.3 - 36.0	0	93			
27 November 2025	17.0 - 35.2	6.6	12			
28 November 2025	14.9 - 35.2	0	13			
29 November 2025	19.1 - 34.3	0	35			
30 November 2025	15.1 - 31.3	0	15			
1 December 2025	13.4 - 27.4	0	20	17.1–31.3	63.2	37
2 December 2025	9.5 - 26.2	0.4	21			
3 December 2025	10.2 - 29.7	0.2	22			
4 December 2025	13.3 - 35.3	0	13			
5 December 2025	18.5 - 38.1	0	13			
6 December 2025	23.3 - 40.0	0	14			
7 December 2025	22.7 - 28.0	0.4	57			
8 December 2025	16.7 - 33.5	0	30			
9 December 2025	17.4 - 38.8	0	13			
10 December 2025	20.3 - 32.4	0	45			
11 December 2025	19.6 - 24.0	1.6	64			
12 December 2025	17.1 - 25.4	0.4	81			
13 December 2025	15.1 - 32.7	20	36			
14 December 2025	18.2 - 34.7	20.6	34			
15 December 2025	18.5 - 29.8	0.2	39			
16 December 2025	16.7 - 24.5	0.8	59			
17 December 2025	17.3 - 31.0	0.2	41			

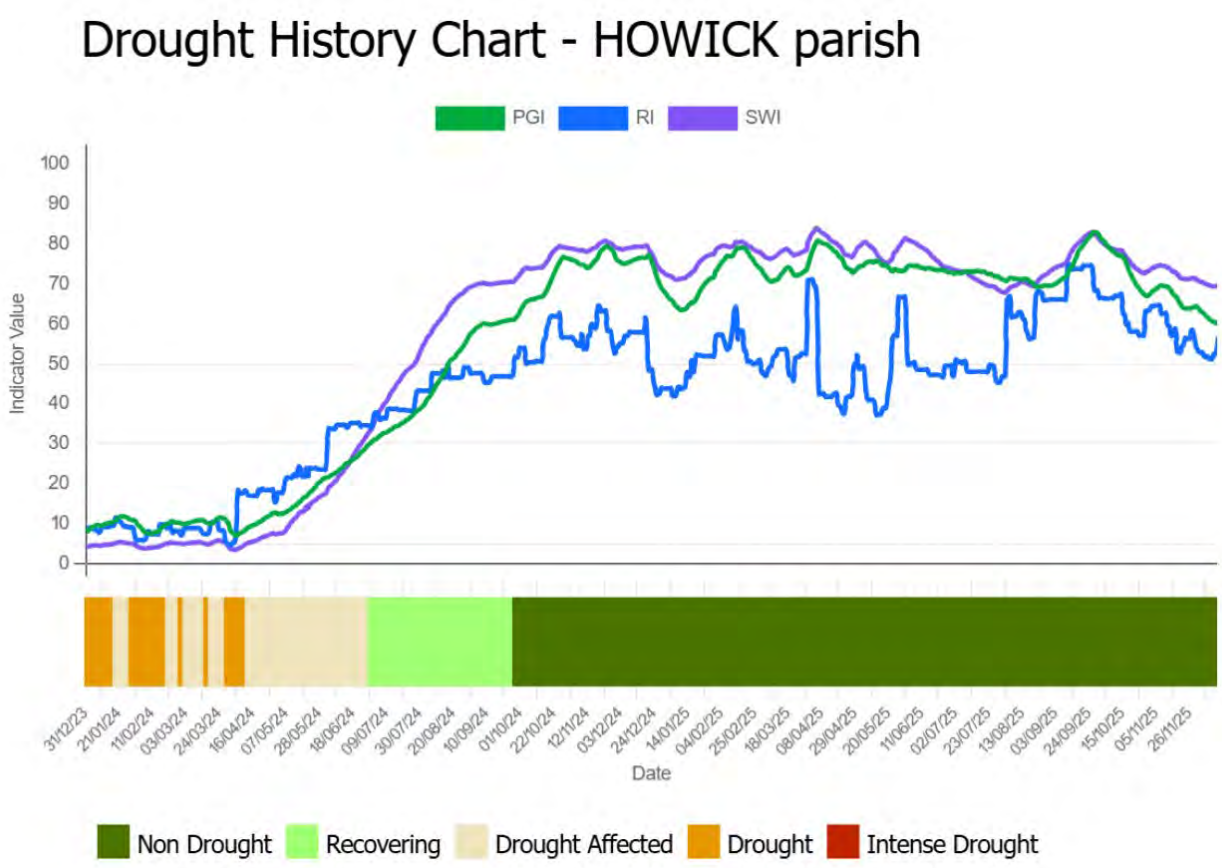
D.6 Survey Limitations

The surveys undertaken in 2019 and 2020 were likely influenced by drought conditions experienced across the Development Footprints and wider Hunter region leading up to and during 2020. The region has been listed as alternating between 'Drought Affected', in 'Drought' and in 'Intense Drought' since July 2017, with a period of 'Recovery' beginning in September 2020 (DPI 2022). The Plant Growth Index did not cross the recovery threshold (50th percentile) until around December 2020 (**Graph D.1**).

From September 2023 to May 2024, the region experienced another brief drought period (refer to **Graph D.2**), before recovering from August 2024. The majority of vegetation integrity plots utilised for this assessment were undertaken in September 2020, February/April 2021 and February/March 2025.



Graph D.1 Combined Drought Indicator Results 2017-2023 (DPI 2023)



Graph D.2 Combined Drought Indicator Results 2024-2025 (DPI 2025)

It is acknowledged that some flora transects appear to show a distance greater than what is recommended in the Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the BAM (DPIE 2020). In many instances gaps or deviations can be attributed to GPS accuracy which is, at best, only accurate to 5 m. Furthermore, transects will often necessarily deviate from parallel 10 m spacing due to natural obstacles such as fallen logs, trees, water, waste, steep rocky areas.

It is acknowledged that this Amended BDAR (dated February 2026) includes survey effort conducted in October 2020, which is marginally older than the age of surveys that can be relied upon according to the BAM Stage 1 Operational Manual (DPE 2022). The intent of this time limitation is to ensure data used in assessments reflect the current biodiversity values on the subject land.

In the case of the HVO Project, surveys have been ongoing across the Development Footprints since 2020 and have been undertaken in multiple years and seasons to ensure contemporary data is used. The BDAR lodged in July 2025 contained substantially updated data, including additional BAM plots collected in 2025 to apply the new East Coast PCT Classification. The revision of this BDAR in January 2026 has been undertaken to address submissions from the NSW DCCEEW, including resolving inconsistencies in Category 1 land mapping and updating credit outcomes following additional targeted surveys undertaken in mid and late 2025. The condition of the habitats within the Development Footprints are well known, with no significant events (extended droughts, bushfires, changed land management practices) altering the landscape. Therefore, it is considered that the survey results relied on in this BDAR are suitably representative of the condition of the habitats and biodiversity value of the subject land.

Annexure E

Vegetation Integrity Data

E1 Vegetation Integrity Data

The following vegetation integrity data presented in **Table E.1** was collected from surveys of the Development Footprints. It includes the composition, structure and function attributes that are recorded in each BAM plot. This data is assessed against benchmark data for PCTs and entered into the BAM Calculator to assess the condition of each vegetation zone in the Development Footprints.

The following abbreviations for growth forms are used in **Table E.1** below:

- Tr – Tree
- Sh – Shrub
- Gr – Grass
- Fb – Forb
- Fn – Fern
- Ot – Other.

Table E.1 Vegetation Integrity Data

Plot ID	COMPOSITION						STRUCTURE						FUNCTION											Area (ha)		Patch Size	Zone	Easting (MGA56) GDA94	Northing (MGA56) GDA94	Bearing
	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Regen	Stem Classes (cm)					No. Large Trees	No. Hollow Trees	Litter (%)	Fallen Logs (m)	High Threat Weeds	HVO North	HVO South					
													>5	5-9	9-19	20-29	30-49	50-79												
Vegetation Zone 1 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Moderate*																														
P047	3	6	11	14	0	2	45.2	1	5.2	1.6	0	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	81.6	12	6.7	64.1	0.5	101	56	316372	6404468	300
P050	2	3	9	6	1	2	20	0.4	59.9	2.5	2	0.3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	46	15.5	0.9	64.1	0.5	101	56	316492	6399504	320
P059	7	7	13	17	2	3	25.2	1.4	45.2	1.9	0.2	0.4	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	81.6	22	0.4	64.1	0.5	101	56	308830	6405707	55
P069	2	0	11	15	1	2	34	0	16.3	3.9	0.2	0.2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	78	3.5	15.7	64.1	0.5	101	56	315782	6402041	310
P070	3	2	13	13	1	2	38	0.6	18.5	3.2	0.1	0.2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	67	49.5	10.6	64.1	0.5	101	56	316000	6401670	82
P071	3	4	15	16	2	1	30	0.5	47.4	3.2	0.3	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	74	8.5	1.4	64.1	0.5	101	56	316254	6401681	131
P072	3	6	15	20	0	1	22	0.9	37.3	4.2	0	0.1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	66	6	8.6	64.1	0.5	101	56	316190	6401745	294
P074	3	0	9	8	1	0	36.5	0	6.4	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	59	37	0.7	64.1	0.5	101	56	315760	6401956	248
P075	2	2	11	11	1	0	40.3	0.4	18.5	1.4	0.2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	29	27	11.3	64.1	0.5	101	56	315473	6402183	161
P076	3	0	11	11	1	0	33	0	20.4	1.4	0.2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	52	8	10.4	64.1	0.5	101	56	315537	6402098	84
P077	2	1	10	9	1	0	30	0.2	34.2	1.4	0.2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	35	4	17.4	64.1	0.5	101	56	315431	6401893	53
P078	2	6	12	9	1	2	35	1.5	7.5	2.2	0.2	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	67	40	0.4	64.1	0.5	101	56	315883	6395399	312
P083	2	5	17	20	2	1	25	6.6	34.3	2.9	0.3	0.1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	68	50	0.5	64.1	0.5	101	56	316691	6394836	180
P084	3	7	11	16	2	2	23	2.9	41.7	4	0.3	0.3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	78	0	0.6	64.1	0.5	101	56	317565	6393501	146
P088	2	4	11	5	1	1	15	2.7	7.2	3.7	0.3	0.1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	74	76	0.2	64.1	0.5	101	56	316745	6394591	338
P092	1	5	13	8	0	1	25	0.6	33	1.4	0	0.1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	0.5	64.1	0.5	101	56	315382	6402138	187
P114	2	8	13	11	0	2	25	2.6	12.7	1.6	0	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	86	84	1.3	64.1	0.5	101	56	316447	6399557	185
P129	5	8	5	13	0	1	38.1	38	27.2	6.5	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	76	45	0.4	64.1	0.5	101	56	309920	6406210	184
P132	6	3	14	15	0	1	52.3	2.2	73.4	6.6	0	0.1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	0	71	56	2.2	64.1	0.5	101	56	308932	6405289	285
Vegetation Zone 2 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Thinned Woodland*																														
P055	2	3	9	9	0	3	22	0.4	23.6	1.4	0	0.3	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	11	12	1.4	9.6	1.9	101	56	307334	6402297	75
P060	5	6	11	12	2	4	32.2	2.7	23.5	6.7	0.2	1.4	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	42	7	4.3	9.6	1.9	101	56	309103	6405566	180
P085	5	9	7	5	1	0	12.8	5.9	8.6	0.7	0.1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	72	8	0.2	9.6	1.9	101	56	317437	6393618	319
P130	3	1	10	14	0	1	16.3	1	84.4	4.2	0	0.5	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	54	65	1.7	9.6	1.9	101	56	309025	6405562	354
P145	4	4	12	9	1	2	30.2	1.2	18.9	2.3	0.2	0.2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	79	6	1.4	9.6	1.9	101	56	309372	6412230	189
Vegetation Zone 3 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Woodland with Exotic Understorey*																														
P116	1	0	4	3	0	0	20	0	11	2.2	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	49	0	72.3	1.9	0.0	101	56	315961	6402785	185
P117	2	0	5	2	0	0	20.2	0	15.9	0.2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	26	15	81.4	1.9	0.0	101	56	315968	6402553	128
Vegetation Zone 4 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Plantation*																														
P058	6	2	7	12	2	2	30.5	0.6	19.8	2.2	0.2	0.5	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	86	10	0.6	3.1	0.0	101	56	307801	6405273	160
P147	2	5	16	11	0	2	25.2	2.9	28.8	8.6	0	0.3	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	54	5	0	3.1	0.0	101	56	305530	6408024	13

Plot ID	COMPOSITION						STRUCTURE						FUNCTION											Area (ha)		Patch Size	Zone	Easting (MGA56) GDA94	Northing (MGA56) GDA94	Bearing
	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Regen	Stem Classes (cm)					No. Large Trees	No. Hollow Trees	Litter (%)	Fallen Logs (m)	High Threat Weeds	HVO North	HVO South					
													>5	5-9	9-19	20-29	30-49	50-79												
P148	3	5	11	15	1	2	20.3	1.4	9.8	4.6	0.1	0.2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	76	0	1	3.1	0.0	101	56	305571	6408277	12
P150	1	5	11	8	1	2	35	2.1	30.1	3	0.2	0.3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	44	3	17.2	3.1	0.0	101	56	306649	6410285	47
Vegetation Zone 5 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Scattered Regeneration*																														
P056	2	1	9	16	1	1	5	0.2	68.7	2.2	0.1	0.3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	7.4	0	0.7	39.3	0.0	101	56	307532	6405009	150
P120	3	5	10	11	2	1	11	16.2	29.8	1.8	0.7	0.2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	55	7	1.3	39.3	0.0	101	56	310680	6406828	67
P133	1	1	17	17	0	3	5	0.4	58.8	3.8	0	0.3	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	22.2	2	3.2	39.3	0.0	101	56	307110	6404958	271
P141	4	3	10	9	0	2	28.6	1.7	83	4.8	0	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	13	0	1.1	39.3	0.0	101	56	305126	6406222	284
P153	3	6	17	7	2	0	10.6	3.7	32.9	6.9	0.7	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	37	10	3.6	39.3	0.0	101	56	305574	6405800	165
Vegetation Zone 6 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Cooba Woodland*																														
P064	5	3	10	18	1	2	13.4	0.4	42.4	3.4	0.2	0.3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	7.4	4	0.9	11.8	0.2	101	56	304980	6406078	110
P065	2	2	15	13	2	2	15.1	0.4	56.7	9.5	8.2	0.3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	49	2	0.8	11.8	0.2	101	56	307483	6404820	280
P066	3	5	14	16	2	2	15	1.1	78.3	2	0.2	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	12.4	19	12.6	11.8	0.2	101	56	309502	6405485	100
P126	2	3	7	6	1	2	16	1.1	6.9	11.5	0.4	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	53	2	4.9	11.8	0.2	101	56	309552	6405891	46
P127	1	2	8	5	1	0	40	0.2	7.6	1.4	0.1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	22	9	69.1	11.8	0.2	101	56	310212	6405847	84
Vegetation Zone 7 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Poor Condition Derived Native Grassland*																														
P048	0	3	7	4	1	0	0	0.3	77	5.3	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.7	2.5	2.7	154.1	7.1	101	56	316571	6404400	75
P063	0	0	7	5	2	0	0	0	83.1	0.7	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.2	0	1.2	154.1	7.1	101	56	305313	6407169	220
P111	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0.1	79.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	3	154.1	7.1	101	56	315242	6397159	264
P123	0	1	8	4	1	0	0	0.3	75.1	5.2	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	12.7	154.1	7.1	101	56	308177	6404963	211
P128	0	1	8	4	0	0	0	0.2	85.3	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	0	18.3	154.1	7.1	101	56	316631	6404426	185
P142	1	2	8	4	1	1	4	0.4	82	0.6	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	10.7	154.1	7.1	101	56	306442	6404226	120
P146	0	4	12	6	1	1	0	1.3	40.3	2	0.3	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	2.9	154.1	7.1	101	56	308695	6411793	304
P149	0	1	12	11	0	1	0	0.4	29.8	2.2	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0.2	154.1	7.1	101	56	305834	6408497	20
P154	0	0	9	8	0	3	0	0	50.2	6.9	0	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0.9	154.1	7.1	101	56	307042	6403396	322
Vegetation Zone 8 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Exotic Grassland*																														
P049	0	0	4	7	0	1	0	0	21.1	3.7	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	15.3	47.9	7.4	0	56	317099	6400380	155
P051	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22.6	0	71.2	47.9	7.4	0	56	316523	6398922	180
P062	0	1	5	6	0	0	0	0.1	9.8	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	2.4	47.9	7.4	0	56	307257	6403058	185
P112	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	5.3	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	76.1	47.9	7.4	0	56	316623	6399079	181
P113	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	66.3	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	2.2	47.9	7.4	0	56	317192	6400368	191
P115	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	2.6	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	0	47.5	47.9	7.4	0	56	315689	6402416	340
P144	1	1	8	6	2	1	0.2	0.1	56.1	3.2	0.2	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	20.6	47.9	7.4	0	56	309840	6412514	203
P155	1	0	9	5	1	1	0.2	0	31.1	2.8	0.5	0.1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	41.4	47.9	7.4	0	56	313889	6413123	123

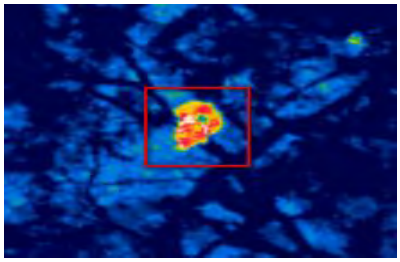
Plot ID	COMPOSITION						STRUCTURE						FUNCTION											Area (ha)		Patch Size	Zone	Easting (MGA56) GDA94	Northing (MGA56) GDA94	Bearing
	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Regen	Stem Classes (cm)					No. Large Trees	No. Hollow Trees	Litter (%)	Fallen Logs (m)	High Threat Weeds	HVO North	HVO South				
													>5	5-9	9-19	20-29	30-49	50-79											
Vegetation Zone 9 – PCT 3431 - Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland - *Bulloak Variant*																													
P057	2	1	8	9	0	2	25.2	0.1	5.8	1.2	0	0.3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	72	0	0.3	0	33	101	56	307807	6405121	105
P073	4	1	9	8	0	0	31	0.2	1.2	2.9	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	53	23	0.7	33.0	0.0	101	56	315967	6401839	127
P082	1	4	13	12	2	2	25	0.4	14.4	1.8	0.4	0.2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	61	35	0.5	33.0	0.0	101	56	316609	6395078	255
P089	1	1	9	3	1	1	25	0.1	1.2	0.8	0.2	0.1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	74	4	2.6	33.0	0.0	101	56	315917	6395531	132
P090	2	1	11	3	1	2	28	0.1	1.6	0.3	0.1	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	47	28	0.1	33.0	0.0	101	56	316445	6394770	137
P125	1	1	4	7	1	1	75	0.1	3.1	2.5	0.1	0.1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	70	17	0.3	33.0	0.0	101	56	308468	6405051	50
P151	2	4	10	5	2	3	26	1.8	8.6	1.5	1.2	0.3	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	68	5	0.6	33.0	0.0	101	56	305507	6407399	132
P152	2	6	10	13	1	2	25.3	1.6	17.8	7.7	0.2	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	76	6	0.6	33.0	0.0	101	56	305677	6406368	183
Vegetation Zone 10 – PCT 3485 - Hunter Valley Footslopes Slaty Gum Forest - *Moderate*																													
P061	8	6	10	11	1	1	24.5	0.9	7.8	1.5	0.1	0.1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	93.6	39	0.5	7.1	0.0	101	56	309365	6405339	15
P122	5	9	9	10	0	2	47.2	3.9	2	1.5	0	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	93	119	0	7.1	0.0	101	56	309470	6405315	295
P124	5	5	10	10	0	3	45.2	1.2	12	2	0	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	91	165	1.2	7.1	0.0	101	56	309385	6405386	222
P131	4	2	12	9	0	0	62	1.2	84.3	2.2	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	1	85	174	0.7	7.1	0.0	101	56	309206	6405390	158
Vegetation Zone 11 – PCT 4015 - Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest - *Moderate*																													
P140	3	7	4	8	1	3	45.4	8.6	86	1.9	0.1	1.3	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	38	3	3.2	2.2	0.0	101	56	305285	6407356	282
P156	2	3	2	3	0	3	30.1	0.4	35	1.7	0	0.4	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	65	13	61.7	2.2	0.0	101	56	314003.3	6413041	204
Vegetation Zone 12 – PCT 4081 - Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest - *Moderate*																													
P045	2	0	2	1	0	0	40.1	0	1.3	0.1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	25	14	0.9	1.7	0.0	101	56	310060	6400703	165
P134	3	1	4	2	0	0	45.2	0.2	1.5	0.9	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	27	300	35.1	1.7	0.0	101	56	310062	6400699	352
Vegetation Zone 13 –PCT 4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest – *Moderate*																													
P121	5	11	19	26	0	3	62.5	6.3	22.5	13.8	0	0.3	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	21	26	6.6	1.0	0.0	101	56	308300	6404744	70
Vegetation Zone 14 – PCT 4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest - *Low to Moderate*																													
P137	2	0	2	1	0	0	22	0	25.1	0.1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	11.4	61	90.2	0.0	0.1	101	56	310014	6400683	156
Vegetation Zone 15 – PCT 4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest - *Cooba Woodland*																													
P138	1	1	7	3	0	1	25	0.1	89.9	0.5	0	0.2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	3.6	278	4.6	0.1	0.6	101	56	309815	6400606	157
Vegetation Zone 16 – PCT 4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest - *Derived Native Grassland*																													
P043	1	0	1	1	0	0	0.2	0	45	0.1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.4	0	0.6	1.0	0.0	101	56	312601	6401544	5
P046	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	0.3	40.2	0.2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.2	0	2.5	1.0	0.0	101	56	310145	6400543	295
P119	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	82.2	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	2.6	1.0	0.0	101	56	312782	6401567	61
P135	1	0	1	7	0	0	0.2	0	15	3.9	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	10	25.4	1.0	0.0	101	56	310153	6400639	142
Vegetation Zone 17 – PCT 4089 - Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest - *Exotic Grassland*																													
P044	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	10	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38.3	0	29.1	7.7	4.7	0	56	312516	6401573	30

Plot ID	COMPOSITION						STRUCTURE						FUNCTION											Area (ha)		Patch Size	Zone	Easting (MGA56) GDA94	Northing (MGA56) GDA94	Bearing
	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Tr	Sh	Gr	Fb	Fn	Ot	Regen	Stem Classes (cm)					No. Large Trees	No. Hollow Trees	Litter (%)	Fallen Logs (m)	High Threat Weeds	HVO North	HVO South					
													>5	5-9	9-19	20-29	30-49	50-79												
P053	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0.4	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69	0	85	7.7	4.7	0	56	309434	6400666	260
P054	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	79	5	62.4	7.7	4.7	0	56	308395	6401601	180
P118	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	45.8	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0.4	7.7	4.7	0	56	313793	6402303	208
P136	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	46.6	0.1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	11.2	20	72.5	7.7	4.7	0	56	310223	6400646	150
P139	1	0	1	3	0	0	0.1	0	2	0.4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	95.6	7.7	4.7	0	56	308231	6401459	21

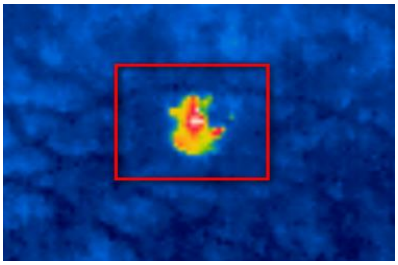
Annexure F

Thermal Drone Report









Umwelt HVO – Thermal Drone Koala Surveys

Prepared for Umwelt, 31 July 2023

Wildlife Drones

Ripper Corp.

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1. Introduction

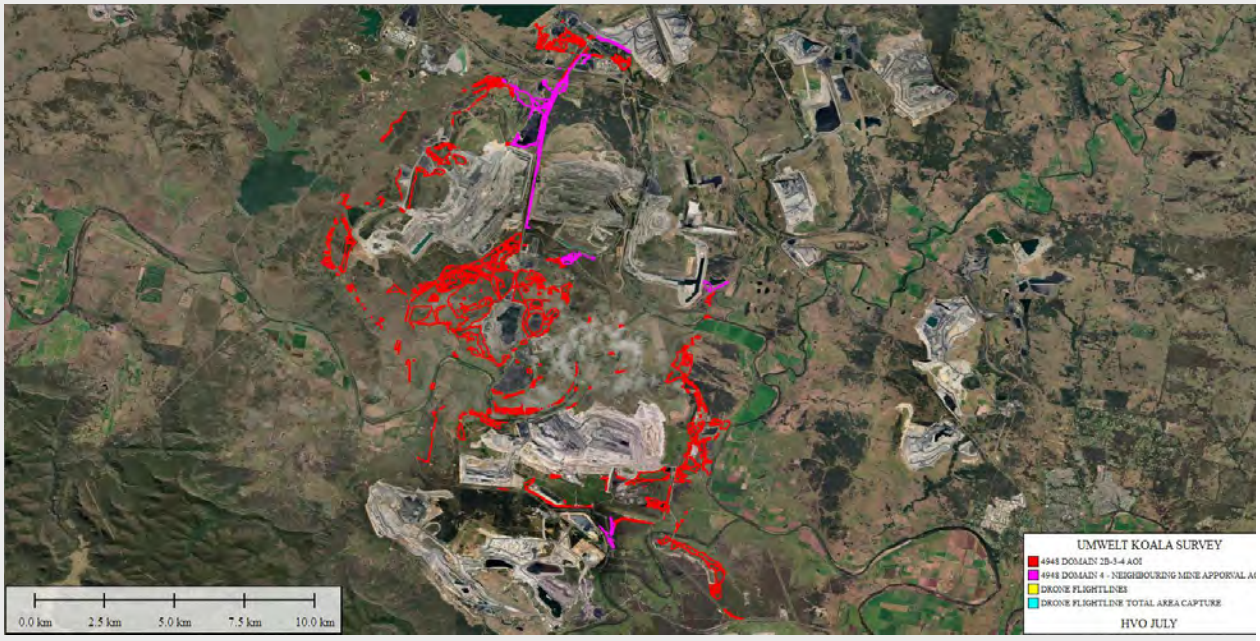
Wildlife Drones were tasked with surveying for Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), using professional grade drones and sensors including DJI XH20T, H20N or XT2 sensors.

1.1. Study site

Umwelt provided existing site information attained from biodiversity surveys including; vegetation mapping, land use assessment, SAT surveys and nocturnal surveys to inform the priority habitat for koalas.

Map 1: HVO Study Site

4948 DOMAIN 2B-3-4: AOI @ 1,014.9HA (RED BOUNDARY AREAS)
4948 DOMAIN 4 NEIGHBOURING MINE APPROVAL AOI'S: AOI @ 107.31HA (PURPLE BOUNDARY AREAS)



Topography	Active mine areas
Land access by client	Granted
Land access by landholder	Granted
Site manager/contractor	Umwelt
Species to be detected	*Phascolarctos cinereus* (Koala)

2. Methodology

A detailed site assessment was conducted across the project area to identify suitability for *Phascolarctos cinereus* (Koala) thermal sensor surveys. Items considered included airspace, landfall and vegetation mass. Additional elements of influence regarding safe and successful flight also included risk management factors, CASA air law generally and RPA (Remotely Piloted Aircraft) standard operating procedures that may influence outcomes.

Thermal drone surveys were undertaken from 12-20th July 2023 in accordance with Section 4.5 of the Koala Biodiversity Assessment Methodology Survey Guide (DPE 2022) as a minimum standard.

2.1. Desktop Research

A desktop review was conducted based upon evidence from Umwelt regarding land usage and possible rehabilitation of regions within the survey area. Tree taxon considerations such as food, shelter or other resources were identified regarding abundance not only in the survey area but also in the surrounding region.

2.2. Drone survey methodology

Flight line direction	N-NW/S-SE (adjusted to corridor angle & site specific heliotropic angle corrections). Whilst generally these lines were observed, due to terrain differences, safety considerations and site configuration, flight direction was variable. Fence, creek and easement areas were surveyed with specific orientation to best optimise coverage.
Flight line overlap (side)	30-40%
Survey altitude (AGL)	60-70m AGL (adjusted to flight waterline areas, required adjustments due to slope changes and altitude difference between take off and mission areas)
Inspection altitude (AGL)	30m AGL above object
Detection method (a)	Hot spot alert
Detection method (b)	Shape detection
Detection method (c)	Characteristic trait
Detection method (d)	Drone infra-red thermal and colour zoom imagery with spotlight
Total flight area (ha)	2693.5 ha
Total Koalas detected	No koalas detected
Flight speed	<6m/s to enable higher resolution image collection
Survey times	21:00 - 06:00 each night/morning at suitable temperatures
Survey nights	10 standard survey nights undertaken over a 7 night period

Optimised flight line directions

Section 4.5 of the NSW government Biodiversity Assessment Methodology (BAM) (NSW DPE 2022) for surveying koalas using drones includes the use of grid flight patterns, which were used as the base format of these surveys. Although the direction of grid flights is not generally given much consideration industry wide, our extensive experience specialising in this form of targeted detection work highlights the benefits of very specific, directional flight lines for optimising fauna detection in natural variable habitats compared to standard methods. That is, our flight line direction takes into consideration both the heliotropic characteristics of native flora in which allows a much higher confidence spotting outcome, as well as following the terrain rise and fall and the relative look/sensor angle.

Large side overlap (30-40%) to ensure no data gaps

Peer reviewed research (e.g. Hamilton *et al* 2020; Witt *et al* 2020) have accepted a 10% side overlap, and the BAM method includes >30% side overlap based upon a 60-75m above ground flight altitude. However, in order to guarantee the most robust survey results where there are no possible gaps in the data we always fly with 30-40% overlap taking into account frame width, lens length, height and other factors, including vegetation and terrain variability (rise and fall height of trees and other vegetation).

Superior thermal data - flight altitude, ground sampling distance & inspection altitudes

We use 19mm focal length thermal sensors which allow greater separation between the tree canopy and drone, making it not only safer in terms of drone flights, but also in terms of detecting and not disturbing wildlife. BAM and other similar methods discuss predominately using 13mm sensors flown at the same altitude, which would result in only 4-6 pixels per koala compared to 14-16 pixels per mature koala from our 19mm sensor at the same height (survey grid height). Therefore, our methods produce a higher likelihood of precise target animal detection and a larger, clearer resultant hotspots for each animal.

Ethical considerations

Inspections carried out upon hotspot detection are performed at no closer than 30m from the fauna for detection. Our team has found disturbance is observed within 25m of both captive and wild koalas during surveys in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales and so we conduct our surveys further away than this.

In our operations, any disturbance observed other than expected during operations triggers the pilot to move away immediately from the koala, note information regarding the encounter and report back to our team ecologists for discussion. The fauna reaction to the drone is then considered, evaluated and improvements are integrated into our methods particularly around closer inspection for identification whereby we consider fauna wellbeing as a matter of priority, and our team remains vigilant in this regard throughout all survey efforts.

Temperature for flight operations

BAM methodology discusses a minimum overnight temperature of 18 deg, however, if the drone sensor has isothermal capability, the pilot can isolate temperature ranges. This limitation on surveys has been adjusted with isotherm capable drones to a minimum overnight temperature of 25 deg.

Testing regarding temperature ranges and Koalas is continually occurring based upon new sensors, detection methods etc. Our pilots regularly test temperature isolation and other methodology-based aspects, and have compared to simultaneous ground based surveys, with results indicating that the drone detections outperforms ground-based surveys with 50-100% increased detection rate of koalas (pers. comm., Jamie Holyoak 2023).

2.3. Equipment

Enterprise grade drone equipment and sensors

Drones	DJI Matrice 300
Thermal & RGB sensors	DJI XH20T, DJI H20N, DJI XT2 Thermal sensitivity: ≤50 mK • Spectral range: LWIR or 8–14 µm • Thermal resolution: ≥640 x 512 px • Focal length: 19 mm • Frame capture rate: ≥30 Hz

- The H20T sensor was used for all specific fauna inspection occurrences. Sensor automatic calibrations occurred every minute of operation with additional calibrations manually performed as needed.
- 22 inch, high contrast screens were used to project controller imagery/video to a larger screen allowing higher detail and quicker confirmation of species for detection.

2.4. Detection evidence:

Hotspot detection

Hotspot detection is the primary detection metric whilst at survey altitude, with a hot spot alert in place, this also detects fauna of a temperature higher than the surrounding environment. Isothermic methods are also used within the detection process at survey altitude which allows isolation of specific temperature ranges in which one may reasonably expect to detect koalas. Considerations are made regarding ambient temperature, thermal drop off/radiation loss through the night, previous day temperature, humidity and object reflectance mitigation.
Our thermal sensors allow certain false positives to be mostly removed through heat reflectance masking on specific object types, such as certain eucalypt trunk verities, termite mounds and other miscellaneous objects. Existing peer review academic

methods generally do no utilise isothermic methods, as the smaller drones used do not have this feature available.
Our team use Enterprise grade drones and sensors for all of our fauna detection operations. Where available, a passive spotlight detection is used to rapidly confirm in RGB/colour what species has been detected by the initial thermal sensor. This recent innovation, has allowed much shorter time periods of loiter regarding the drone around fauna for inspection thus reducing any possible impacts that prolonged drone inspection may produce. Our team generally does not loiter on a fauna inspection target for any more than two minutes in any single inspection effort per animal.

Combined hot spot, characteristic traits (shape, ears, arms, legs, movement), allow the pilot to gather suitable evidence in an effort to determine fauna type with the use of a spotlight to confirm.

Detection validations & species confirmation:

Our team utilises spotlighting from the drone to confirm species detected whilst airborne. This has generally removed the requirement for follow-up post-survey validation from on the ground. Where there is any uncertainty ground-validations can be undertaken where access to the site is possible, or repeat surveys of the location may be undertaken. A colour image of the species detected is captured upon detection as documented validation of the animals observed. Generally, the team will only capture the target species for detection (koala in this case), however, a base capture of other fauna is catalogued during operations to demonstrate the diversity of fauna that are present at the site.

Calibration and field testing:

Our team utilise several established test ranges with known koala populations to confirm both the sensor quality, settings and other considerations. These ranges also allow our pilots the capability to be trained in a controlled and known environment which senior pilots may grade and determine their suitability for commercial operations. All pilots generally perform testing at least once a month where not field spotting koalas for our commercial clients and partners to maintain well-honed skills and observation abilities.

3. Survey Results

Our team surveyed all survey areas across the site over 7 nights from 12/07/2023-20/07/2023. Given time was of the essence during the surveys, the Chief Remote Pilot approved extended periods of survey each night, equating to 10 standard thermal survey nights.

Weather conditions were stable throughout the survey period with some site related complexities causing delays and postponements. There no incidents reported during the surveys from an aviation perspective. There was reasonable access to all areas and so all proposed flight areas were surveyed. Mobilisation generally occurred mid to late afternoon to account for site access and escort assignment. Our pilot generally flew from mid evening through to dawn the following day.

3.1. Detection evidence

Koala detections

No koalas were detected during these comprehensive surveys.

Other wildlife detected

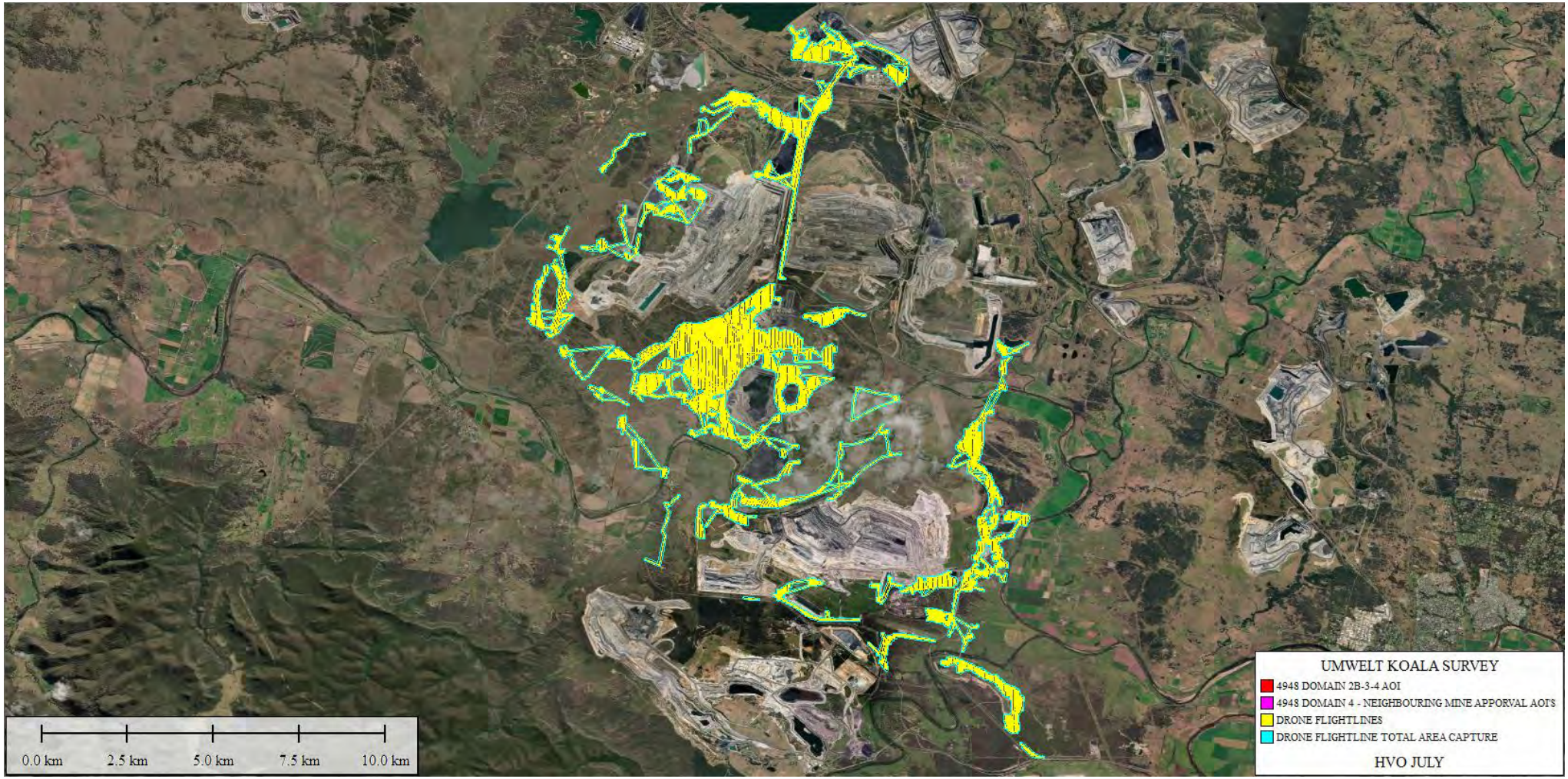
Our pilots use an excel spreadsheet to make wildlife observation notes during all surveys. This document is included with the data collected for these surveys.

The diversity of animals detected and recorded provides evidence of the comprehensive nature of our surveys and illustrates successful detection of an array of wildlife, including a variety of animals with different shapes, sizes and temperature signatures. An example of the data captured on the spreadsheet is provided below:

Species	Time	Date/Notes	Confirmed/uncont	Lat/	Pin	Image	File #	Est.	Abnor
		2023-07-12				FALSE			No
Macropod	1:19:07 AM				1	TRUE			No
Macropod	1:30:46 AM				2	TRUE			No
Possum Brushtail	1:35:00 AM				3	TRUE			No
Possum Brushtail	1:39:08 AM				4	TRUE			No
Bird	2:57:55 AM				5	TRUE			No
Bird	3:14:13 AM				6	TRUE			No
Bird	4:42:53 AM				7	TRUE			No

All video and still imagery have been provided via our secure cloud portal. Species images can be found by sorting the file names by time/date and finding the ones that correspond to species on the spreadsheet.

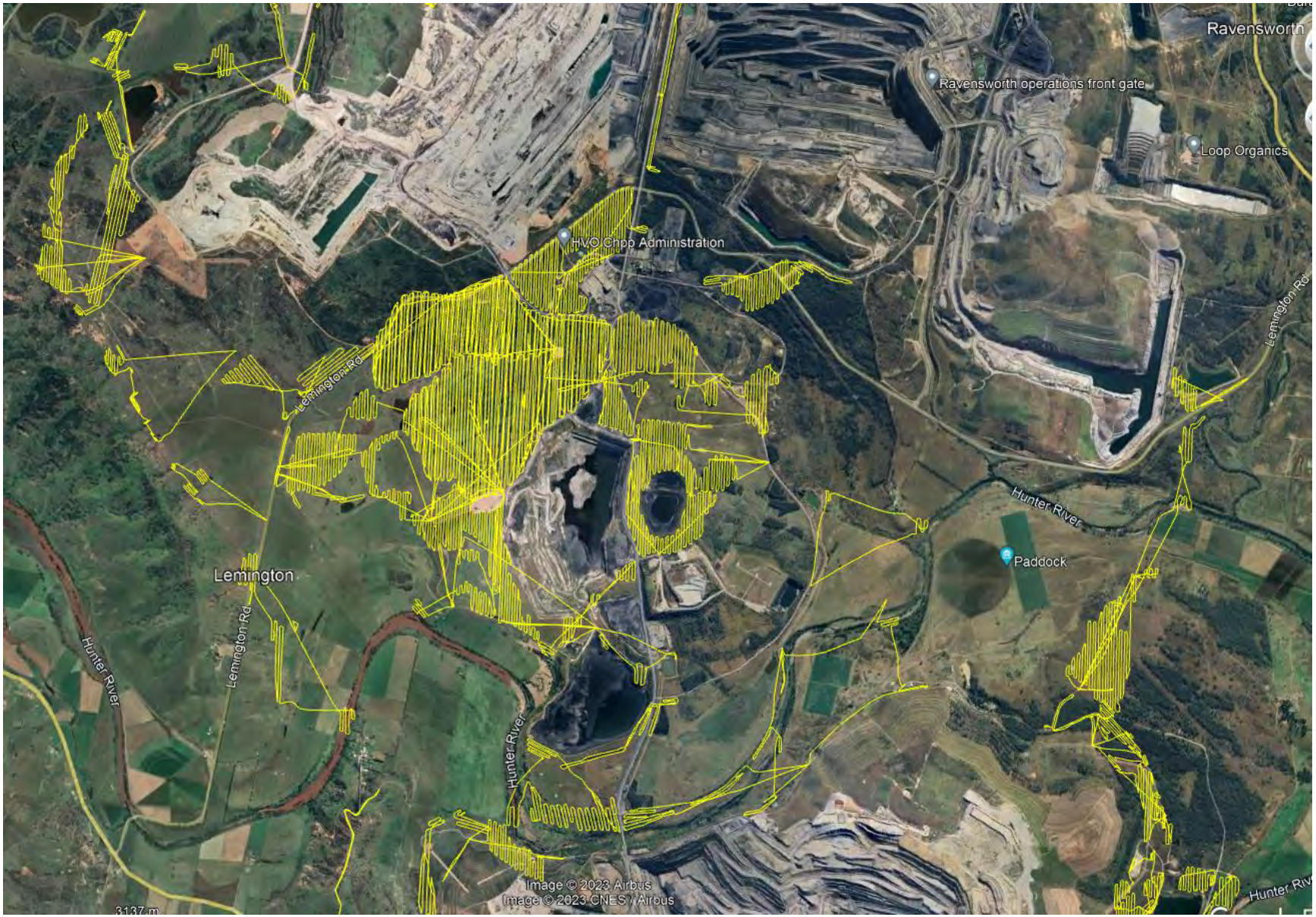
Map 2: Flight line coverage – all sites



Map 3: Flight line coverage – Northern areas detail



Map 4: Flight line coverage – Central areas detail



Map 5: Flight line coverage – Southern areas detail



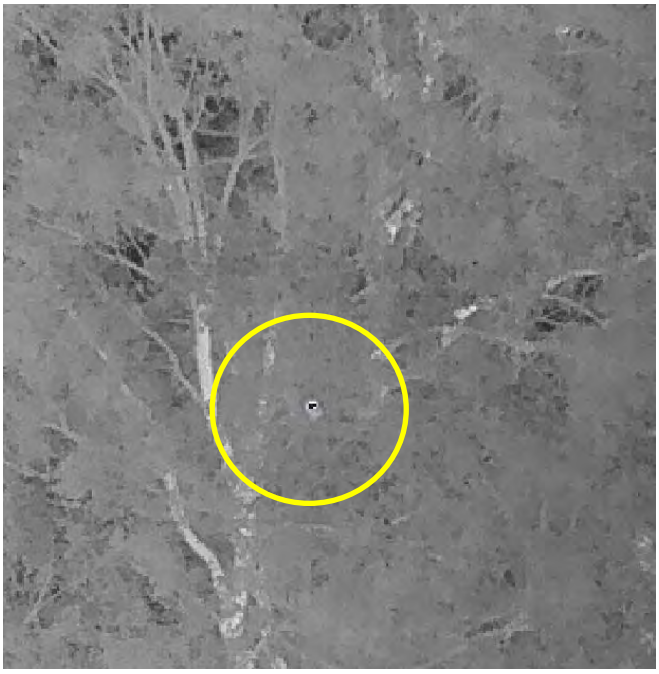
3.2. Koala detections - details

Koala detection details	No koalas were detected

3.3. Examples of non-target species detected

Roosted birds:









Feral pig





Macropod

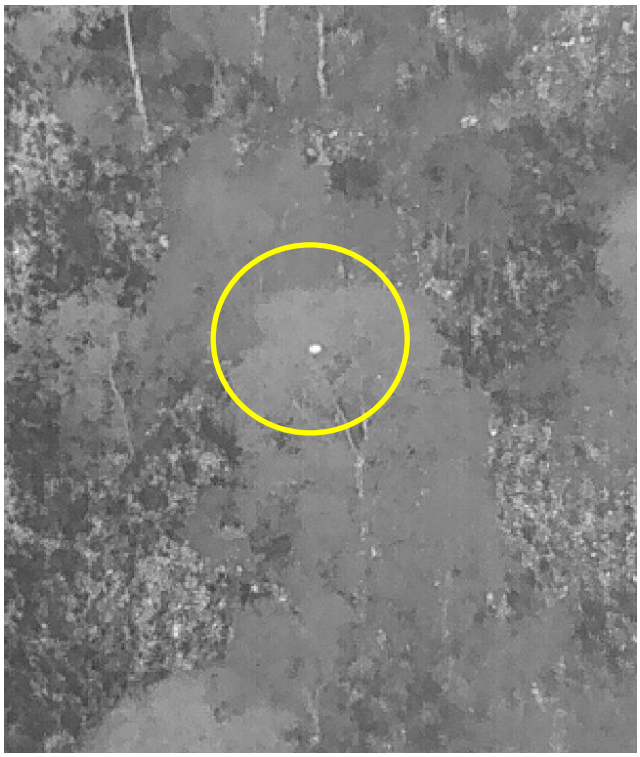


Possums









Field operations:





4. Conclusion

Although the aerial surveys did not find any Koalas, a range of other native and feral species were detected and identified as a result of the comprehensive survey coverage across the site.

5. References

- Hamilton G, Corcoran E, Denman S, Hennekam ME and Koh LP (2020), When you can't see the koalas for the trees: Using drones and machine learning in complex environments, Biological Conservation, vol.247, p.108598, doi: 10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108598.
- NSW DPE (2022) Biodiversity Assessment Methodology https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Threatened-species/koala-phascolarctos-cinereus-biodiversity-assessment-method-survey-guide-220249.pdf)
- Witt RR, Beranek CT, Howell LG, Ryan SA, Clulow J, Jordan NR, Denholm B and Roff A (2020), Real-time drone derived thermal imagery outperforms traditional survey methods for an arboreal forest mammal, PLoS ONE, vol.15, no.11: e0242204, doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242204.

Please use the below email addresses to obtain any other relevant files used in this assessment, or if you have any questions.

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Annexure G

DCCEEW Submissions, Responses and Correspondence

Table G.1 BCD Submissions and Response – 13 March 2023

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
1.	The BDAR outlines that the project will clear 1.5 hectares of the EEC, which is about 0.35% of its estimated extent of 436 hectares. Section 5.2.3 of the BDAR describes measures that have been undertaken to avoid impacts to this EEC, including the avoidance of impacts to about 255 of the 269 River Red Gums that are in the vicinity of the transmission line that forms the part of the project that will cause impacts to this EEC. Table 6.9 'Impact Assessment for SAII Entities – Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC' of the BDAR states that the project triggers SAII Principle 3 for the Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. The project would clear 5.2 hectares of the EEC which represents 1.59% of its estimated extent of 333 hectares. BCD notes that both EECs have a very limited geographic distribution by having an extent of occurrence of < 1,000 square kilometres. Weeds have also caused a decline in the environmental quality and biotic interactions within both EECs, hampering the recruitment and establishment of characteristic species, even in areas of active management such as the Carrington Billabong for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC and the Warkworth Mine's Northern Offset for Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. As a result of these two factors BCD considers the project represents a risk of SAII to both EECs.	BCD recommends that if the project is approved that it includes specific conditions of consent that will minimise the impact of the project on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC and Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney basin Bioregion EEC. BCD further recommends that management and mitigation strategies for these EECs are produced, and this is done in consultation with Planning and Assessment Group and with BCD.	Further avoidance measures have been undertaken to ensure that the Project has no direct impact to Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC and a further reduction of impacts on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC (refer to Section 5.0) Additional recommendations are provided in Section 5.6 of the revised BDAR in relation to additional measures for: • Weed management. • Protection and habitat restoration. • Establishment of native vegetation. • Monitoring and adaptive management. A Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site is proposed to provide an 'additional measures' offset for impacts associated with SAII (refer to Section 9.0).

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
2.	Proponent should provide the following information: 1. Table of candidate threatened plant species surveyed for the project. Table to include: Area of suitable habitat within Project area (h) by VZ and PCT and a total area within the subject land; number of circular survey areas per VZ, per PCT, and in Project area; are surveyed by these circular survey areas by VZ, PCT, and for the subject land. 2. description of how 2-phase grid method was applied including details of how the 1km grids sampled were chosen, and a discussion on any assumptions and limitations of the use of this method. As described in Section 4.4 of 'Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method' (EES, 2020) this survey method applies only where suitable habitat for a particular species is larger than 50 hectares, and this has not been demonstrated in the BDAR. BCD notes that only vegetation zones 13, 19 and 20 are larger than 50 hectares.	The proponent should provide the following information to demonstrate the effectiveness of the two-phase grid-based systematic survey technique applied for this assessment: • A table of candidate threatened plant species surveyed for this project with the area of suitable habitat within the Project area given in hectares by Vegetation Zone and by Plant Community Type (PCT), and a total area within the subject land; the number of circular survey areas per Vegetation Zone, per PCT and in the Project area; and the area surveyed by these circular survey areas by Vegetation Zone, by PCT and for the subject land. • A description of how the two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach was applied for this project, including details of how the one-kilometre grids that were sampled were chosen, and a discussion on any assumptions and limitations of the use of this method.	Further detail and justification on grid-based approached provided in Section 4.1.3.1 and Table 4.1 of the revised BDAR. Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach was undertaken across all suitable habitat areas within the Development Footprints as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Due to the size of the impact area and varying condition of PCTs (i.e. mosaic of vegetation zones) across the Development Footprints, it was determined that undertaking the two-phase grid method across all suitable habitat for all predicted species was the most effective way to cover the site (rather than assess habitat discretely by vegetation zone). The NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e) does not specify a requirement to undertake the two-phase grid-based approach on a vegetation zone-basis.
3.	Columns should be added to a revised version of Table D2.2 including: 1. 'Minimum survey effort requirements'; 2. 'Survey requirements met (answered yes, no, partially). A 'Notes' column may be added, or the same text otherwise provided to explain why survey effort and survey methods used may not have met survey requirements.	Columns should be added to a revised version of Table D2.2 of the BDAR that cover: • 'Minimum survey effort requirements'. • 'Survey requirements met?' (to be answered by 'Yes', 'No' or 'Partially'). A 'Notes' column may be added, or the same text otherwise provided to explain why survey effort and survey methods used may not have met survey requirements.	Updated in Table D2 of Appendix D to include information requested.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
4.	For under-surveyed areas of potentially suitable koala habitat that additional surveys are undertaken, or the species is assumed to be present, or an expert report is prepared. Survey requirements for the koala changed during the period that the BDAR was being prepared, and after most targeted surveys for the koala has been undertaken. Nevertheless, the survey effort outlined in the BDAR for the koala does not meet the survey requirements applicable at the time of submission.	Further assessment should be undertaken for the potential presence of the koala where survey effort does not meet BCD's survey requirements. The additional assessment may be in the form of additional targeted threatened species survey, done in accordance with current survey guidelines, or from the provision of an expert report, or by assuming the presence of the koala in areas of suitable habitat.	Thermal drone surveys and additional SAT surveys for the koala have been undertaken. The BDAR has been updated in Table 4.2 and Table D2 to reflect these surveys. Figure 4.2 has been updated to identify the extent of survey coverage. Table D3 in Appendix D outlines the assessment of suitable koala habitat as described in the Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide. Appendix G includes the drone report. No koalas or signs of koala were recorded during the targeted surveys.
5.	Appendix D 'Threatened Species Assessment and Survey Methodology' and the BAM Calculator file shows that the targeted surveys for some threatened species were either partially (e.g., Gang-gang Cockatoo, Eastern Pygmy Possum, and *Thesium australe*), or fully (e.g., *Cryptostylis hunteriana*) done outside of the specified survey months. Further details are required to demonstrate that BCD's minimum survey requirements have been followed and that the minimum survey effort has been done; if not those species will require further surveys (in the appropriate months), or an assessment by an Expert Report or to be assumed to be present and offset accordingly.	Further information should be provided about the survey effort undertaken within the specified months for targeted surveys for all candidate species-credit species, and that surveys within the specified months are compared against the required survey effort. If some species have been inadequately surveyed then further surveys (done in the appropriate months), an expert report, or the species is assumed to be present and offset accordingly.	Table D2 updated in Appendix D, where relevant. Each of the threatened species identified by BCD in their submission were adequately surveyed, with surveys undertaken during the survey windows specified in the TBDC. Additionally, surveys undertaken during sub-optimal seasons are also included in Table D2 of Appendix D as supplementary surveys which contribute to the overall survey effort, noting that the majority of threatened species can be identified outside of the nominated survey period and these surveys provide important contextual surveys for all species. Additional survey effort undertaken following the exhibition of the EIS included: • Additional koala SAT surveys and thermal drone surveys targeting koala. • Pitfall trapping targeting the common planigale. Further surveys were undertaken in October 2023 and November 2023 and March, April and June 2025 that included: • Spotlighting surveys for Stephens banded snake.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
			• Hollow tree searches for breeding activity for gang-gang cockatoo. • Threatened flora transects targeting species detectable in November (*Thesium australe* and *Cryptostylis hunteriana*). • Additional remote camera surveys and green and golden bell frog surveys . • Hollow bearing tree surveys and nesting/roosting habitat constraints • Acoustic recorded surveys • Dip netting for green and golden bell frog tadpoles and Gambusia sp. •
6.	The survey requirements for the common Planigale (*Planigale maculata*) have not been met. The appropriate survey technique for this species is pitfall trapping however, Table 4.1 'Species-credit Species Surveys' of the BDAR states that the following survey has been conducted for common Planigale: • Nocturnal spotlighting; and • Remote camera survey. The Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection in BioNet states that 'surveys must be undertaken using pitfall traps.' Where that is not possible, due to rocky ground, for example, then the alternative is an expert report.	Areas of suitable habitat for the common planigale in the subject land should be surveyed using pitfall trapping, or the species is assessed by an expert report, or that the species is assumed to be present and then offset in accordance with the Biodiversity Offset Scheme.	Pitfall traps were installed across the Development Footprint as outlined in Table 4.1 and Appendix D. Consultation with the BCD was undertaken to determine the survey effort required across the Development Footprints which is considered 'large-scale'. The conclusion was where "total suitable habitat > 50 ha: 22 arrays plus one additional for every 10 ha of suitable habitat above 10 ha. For example, 60 ha of suitable habitat will require 23 arrays." The Development Footprints contain approximately 420 ha of potentially suitable habitat subject to impacts in accordance with the predicted vegetation zones in the TBDC. Based on this advice, it was calculated that a total of 59 pitfall trap arrays should be established to adequately survey for the common planigale. A total of 64 pitfall trap surveys were installed.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
			No common planigales were recorded. Consultation with BCD was undertaken to determine the extent of surveys required.
7.	Section 4.2.2.1 'Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*)' of the BDAR outlines that habitat polygon mapping for the southern Myotis was calculated on the direct impacts to the population by buffering all recorded individuals by 30 metres. This approach does not cover all waterbodies within the project site. Under the BAM 2020, for fauna species assessed by area (as per the threatened biodiversity data collection (TBDC)), the species polygon is meant to be used to measure the area of suitable habitat on the subject land. The 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats - NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method, outlines that 'All habitat on the subject land where the subject land is within 200m of a waterbody with pools/ stretches 3m or wider including rivers, creeks, billabongs, lagoons, dams and other waterbodies on the subject land' should be included in the species polygon for the southern Myotis.	The species and habitat polygons for the southern Myotis should be updated to include waterbodies as outlined in the BAM 2020 and associated guidance documents.	Section 4.2.2.1 of the BDAR does not state this. The southern myotis habitat polygon mapping was undertaken by clipping associated PCTs within the Development Footprint and within 200 m of a waterbody what was 3m or wider. This included rivers (such as the Hunter River), creeks and dams within the locality of the Project. This is consistent with the requirements outlined in Table 1 of 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method (OEH 2018). No changes to the assessment in the revised BDAR have been undertaken.
8.	The assessor should not exclude the Stephens banded snake from assessment and should provide further details of potential habitat for cave-dwelling bats within the project area that could be provided by built structures and mine shafts.	Stephens banded snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensii*) – the TBDC notes that this species uses very old primary forest with many large old hollow bearing trees and therefore discounts this species. However, this description is provided as a general guidance and the TBDC also states that fallen timber, hollow bearing trees and areas within 500 metres of arboreal vine tangles can also provide habitat. As the Project area contains these features, the species habitat constraints, the species should not be ruled out due to lack of habitat.	Surveys were undertaken for this species in accordance with relevant survey guidelines however the species is no longer a candidate species, as per the TBDC, following an update to the BAM-C and TBDC in October 2024.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
		Cave-dwelling microbats (*Chalinolobus dwyeri* and Bentwings) – the BDAR does not contain enough information to quantify prescribed impacts to threatened microbats from the loss of mine shafts, and other old mine workings, and buildings in the Project area.	Additional text added to the justification in Table D1 in Appendix D noting that there are no mine shafts, workings, or old buildings within the Development Footprints.
		Foraging *Miniopterus australis* bats were recorded on site. This species roosts in caves, tunnels, tree hollows, abandoned mines, stormwater drains, culverts, bridges, and buildings. BAM assessments that require surveys for roosting sites for this species and also require an assessment of the importance of the habitat to the migration of this species. This species is very selective for roosting habitat and will move between roosts sites depending on temporal variance. The removal of any roosting habitat should be compensated with supplementary habitat so as to not disrupt migration to the maternity roost: a significant impact to a maternity roost for this species would be considered to be a Serious and Irreversible Impact.	Additional text added to the justification in Table D1 in Appendix D noting that there are no mine shafts, workings, or old buildings within the Development Footprints. Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts in October 2023 (undertaken as part of the Commonwealth assessment for the Project) did not result in the identification of roosting microbats. As there was no roosting habitat identified in the Development Footprint, or nearby further assessment of the disruption to migratory patterns. As there is no impact to roosting or maternity habitat of *Miniopterus australis*, the species is not at risk of a SAII.
9.	Vegetation at and around BAM Plot 18, within Warkworth Sands Woodlands appears to be in a discharge zone of the local aquifer, this suggests that consideration of groundwater impacts will be required for the proposed relocation of Lemington Road in this area. During the site visit of 22 February 2023, it was noted that the vegetation in and around BAM Plot 18 included *Myriophyllum* sp., *Xyris* sp., and *Drosera burmanni*. The soil at the site was wet too, with standing water, but the presence of these wetland species suggests this is due to a local, relatively persistent source of water rather than	An assessment of potential impacts to Warkworth Sand Woodland in areas adjacent to BAM Plot 18 should be undertaken if development activities in that area are likely to change local groundwater conditions (e.g. by either draining the upslope section of sandsheet or blocking the flow of water)	Further discussion on this provided in Table 6.4 of the BDAR including a graphic (Figure 6.2) from the groundwater assessment demonstrating that the community relies on the perched aquifer and will not be altered by groundwater impacts.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	from the heavy rain that fell before the site visit. Given that this site is downslope of part of the biodiversity offset for the Warkworth Mine, with Warkworth Sands Woodland, BCD recommends that an assessment of the local aquifer, within the sandsheet is undertaken to ensure that any development of the site will not adversely affect the aquifer and affect other areas of Warkworth Sands Woodland, by either draining the upslope section of sandsheet or blocking the flow of water.		
10.	Figure 6.1 'Location of Prescribed Impacts' shows the general location of corridors within the project area. However, the BDAR does not show how the corridors in the project area fit within the wider landscape and important corridors have not been identified. This does not meet the requirements of Section 7.2.1 (c) of the BAM 2020, which requires the proponent to 'locate the proposal to avoid severing or interfering with corridors connecting different areas of habitat and migratory flight paths, to important habitat or local movement pathways.'	The BDAR should be amended to discuss how the project fits within the wider landscape and presents a new, or revised version of Figure 6.1, or both that has clear lines that indicate probable corridors.	Figure 6.4 (formerly Figure 6.1) updated to show regional corridors based on native vegetation mapped on SVTM. Further justification is provided in Table 6.6 of the BDAR, demonstrating that HVO is not located within an important regional corridor and that the project will not result in the severing of regional corridors.
11.	Table 6.4 'Assessment of Indirect Impacts' of the BDAR provides a brief discussion of indirect impacts, including from weed invasion. BCD recommends that further information is provided in relation to measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road. BCD notes that several exotic species are already present in the patch of Warkworth Sands Woodland at Archerfield (such as Eragrostis curvula, Melinis repens and Heterotheca grandiflora) but the patch is vulnerable to the establishment of other weeds	Further details should be provided around measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road.	Additional recommendations are provided in Section 5.6 of the revised BDAR in relation to additional measures for: • Weed management. • Protection and habitat restoration. • Establishment of native vegetation. • Monitoring and adaptive management.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	from sandy soils nearby (such as Bryophyllum delagoense and Coreopsis lanceolata).		
12.	Table 5.4 'Impacts and Avoided Impacts in Easement Realignment Design' of the BDAR does not document the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts as required by Chapter 8 'Assessing the impacts of the proposal on biodiversity values' of the BAM 2020.	The BDAR should be revised include the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts, as required under the BAM 2020.	Additional text is provided at Table 5.8 and Section 5.5 of the BDAR to confirm that the impact minimisation and mitigation strategies are well known and represent a low risk of failure. These strategies are implemented widely across mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and will be documented in a BMP.
13.	The BDAR does not adequately discuss prescribed impacts in relation to southern Myotis from direct impacts to waterbodies, including dams, within the subject land. Table 6.5 'Prescribed Impacts identified at HVO North and HVO South' discusses potential impacts to the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities, including impacts to human-made structures, impacts to connectivity, and impacts to '...water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities.' The first two potential impacts were identified as likely to occur for this project, but not the last one. Table 6.6 'Prescribed Impacts Assessment' discusses '...impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range' in relation to all threatened fauna species and native vegetation but does not discuss the likely impact on the loss of water bodies on the subject land in relation to the movement of the southern Myotis.	The BDAR should include an assessment of potential prescribed impacts of the project on the southern Myotis by the removal of water bodies in accordance with section 8.3 'Assess prescribed biodiversity impacts' in the BAM 2020.	Additional prescribed impact assessment included in Table 6.7 and shown on Figure 6.4.
14.	Section 1.1.1 'HVO North' of the BDAR does not provide enough information on the likely location of ancillary or temporary construction facilities	The BDAR should be amended to provide more information on the location of temporary or ancillary construction facilities that will require	The proposed location of ancillary or temporary construction facilities is now shown on Figure 1.4 of the BDAR. While these locations are indicative

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	and infrastructure and the likely amount of clearing associated with them. The BDAR does not identify these areas on any maps, such as Figure 1.3 'Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project' or Figure 1.4. 'The Development Footprints HVO North and HVO South' This information is required under Section 2 'Stage 1: Biodiversity assessment' (page 5) and also Table 24 'Minimum information requirements for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report and the Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report – Stage 1: Biodiversity assessment' (page 116) of the BAM 2020.	additional clearing, and to show these locations on one or more maps.	only, the proponent confirms that these will be cited in existing approved disturbance areas or within the proposed Development Footprints. Ancillary or temporary construction facilities will not be constructed outside these boundaries and therefore no additional impacts are proposed.
15.	A map showing the location of indirect impacts from the project is required. Table A.1 'Assessment of compliance with BDAR minimum information requirements' of the BDAR states, on page A-15, that maps of indirect impact zones for the project are not applicable for this project. However, indirect impacts for the project have been identified in: Section 6.2 'Indirect impacts' and described in Table 6.4 'Assessment of indirect impacts'. A map showing the location of areas of indirect impacts; specifically: • where drawdown impacts to groundwater-dependent ecosystems are located • where rubbish dumping on the aligned Lemington Road is a threat to any threatened species of communities • edge effects that may impact threatened species or communities outside of the development footprint	The BDAR should be amended to include a map, or maps of likely indirect impacts from the project in order to meet requirements of the BAM 2020.	Figure 6.1A and Figure 6.1B shows Wollombi Brook and Hunter River (respectively) alluvium-maximum cumulative drawdown during operations. Figure 6.2 shows the maximum predicted incremental drawdown during operations in the Hunter River alluvium. Figure 6.3 now shows edge effects around Lemington Road realignment and indicative habitat connectivity in the locality and region based on the SVTM native vegetation extent.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	• fugitive light, noise and dust impacts to native plant communities and threatened species. A map, or maps, would meet the requirements of Table 25 'Minimum information requirements for the BDAR or BCAR – Stage 2: Impact assessment (biodiversity values)' (page 124) of the BAM 2020.		
16.	Section 6.2 'Indirect impacts' of the BDAR does not identify or describe the limitations and assumptions of the assessment of indirect impacts for the project. This is required to meet Section 8.2.1 (c) of 'Assess indirect impacts on native vegetation, threatened ecological communities, threatened species and their habitat' for the BAM 2020.	The BDAR should include a discussion on the limitations and assumptions in the assessment of indirect impacts of the project to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020.	Section 6.2 updated with a statement relating to the confidence of the indirect impacts assessed in the BDAR, based on a long history of assessment and monitoring of impacts to biodiversity due to mining in the Hunter Valley over the last 20 years.
17.	BCD recommends that additional information is provided to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020 as outlined in this letter of advice.	The BDAR does not include all of the information required by BAM 2020, including: The BAM 2020 assesses the biodiversity values of the 'subject land', however the BDAR does not define the 'subject land' for this project.	Definition of 'Subject Land' now included in Section 1.2 of revised BDAR.
		Figures 2.1 'Site Map', 2.2A 'Location Map – HVO North' and 2.2B 'Location map - HVO South' do not show dams and mine sites on a Map.	Figure 2.2A and 2.2B have been updated to show dams and surrounding mining sites.
		Maps of Native Vegetation Extent are not presented at < 1:10,000 scale, as required by Section 4.1 'Map of native vegetation extent on the subject land' of the BAM 2020 (The maps of native vegetation extent in APPENDIX C are presented at a scale of 1:28,000).	Appendix C figures have been updated to be 1:10,000 scale.
		Threatened Ecological Communities that are dependent on or use habitat features associated with prescribed impacts are not listed.	Features added to Table 6.6 of the revised BDAR.

Table G.2 BCD Submissions and Response – 19 June 2024

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
1.	Table D.1 of the BDAR states "Habitat searches undertaken in…2020 did not record the habitat constraints required…Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts…did not result in identification of roosting microbats." However, the BDAR identifies that suitable habitat such as old buildings, mine shafts and workings exist at the site. Microbats will roost in buildings that are in frequent use and therefore all buildings should be treated as potential roosting and breeding habitat for the target species. The BDAR should also detail the methodology used for potential roost assessment (i.e. specific methodology used for culvert searches). The BDAR does not include an assessment of SAII microbat species. This is required under Section 9.1 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (BAM).	The BDAR should be amended to include the detailed methodology used for potential roost assessment (i.e. specific methodology used for culvert searches). The BDAR should be amended to include a SAII impact assessment for microbats in accordance with section 9.1 of the BAM.	The BDAR does not require further assessment of SAII entity microbats if the Accredited Assessor determines that there is not going to be an impact on breeding habitat of the candidate SAII bat species, (DPIE 2019). For the reasons set in Section 6.4 of the BDAR, as the Accredited Assessor has determined that there will not be an impact on the breeding habitat of the candidate SAII bat species, the BDAR is not considered to require amendment.
2.	Section 4.4 of Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method outlines that a two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach may be used within areas of suitable habitat greater than 50ha. The proponent should demonstrate that more than 50ha of habitat exists within the site for this method to be applied. BCS's previous advice of 13 March 2024 recommended that suitable habitat be displayed in hectares by vegetation zone and plant community type (PCT). Section 4.1.3.1 of the BDAR outlines that the proponent did not use vegetation zones and condition of PCTs to determine suitable habitat. However, the BDAR does describe that suitable habitat was considered by stating that some survey was undertaken in 'exotic condition zones' and areas with 'VI scores below the minimum offsetting threshold'	The proponent should undertake flora surveys that meet the requirements of relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Otherwise, the proponent may choose to engage an expert to prepare a report on why alternative approaches are appropriate or assume presence.	Umwelt has undertaken substantial targeted threatened species surveys over multiple seasons across the Development Footprints, with no threatened flora species recorded. Umwelt implemented the large area survey method for most candidate species as prescribed in the Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the BAM (DPIE 2020). Potentially suitable habitat for threatened flora species was determined at the commencement of the Project when a threatened flora sampling methodology was prepared. This included identifying the potentially suitable habitat within the Development Footprints for candidate threatened species, which was based on the extent of associated PCTs as outlined in the TBDC occurring in the Development Footprints. Large sites are defined in the guideline as areas of suitable habitat greater than 50 hectares (ha). We note that the area of native

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	however, these areas were 'determined to be substantially degraded and highly unlikely to contain threatened flora species'. The BDAR does not state which species are being referred to or provide reasoning for this approach. As outlined in section 5.2.3 of the BAM, the assessor must include a description in the BDAR of the microhabitats assessed as required by the species (this must be based on evidence such as published literature) and the assessor must provide their reasons for determining a candidate species credit species is unlikely to have suitable habitat on the subject land (or specific vegetation zones). Table 4.1 of the BDAR demonstrates that the only PCT within the development footprint more than 50 ha is PCT 1691: Narrow-leaved ironbark – Grey Box grassy woodland of the central and upper Hunter. However, the BDAR uses the grid search method in PCT 1692: Bull Oak grassy woodland of the central Hunter Valley and discontiguous areas of PCT 1691. PCT 1692 only equates to 35.6 ha of the development footprint and so this PCT does not offer greater than 50 ha of potential habitat (see figure 1 below). The discontiguous areas of PCT 1691 do not consists of areas greater than 50 ha. This means BCS does not consider that the proponent has surveyed targeted threatened flora in accordance with relevant guidelines and the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC).		vegetation within the Development Footprints subject to targeted surveys for species predicted to occur in all PCTs is [609 ha] which is 12-fold larger than this definition of a large site. In cases where threatened flora species were predicted to occur in suitable habitat that totalled less than 50 ha, parallel transects were undertaken (e.g. *Chryptostylis hunteriana* and *Thesium australe* are only predicted to occur in PCTs 4081 and 3485). If there is uncertainty, Umwelt will always take a conservative approach and sample accordingly. BCS has identified a small area alongside Comleroi Road (Figure 3 of the BCS submission) that does not contain flora survey transects or grids. This area was included within the Development Footprint in error. The area is in fact already contained within the existing and approved disturbance area at HVO South under the current project approval and does not require any further approval under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) to disturb. This area does not require survey as it does not occur in the Development Footprint. The substantial targeted threatened flora surveys undertaken in the Development Footprint are considered to be appropriate for the scale of the Project and the condition and quality of potentially suitable habitat identified during the assessment. Umwelt does not therefore consider that further surveys are required.
3	The 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats - NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method, outlines that 'All habitat on the subject land where the subject land is within 200m of a waterbody with pools/ stretches 3m or wider including rivers, creeks, billabongs, lagoons, dams and other waterbodies on the subject land' should be included in	The southern myotis species polygon should be amended to include all areas of proposed impact within a 200m buffer of any medium to large permanent creeks, rivers or other waterbodies.	Umwelt has reviewed and amended the species polygon for the southern myotis as per BCS's recommendations. The layer was not previously updated to reflect the change in Development Footprint boundary following the avoidance of the Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC associated with the amended

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	the species polygon for the southern myotis. However, the polygons provided in the BDAR only partially include the habitat to be impacted as seen in the example in Figure 4 below. This example shows a waterbody (light blue polygon), a 200m buffer of the waterbody (lime green polygon line), the project footprint (red polygon) and myotis species polygon (blue hatching).		realignment of Lemington Road, as presented in the Amendment Report (EMM 2023). Please note that the example area provided in Figure 4 of BCS's response is not within the Development Footprint but was erroneously shown as being included. This area does not require approval under the EP&A Act to disturb. This area does not require the generation of myotis credits as it does not occur in the Development Footprint.
4	Austral toadflax (*Thesium australe*) and leafless tongue orchid (*Cryptostylis hunteriana*)*:* Section 4.2 of the Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method sets out the maximum distance between parallel field traverses. Table 1 of this guide states that the maximum traversal distance for orchids and herbs within open vegetation is 10m, and 5m within dense vegetation. The data package provided to BCS on 13 March 2024 shows distances of up to 17.5m between field transects within dense vegetation (see figure 5 of Response to Submission) This does not meet the requirements of the guideline. The proponent should complete additional surveys to address this.	Additional surveys should be done for Austral toadflax (*Thesium australe*) and leafless tongue orchid *(Cryptostylis hunteriana)*.	It is acknowledged that some transects appear to show a distance greater than what is recommended in the Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the BAM (DPIE 2020). In many instances gaps or deviations can be attributed to GPS accuracy which is, at best, only accurate to 5 m. Furthermore, transects will often necessarily deviate from parallel 10 m spacing due to natural obstacles such as fallen logs, trees, water, waste, steep rocky areas. It should be noted that the vegetation structure within the Development Footprint would be considered open vegetation. Dense vegetation is characterised by foliage cover of >70%. Examples of this in Walker and Hopkins (1990) include rainforests and closed Casuarina forests. In the case of surveying for orchids and herbs in the Development Footprint, there are no areas of dense vegetation that would reasonably prevent detection of these species using 10 m transects. Following the updates to the new East Coast PCT Classification and species associations, the BAM-C longer predicts these species for the Project. No further assessments or surveys are required.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	Gang-gang cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) and glossy black-cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*): The TBDC listings for the gang-gang cockatoo and glossy-black cockatoo require the potential nest trees within the site to be identified and monitored during breeding season. In lieu of NSW guidelines, the TBDC states 'assessors must undertake a species survey using best practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys.' The shapefile provided in the Response to Submission lists regent honeyeater and swift parrot as the target bird species for surveys conducted in August 2023. Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR states targeted surveys were completed for gang-gang cockatoo in October 2023, however, the shapefile does not include track data from October 2023.	The proponent should provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it has done targeted surveys for glossy-black cockatoos and gang-gang cockatoos, and that the method can be replicated.	Umwelt confirms that targeted bird surveys, that included observations for glossy-black cockatoo (and any potential nests), were undertaken over 23 days during the following dates (it is noted that the survey timing for glossy-black cockatoo has changed since the assessment for the Project and surveys are now suitable between January-September): • 3–6 June 2019 • 12–15 August 2019 • 6–10 July 2020 • 16-17 and 28-29 August 2023 • 18 September 2023 • 9-11, 14-15 April 2025 Surveys for gang-gang cockatoo hollow trees were undertaken over 16 days over the following dates: • 12-16 and 19-23 October 2020 • 14 October 2021 • 23, 25, 30, 31 October 2023 • 1 November 2023 • 4-6 November 2025 Neither the gang-gang cockatoo nor the glossy black-cockatoo, or evidence of these species, were recorded as part of any surveys undertaken for this assessment. All of the survey methods undertaken are able to be readily replicated by returning to the locations (points and transects) as provided in the GIS files submitted to BCS as part of this response.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	Pale-headed snake (*Hoplocephalus bitorquatus*): Section 4.2 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method Operational Manual – Stage 1 states that the TBDC is updated regularly to include the best available information and to add new listings under the BC Act. Therefore the BDAR should be consistent with the TBDC on the date it is finalised. As such, pale-headed snake surveys should comply with the Threatened reptiles: Biodiversity Assessment Method survey guide which requires a minimum spotlight survey effort of 120 person minutes for 4 nights and 72 funnel trap nights. This means the proponent needs to do additional survey for this species.	Additional surveys should be done for the proposed road upgrade to meet BAM requirements for the pale-headed snake (*Hoplocephalus bitorquatus*). Species surveys should be conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Any proposed deviations from species survey must be first approved by BCS.	Following the updates to the new East Coast PCT Classification and species associations, the BAM-C longer predicts pale-headed snake for the Project. No further assessments or surveys are required.
	Stephen's banded snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensii*): The Threatened reptiles: Biodiversity Assessment Method survey guide states that a minimum 120 person-minute survey is required to be replicated 4 times. It also states that suitable habitat for this species is 'hollow bearing trees, arboreal vine tangles, fallen/standing dead timber including logs (or within 500 m of these habitats)". Table 2.2 of the Addendum report states that the proponent spent a total of 7 nights surveying over a total of 16 person hours. It also states that "Nocturnal road surveys were also undertaken for opportunistic sightings, however these were not in accordance with the survey guidelines as they were not undertaken within suitable habitat and exceeded the required travelling speed of 5 kilometres per hour at times." Section 2.3 of the Addendum Report also notes that the "small size of the patches of suitable habitat within associated PCTs precluded the necessity to survey within 500 metres of suitable habitat". Shapefile ECO_4948_Umwelt_SBS_SpotlightingTransects_231219_GDA20z56 does not include legible dates and timing	The proponent should provide a shapefile for Stephen's banded-snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensii*) with the spotlight surveys only and include the specific date and time of surveys so that it can be established that surveys were conducted in accordance with the guideline.	Following the updates to the new East Coast PCT Classification, the BAM-C longer predicts Stephens banded snake for the Project. Despite this, surveys targeting the species was undertaken in 2023 prior to the PCT change taking place.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	of surveys, it also includes the road surveys within the transects despite the Addendum Report acknowledging that the road surveys were not conducted in accordance with guidelines. The proponent should provide a shapefile that clearly defines spotlight surveys and the date and time of surveys. Given the information available, BCS cannot determine if surveys met relevant guideline requirements.		
	Eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*): Section 5.3.2(c) of the BAM states that assessors should 'use best practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys, if the Department has not published guidelines.' BCS considers that Commonwealth guidelines provide best-practice methods in lieu of the Department releasing survey guidelines for eastern pygmy possum. The Commonwealth's Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals recommends: • cameras be deployed for at least 14 nights, and • approximately 10 cameras be deployed per hectare Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR notes 9 camera traps were commissioned over the 609.5 ha development footprint. Considering the above, additional camera traps should be deployed to comply with the Commonwealth guidelines.	Additional surveys should be done for the proposed road upgrade to meet BAM requirements for the eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*). Species surveys should be conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Any proposed deviations from species survey must be first approved by BCS.	The Commonwealth Guidelines referenced by BCS being the Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals (DSEWPC 2011), do not provide species-specific recommendations for the eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*) as this species is not listed under the EPBC Act. Umwelt does not consider the Commonwealth Guidelines (DSEWPC 2011) the most suitable species-specific guideline for the eastern pygmy possum, and deploying 10 cameras per hectare of potential habitat (resulting in 1844 cameras across 184.3 ha), as suggested is required by BCS, is not practicable. Additional surveys for eastern pygmy possum were undertaken in June-July 2025 and December-February 2026 following liaison and approval of survey methods with DCCEEW. This species was not recorded and no further assessment or credit generation is required.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	Green and golden bell frog (*Litoria aurea*) and green-thighed frog (*Litoria brevipalmata*): Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR states that green and golden bell frog and green-thighed frog surveys included a total of 8 person hours over 4 consecutive nights across 17 dams, drainage lines or rover locations. The NSW Survey Guide for Threatened Frogs requires the surveyor to survey for a minimum 480 mins per 500m transect with each site repeated 4 times. Additionally, the green-thighed frog requires surveys to be done after flooding rain. Given this, the proponent should do additional amphibian surveys to comply with relevant survey guidelines.	Additional surveys should be done for the proposed road upgrade to meet BAM requirements for the green and golden bell from (*Litoria aurea*) and green-thighed frog (*Litoria brevipalmata*). Species surveys should be conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Any proposed deviations from species survey must be first approved by BCS.	As the original surveys for the green and golden bell frog were undertaken in March 2020, new surveys in accordance with the BAM Frog Survey Guideline was undertaken between February-March 2025 in suitable waterbody habitat within the Development Footprints. Further information is provided in Section 4.1.3 of the BDAR. Following the updates to the new East Coast PCT Classification, the PCTs within the Development Footprint no longer predict green-thighed frog.
	Raptors: Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR states that targeted bird of prey searches were conducted throughout the site. The data package did not include a GIS file including raptor transects. The proponent should provide this to allow BCS to determine if surveys were conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines.	The GIS data for raptor transects should be provided to BCS.	Additional raptor nest surveys were undertaken in April 2025 and October 2025 to supplement the surveys undertaken prior to September 2020.
	Forest Owls: The shapefile FAUNA_Umwelt_HollowBearing Trees_231220 includes a visual record of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*). Barn owls calls are very difficult to differentiate from masked owls (Tyto novaehollandiae). There are several masked owl BioNet records within and surrounding the footprint which indicates that the recording could have been a masked owl. BCS discussed this with the consultant during a site inspection on 19 February 2024. The proponent should provide further evidence (i.e. photographs) to determine presence of barn owl	Further evidence should be provided (i.e. photographs) to determine presence of barn owl (Tyto alba) and absence of masked owl (Tyto novaehollandiae). If further evidence cannot be provided, the precautionary approach should be applied and masked owl assumed present.	Umwelt does not consider that barn owls and masked owls are difficult to differentiate. While both species have similar features belonging to the Tyto genus, Umwelt's ecologists are well-trained and experienced to understand the features that distinguish common and threatened species in the field. The specimen in question was carefully observed by two ecologists who agreed the individual was an eastern barn owl. The ecologists made specific efforts to observe the size of the owl's legs and talons, which matched those typically exhibited by eastern barn owls. A photograph

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	and absence of masked owl. If the proponent cannot provide further evidence, the precautionary approach should be applied and masked owl assumed present. BCS also notes best-practice survey methodology for forest owls is night monitoring of each potential nest location for a minimum of two nights, with surveys commencing 30 minutes prior to dusk and continuing for 60 minutes after sunset.		was not taken at the time of survey and therefore cannot be provided, however it is noted that this is not required as part of the BAM (2020) or the BAM Operational Manual Stage 1 (DPIE 2020). Regardless of the above, Umwelt has undertaken targeted owl surveys using acoustic recorders in June and July 2025 and again in January-February 2026. The survey method and plan has been deemed adequate by both the BOS Helpdesk and the Newcastle CPHR office. The outcomes of these surveys are included in the BDAR.
	Microbats: Section 4.2.2 of the BDAR states 'large-eared pied-bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*) and little bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus australis*) were positively recorded, however no areas containing breeding habitat occur'. Appendix H of the BDAR also states there are 'no mine shaftings, workings, or old buildings within the Development Footprints'. BCS has analysed aerial imagery and made observations during the site inspection on 19 February 2024. This shows that the proposed footprint contains buildings, which is noted as roosting habitat within the TBDC for the large-eared pied-bat. The proponent should do additional surveys, in accordance with the 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats, within all building/structure proposed for removal. Table D1 of Appendix D of the BDAR notes targeted microbat searches of culverts were completed as part of the Commonwealth assessment. All survey information in relation to BC Act listed species should be included in the BDAR. The above species are also both considered SAII entities. This means the proponent needs to do an	Additional surveys should be done for the proposed road upgrade to meet BAM requirements for microbats. Species surveys should be conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Any proposed deviations from species survey must be first approved by BCS. Additional surveys for microbat species should be completed in accordance with the 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats within all building/structure proposed for removal.	As outlined in the response in Ref 1 above, it is unlikely that either large-eared pied-bat or little bent-winged bats would use buildings for breeding. It is therefore highly unlikely that there is active breeding habitat for these species within either the natural habitat on site, or in the disused or used buildings in the Development Footprints. This is further discussed in Section 6.4 of the BDAR.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	assessment for SAII in line with the requirements set out in section 9.1 of the BAM.		
5	<u>Prescribed impacts have not been adequately assessed:</u> Section 4.3.4 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 2 outlines that the location of prescribed impacts, including polygons identifying the extent of the impact, must be mapped on the Site and Location maps included in the BDAR. Section 6.1.2 of the BAM requires that for non-native vegetation, a BDAR must: • provide a description of the type of human-made structure or non-native vegetation habitat • prepare a list of threatened species that use these features as habitat	• provide a description of the type of human-made structure or non-native vegetation habitat • prepare a list of threatened species that use these features as habitat	Prescribed impacts are assessed in Section 6.3 of BDAR and shown on a specific figure (Figure 6.4). The BAM (2020) outlines the reporting requirements for a BDAR. The BAM (2020) does not require prescribed impacts to be displayed on the Site Map or Location Map, despite what is noted in the BAM Operation Manual Stage 2 (DPE 2023). It is understood that where there is ambiguity, the BAM (2020) takes precedence. The Site Map and Location Map contains a range of features and is unlikely to be legible with the potential prescribed impacts relevant to the Project. It is considered that the display of prescribed impacts on Figure 6.4 is appropriate. Impacts relating to non-native vegetation habitat is outlined in Table 6.7 of the BDAR which describes the threatened species likely to occupy this habitat and a description of the habitat.
	<u>Mine rehabilitation:</u> Approximately 356 ha of Category 1 - Exempt land and 1,153 ha of mine rehabilitation would be impacted by the proposal. Table 6.6 of the BDAR lists hunter valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) as the only threatened entity likely to inhabit Category 1 – Exempt lands. It is likely additional threatened species would use the 1,153ha of mine rehabilitation. •	• The proponent should provide additional information so that BCS can fully understand the prescribed impacts related to the mine rehabilitation areas. This should include: • the vegetation types and formations within the mine rehabilitation areas • all habitat features within the mine rehabilitation areas and Category 1 – Exempt lands • details of targeted threatened species surveys completed within the mine rehabilitation	Areas of mine rehabilitation in the wider HVO Complex were not included in the Development Footprint for the assessment as: • All mine rehabilitation areas are already approved for disturbance. • None of these areas have been relinquished or meet the completion criteria as outlined in the Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) and the existing consent documents acknowledge that further disturbance to rehabilitated areas may still be required. • None of the rehabilitation established at HVO that will be disturbed by the Project is required to conform to a PCT or TEC. • The location of the rehabilitation is only shown conceptually by the consent documents and does

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
		area to determine presence of threatened species.	not represent areas that have been formally 'set aside' for nature conservation, re-vegetation of native vegetation or as a native vegetation offset. • The obligation to rehabilitate the areas that are currently approved for disturbance under the HVO North Development Consent (DA 450-10-2003) and HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) will be incorporated into the proposed new consents. • The mine rehabilitation areas that will be disturbed by the Project can be classified as Category 1 – Exempt Land as they were cleared prior to 1990 or lawfully cleared after 1 January 1990 and: ○ have not been "notified to the Environment Agency Head"; and ○ are not required to have been "set aside" by any condition of any of the Consents "for nature conservation, for re-vegetation of native vegetation or as a native vegetation offset" which forms part of the definition of Category 2 -sensitive regulated land (DCCEEW 2024). ○ This is further discussed in Section 2.4 of the BDAR.
	Drawdown Impacts: The BDAR currently does not include information on the PCT/Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or threatened entities which exist or may use the areas of predicted drawdown outside of the development footprint. Section 2.1 of the Groundwater and SAII Report states that the "groundwater drawdown spatial information provided to BCD represents the predicted maximum cumulative alluvial drawdown. This predicted drawdown is due to mining effects from a number of approved mining operations within the groundwater model domain" and that the "10 m drawdown contours evidenced within are not a result of the Project". Section 4.3.5 of the Biodiversity	The proponent should: • amend the BDAR to consider cumulative impacts, with section 6.1.4 and 8.3.4 of the BAM completed and assessed • provide GIS shapefiles of the PCT/TECs within the areas of predicted drawdown • amend Section 5.5 of the BDAR to include proposed mitigation measures for impacts to man-made structures, non-native	The BDAR addresses cumulative impacts in Table 6.5 in relation to potential drawdown impacts and cumulative impacts on biodiversity in the wider locality. It should be noted that all drawdown impact predictions are cumulative – that is they take into account drawdown predictions from surrounding developments in the locality. It is considered that the measures outlined in Section 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 of the BDAR will mitigate the impacts on indirect and prescribed impacts including those on man-made structures and non-native vegetation.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 2 (BAM Ops – Stage 2) states that cumulative impacts from the proposed development and other largescale or similar developments within the region should be considered and discussed in the BDAR. Neither the BDAR or the Groundwater and SAII Report consider the impact to water quality in groundwater discharges given that the aquifers would no longer be confined systems. The BDAR should consider the short term and long term impact of altered baseflow and stream flows to the PCTs and threatened species within the area.	vegetation and hydrological processes • provide an adaptive management plan be provided for areas of predicted drawdown in line with Section 8.5 of the BAM outlines that an adaptive management plan should be used to address impacts that are infrequent or difficult to measure	
6	<u>Identify the limitations and risk of failure for measures to mitigate or management impacts:</u> The proponent has amended Section 5.4 of the BDAR to include a statement suggesting mitigation strategies are well known and represent a low risk of failure. Section 8.4.2 (b) (c) of the BAM specifically requires the proponent to: • identify any measures for which there is risk of failure • evaluate the risk and consequence of any impacts likely to remain after mitigation measures are applied	• The BDAR should be amended to include the following: • identify any measures for which there is risk of failure; and • evaluate the risk and consequence of any impacts likely to remain after mitigation measures are applied	As outlined in the BDAR, the mitigation measures are considered to represent a suitable suite of management strategies that are well known and routinely implemented in biodiversity management plans for mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and therefore are considered to represent a low risk of failure. HVO's existing Integrated Biodiversity Management Plan (EMM 2018) includes a risk framework and adaptive management measures to ensure successful implementation of management measures and actions. This includes specific monitoring, annual review processes and updating of plans on a regular basis to ensure best practice mitigation and improvements once new information is available or changed circumstances arise. Refer to Table 5.8 *Risks to Achieving Key Mitigation Measure Objectives and Responses* of BDAR for an outline for risk assessment for mitigation measure efficacy and the consequences and adaptive actions proposed if there is a failure.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
7	Further information is required to demonstrate the future vegetation integrity (VI) score in the BAM-C: As set out in section 8.1.1 of the BAM, the value of the attributes in the future can be amended to reflect the impacts from partially clearing a vegetation zone, including areas such as asset protection zones and easements. The BAM also states that the assessor must map these areas of the vegetation zone as a separate management zone, refer to these areas in the BDAR, and in the BDAR specify how the remaining attributes will be maintained. If it is likely these attributes will continue to degrade, the BDAR should assume full loss. And the BAM specifies that the future value of an attribute must not be higher than the current observed value for that attribute. The future value for each attribute must be 0 when a proposal will clear that attribute or all the vegetation in the development footprint, or equivalent area for other types of proposals on the subject land. The proposal's BAM-C file shows that multiple management zones have a total VI loss that does not equate to zero. The reasons for this should be explained in the BDAR.	• The BDAR should be amended to specify why the future VI loss does not equate to zero, and how remaining attributes will be maintained. • The BDAR should include a figure demonstrating each management zone.	This detail is provided in Section 6.1 of the BDAR and figures of the management zones are shown in the detailed vegetation figures in Appendix C of the BDAR. Umwelt confirms this information was included in both the original BDAR (Umwelt 2022) and the revised BDAR following RTS (Umwelt 2023).
8	information is required for BAM-C ecosystem credit species: The BDAR does not include microbats and birds as confirmed predicted species from grassland vegetation zones even though this was in the BDAR submitted with the EIS. The BAM allows ecosystem species to be removed if they do not meet any one of the criteria outlined in section 5.2.1.2 (a-f) of the BAM. However, the BAM requires that if any past surveys of the subject land have recorded the presence of a threatened species or it has been incidentally observed on site, the	• The BDAR should be amended to include justification for exclusion for ecosystem credit species per the BAM.	This has been resolved in the latest version of the BAM-C.

Ref.	BCD Comment	BCD Recommendation	Proponent Response
	species must be assessed regardless of whether the relevant criteria have been met. The BDAR does not justify excluding microbats or birds in grassland vegetation zones. BCS requests the BDAR be amended to include justification for excluding ecosystem credit species, in line with the requirements of the BAM.		
9	<u>Further information is required for BAM-C species credit species:</u> The proponent has removed the pink-tailed legless lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) from the assessment citing an absence of rocky areas. However, BCS observed rocky areas within the footprint during our site inspection on 19 February 2024. As the habitat constraint exists within the development footprint, the proponent should not exclude this from its assessment. The proponent needs to do targeted surveys for pink-tailed legless lizard. The proponent also excluded the Stephens' banded snake, large-eared pied bat and both Miniopterus species as confirmed candidate species. However, each species were targeted for surveys. The BAM-C should accurately reflect site values and surveys.	• Recommended action: • Targeted surveys are required for pink-tailed legless lizard. • The BAM-C should be amended to accurately reflect site values and targeted species surveys undertaken.	Following the updates to the new East Coast PCT Classification, the BAM-C no longer predicts pink-tailed legless lizard. No further assessment or surveys are required.

Table G.3 CPHR Submissions and Response – 15 October 2025

Ref	CPHR Comment	CPHR Recommendation	Proponent Response
1.	The BDAR continues to identify impacts to the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC*, which the Department considers may pose a risk of Serious and Irreversible Impact (SAII). Condition 31 of the consent explicitly states that "the applicant must protect all stands of the Hunter Lowland Red Gum Forest (also identified as Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Complex in the EA) endangered ecological community within the site, and adjacent lands under the control of the Applicant". The proposed impacts are in direct contradiction to this consent condition. Furthermore, while the proposed restoration area is larger in size (6.6 ha), it does not represent a like-for-like offset for the impacted area. The restoration site comprises grasslands and exotic pasture with low to moderate native ground cover and contains only one Eucalyptus camaldulensis. This is not comparable to the ecological value of the impact zone. It is also notable that the proposed restoration area borders habitat that appears to be significantly more suitable, including six Eucalyptus camaldulensis specimens, raising questions about site selection. Additionally, the indirect impacts to Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC have not been adequately addressed.	It is recommended that the proposal be revised to avoid any further impact on the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC). If avoidance is not feasible, the proponent should engage with the Department to identify and secure an area of equal or greater ecological value for protection and rehabilitation. This offset area must not be subject to any existing or proposed rehabilitation or conservation agreements. Ensure that any potential indirect impacts to the Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC have been assessed and subsequently avoided and/or mitigated.	This is addressed in Section 4 of the Amendment Submissions Report (EMM 2025). Substantial efforts to avoid impacts to the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* has already been made through Project design and site location selection, with 8.1 ha of impact to this EEC avoided through the EIS and subsequent project refinements. Due to the location of this EEC in proximity to the Hunter River, no further avoidance is possible. The Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR, Umwelt 2025) acknowledges that the EEC is listed as a potentially SAII entity under the Biodiversity Offset Scheme. Consequently, and in addition to the offsets proposed as part of the Project's biodiversity offset strategy, HVO has identified an area of land approximately 6.6 ha in size that would be subject to measures to restore this EEC through revegetation and management, which would not only increase the extent of the EEC result in a net gain for this community and , but provide a higher level of protection to adjacent areas of this EEC. This area of land would be incorporated into the HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy that would be revised should the Project be approved.
2.	In accordance with the BC Act and The Departments website, the current Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) must be prepared following	It is recommended that the proponent makes suitable arrangements to provide the	Condition 29A of PA 06_0261 is a condition of the existing planning approval for HVO

Ref	CPHR Comment	CPHR Recommendation	Proponent Response
	the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) and in accordance with the requirements for modifications. The BDAR will need to: • Outline available information about the original impact of the development and consider any measures already taken to avoid, minimise or offset the impact on biodiversity values in connection with the approval before the proposed modification. • Identify those offset requirements that have been discharged with documentary evidence. • Assess any new impacts on biodiversity values resulting from the modification of the development in accordance with the BAM. • Identify offset requirements and any new measures to avoid and minimise impacts in accordance with the BAM. The BDAR must clearly outline how offset obligations for the previous impact(s) remain unmet and provide accurate and transparent information to support a proper assessment. There is a requirement to satisfy condition 29 of the consent. It appears that the applicant has yet to implement the biodiversity offset strategy as described in the Warkworth Mine EIS, and outlined under Consent Condition 29 and Table 15. CPHR has reached out to BCT and POTSE, they have no record of a BSA for this site. It is understood that a pre-submission meeting has occurred, and initial work is to have begun, with further consultation scheduled for late Oct/early Nov. The development of the Biodiversity Offset Strategy and selection of the Offset Site was based on addressing the ecological impacts of the previous approval and was designed to mitigate impacts for the threatened species that were lost. The establishment of the BSS to meet the offset obligation is an important element to support the current application	appropriate long-term security for the Offset Area in accordance with Condition 29. It is recommended that all offset areas associated with previous approvals (being the establishment of Biodiversity Stewardship Sites (BSS)), be established in parallel with the Mod to ensure compliance with all previous approvals and support the current modification application.	South and is unrelated to the SSD application for the Project. The HVO Continuation Project includes SSD applications for both HVO North and HVO South – it does not seek modifications to existing approvals.

Ref	CPHR Comment	CPHR Recommendation	Proponent Response
	and its proposed impacts. Without such it is unclear how impacts to threatened species can be justified and supported.		

Table G.4 CPHR Submissions and Response – 23 December 2025

Ref	CPHR Comment	CPHR Recommendation	Proponent Response
1.	CPHR considers that the reported 0.28% of the EEC that is proposed to be impacted may quantify a significant and irreversible impact (SAII) to a species listed under principle 2. Any impacts – direct OR indirect, to this species are capable of being considered a SAII as the community is listed under principle 2 and is known to have a very limited geographic distribution. It is recommended that the impacts to known Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC be avoided entirely. CPHR recommends that conditions of approval in line with previous consent conditions associated with Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC are set. The proposal should avoid all stands of the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC within the site.	CPHR considers that the reported 0.28% of the EEC that is proposed to be impacted may quantify a significant and irreversible impact (SAII) to a species listed under principle 2. Any impacts – direct OR indirect, to this species are capable of being considered a SAII as the community is listed under principle 2 and is known to have a very limited geographic distribution. It is recommended that the impacts to known Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC be avoided entirely. CPHR recommends that conditions of approval in line with previous consent conditions associated with Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC are set. The proposal should avoid all stands of the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC within the site.	The Project is proposing to impact 1.2 ha of the Red Gum EEC associated with the HVO North Project. This 1.2 hectares (ha) of impact comprises 1.06 ha in HVO North and 0.15 ha in the River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area. The River Red Gum Additional Disturbance Area is an area within the existing HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261) adjacent to the Hunter River. This area is currently managed in accordance with the HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy developed in accordance with the requirements of Condition 30 of the existing HVO South Project Approval (PA 06_0261). Impacts to the Red Gum EEC are expected to occur as a result of the proposed transmission line relocation works and discrete areas associated with the proposed new pit. No significant impact from groundwater drawdown to this EEC is predicted to occur, and the HVO North Project is not expected to result in substantial indirect impacts such as inappropriate fire regimes, invasive species or pathogens. Substantial efforts to avoid impacts to the Red Gum EEC has already been made through Project design and site location selection, with 8.1 ha of impact to this EEC avoided through the EIS and subsequent project refinements. Due to the location of this EEC in proximity to the Hunter River, no further avoidance is possible. Impacts to the community in relation to the proposed transmission line relocation works have been assessed conservatively and are expected to primarily be associated with tree trimming and edge impacts. Where possible, mature trees will be avoided. Pre-clearance surveys and clear delineation of easement boundaries avoiding river red gums during construction will be undertaken. The Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR, Umwelt 2025) acknowledges that the Red Gum EEC is listed as a potentially SAII entity under the Biodiversity Offset Scheme. Consequently, and in addition to the offsets proposed as part of the Project's biodiversity offset strategy, HVO has identified an area of land approximately 6.6 ha in size that would be subject to measures to restore this EEC through revegetation and management, which would not only increase the extent of the EEC result in a net gain for this community and , but provide a higher level of protection to adjacent areas of this EEC. This area of land would be incorporated into the HVO River

Ref	CPHR Comment	CPHR Recommendation	Proponent Response
			Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy that would be revised should the Project be approved.
2.	It is recommended that the BDAR identify previous commitments to offset or rehabilitate the subject land. The BDAR should demonstrate that the proposed activity does not impact upon these areas. It is currently unclear whether proposed offset or rehabilitation areas within this proposal overlap with those that have been previously committed to.	It is recommended that the BDAR identify previous commitments to offset or rehabilitate the subject land. The BDAR should demonstrate that the proposed activity does not impact upon these areas. It is currently unclear whether proposed offset or rehabilitation areas within this proposal overlap with those that have been previously committed to.	The CPHR submission recommended that all previous offset and rehabilitation areas associated with HVO be mapped against the proposed project works and include the proposed additional restoration area. As noted above, the Project will impact 0.15 ha of the Red Gum EEC occurring adjacent to the Hunter River as a result of the construction of relocated transmission lines. This area of impact is currently managed in accordance with the HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy. The HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy identifies a range of monitoring, management and restoration actions for the Red Gum EEC, focusing on the Carrington Billabong within the existing HVO North development consent boundary, and includes stands of River Red Gums occurring along the Hunter River and Wollombi Brook and within the current HVO South Project Approval boundary. These areas are not secured under any formal offset arrangement. The proposed additional 6.6 ha of land to be incorporated into the HVO River Red Gum Rehabilitation and Restoration Strategy adjoins existing 'Priority' areas managed in accordance with this Strategy and will not be impacted by Project. Except for the above, the Project does not propose to impact any other areas of land managed for conservation purposes or any existing or proposed legally secured offset areas.

Your ref: SSD-11826621 & SSD-11826681
Our ref: DOC23/57326-18

Mr Joe Fittell
Team Leader
Energy, Resources & Industry
Department of Planning and Environment

By email: Joe.Fittell@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Fittell

Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (SSD-11826621 & SSD-11826681) – Review of Environmental Impact Statement

I refer to your request for advice on the Major Projects Portal, dated 27 January 2023, in which the Planning and Assessment Division (P&A) of the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) invited Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) to provide advice in relation to the Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (the project). BCD notes that the project comprises the Hunter Valley Operations South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621) and the Hunter Valley North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826681), both of which are covered by the same Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

BCD has reviewed the EIS, including relevant appendices, in relation to impacts on biodiversity (including Matters of National Environmental Significance [MNES] under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) and flood risk assessment. BCD has also reviewed GIS shapefiles for the project that were provided by the proponent in December 2022 and in February 2023. BCD's assessment has been informed by a site inspection on 22 February 2023.

During this review BCD identified several f issues, including those summarised below:

- BCD considers that the project presents a likely risk of Serious and Irreversible Impact to the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC and Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC
- BCD considers that further details are required to demonstrate how survey effort has met BCD's threatened species survey requirements
- BCD considers that the proponent has not assessed flood impacts to the township of Singleton.

BCD's recommendations are provided in **Attachment A** and detailed comments are provided in **Attachment B.** If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact Steven Crick, Senior Team Leader Planning, on 4927 3248 or at huntercentralcoast@environment.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Joe Thompson
Director Hunter Central Coast Branch
Biodiversity and Conservation Division

13 March 2023
Enclosure: Attachments A and B

BCD's recommendations

Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (SSD-11826621 and SSD-11826681) – Review of EIS

Biodiversity

1. BCD recommends that if the project is approved it includes specific conditions of consent that will minimise the impact of the project on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC and Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney basin Bioregion EEC. BCD further recommends that management and mitigation strategies for these EECs are produced, and this is done in consultation with Planning and Assessment Group and with BCD.

2. The proponent should provide the following information to demonstrate the effectiveness of the two-phase grid-based systematic survey technique applied for this assessment:

    - A table of candidate threatened plant species surveyed for this project, with the area of suitable habitat within the subject area given in hectares by Vegetation Zone and by Plant Community Type (PCT), and a total area within the subject land; the number of circular survey areas per Vegetation Zone, per PCT and in the subject land; and the area surveyed by these circular survey areas by Vegetation Zone, by PCT and for the subject land.
    - A description of how the two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach was applied for this project, including details of how the one kilometre grids that were sampled were chosen, and a discussion on any assumptions and limitations of the use of this method.

3. Columns should be added to a revised version of Table D2.2 of the BDAR that cover:

    - 'Minimum survey effort requirements'
    - 'Survey requirements met?' (to be answered by 'Yes', 'No' or 'Partially').

    A 'Notes' column may be added, or the same text otherwise provided to explain why survey effort and survey methods used may not have met survey requirements.

4. Further assessment should be undertaken for the potential presence of koalas, where survey effort does not meet BCD's survey requirements. The additional assessment may be in the form of additional targeted threatened species survey, done in accordance with current survey guidelines, or from the provision of an expert report, or by assuming the presence of koalas in areas of suitable habitat.

5. Further information should be provided about the survey effort undertaken within the specified months for targeted surveys for all candidate species-credit species, and that surveys within the specified months are compared against the required survey effort. If some species have been inadequately surveyed then further surveys (done in the appropriate months), an expert report, or the species is assumed to be present and offset accordingly.

6. Areas of suitable habitat for the common Planigale in the subject land should be surveyed using pitfall trapping, or the species is assessed by an expert report, or that the species is assumed to be present and then offset in accordance with the Biodiversity Offset Scheme.

7. The species and habitat polygons for the southern Myotis should be updated to include waterbodies as outlined in the BAM 2020 and associated guidance documents.

8. The assessor should not exclude the Stephens banded snake from assessment and should provide further details of potential habitat for cave-dwelling bats within the project area that could be provided by built structures and mine shafts

9. An assessment of potential impacts to Warkworth Sand Woodland in areas adjacent to BAM Plot 18 should be undertaken if development activities in that area are likely to change local groundwater conditions.

10. The BDAR should be amended to discuss how the project fits within the wider landscape and presents a new, or revised version of Figure 6.1, or both that has clear lines that indicate probably corridors.

11. Further details should be provided around measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road.

12. The BDAR should be revised to include the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts, as required under the BAM 2020.

13. The BDAR should be amended to include an assessment of prescribed impacts to the southern Myotis from the removal of water bodies within the subject land.

14. The BDAR should be amended to provide more information on the location of temporary or ancillary construction facilities that will require additional clearing, and to show these locations on one or more maps.

15. The BDAR should be amended to include a map, or maps of likely indirect impacts from the project in order to meet requirements of the BAM 2020.

16. The BDAR should include a discussion on the limitations and assumptions in the assessment of indirect impacts of the project to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020.

17. BCD recommends that additional information is provided to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020 as outlined in this letter of advice.

Flooding and flood risk

18. BCD recommends that the proponent's flood model is peer reviewed to identify the cause of boundary condition instabilities and assess the model's suitability for assessing flood impacts. Or alternatively, the proponent seeks Singleton Council's permission to use the TUFLOW model developed for the 2022 Singleton Flood Study.

19. BCD recommends that the proponent provides mapping that shows flood impacts down to 10 mm and clearly identifies all private land and residential dwellings where flood impacts are predicted to occur.

20. BCD recommends that the proponent provides mapping that clearly identifies all private land and residential dwellings where flood impacts are predicted to occur.

21. BCD recommends that the proponent assesses the change to the frequency and duration of flooding on all impacted private property.

22. BCD recommends that the proponent provides mapping, at a suitable scale, such that all impacted private landholders can clearly understand the predicted change in flood behaviour on their land. This mapping should include property boundaries and residential dwellings.

23. BCD recommends that conditions of consent are required to ensure that flood impacted landowners are equitably compensated.

BCD's detailed comments

Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (SSD-11826621 and SSD-11826681) – Review of EIS

Biodiversity

1. Serious and Irreversible Impacts

Section 6.4 'Serious and Irreversible Impacts' of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), which forms Appendix L of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), provides an assessment of four entities considered to be at risk of Serious and Irreversible Impacts (SAII) from the project. The four entities are:

- Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregion Endangered Ecological Community (EEC)
- Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC
- large-eared pied bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)
- little bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus australis*).

The four threatened entities have been identified as being at risk of SAII in BCD's Threatened Species Data Collection in BioNet, with SAII triggered for the two threatened microbats if breeding habitat is affected.

BCD has assessed the extinction risk to the four SAII entities by considering:

- the principles outlined in Clause 6.7 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 for determining if an action is likely to cause an SAII
- the proposed measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate impacts to the SAII entities for this project
- SAII considerations outlined under Sections 10.2.2 and 10.2.3 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) 2020.

BCD has considered these measures and the residual impacts of the project on matters at risk of SAII as required under Section 7.16 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act).

The SAII implications of the project to the SAII entities are discussed further below.

Threatened microbats

The risk of SAII impacts to the two threatened microbats was excluded in the EIS on the basis that no potential breeding habitat was present in or adjacent to the Project area. However, the EIS is not clear on whether mine shafts and other old coal mine features such as buildings in the development footprint have been examined to support this conclusion. Nevertheless, BCD considers that the predicted impacts of the project on threatened microbats is unlikely to be a risk of SAII for this project due to the large area of occupancy of those two species of microbats.

Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland and Warkworth Sands Woodland Endangered Ecological Communities

Table 6.8 'Impact Assessment for SAII Entities – Hunter Floodplain Redgum Woodland EEC' of the BDAR concludes that the Hunter Floodplain Redgum Woodland EEC meets SAII Principle 1 (Further decline of TEC), SAII Principle 2 (Further reduce the size of TEC) and SAII Principle 3 (Further limit distribution of TEC), but not SAII Principle 4 (Inability to respond to management).

The BDAR outlines that the project will clear 1.5 hectares of the EEC, which is about 0.35% of its estimated extent of 436 hectares. Section 5.2.3 of the BDAR describes measures that have been undertaken to avoid impacts to this EEC, including the avoidance of impacts to about 255 of the 269 River Red Gums that are in the vicinity of the transmission line that forms the part of the project that will cause impacts to this EEC.

Table 6.9 'Impact Assessment for SAII Entities – Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC' of the BDAR states that the project triggers SAII Principle 3 for the Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. The project would clear 5.2 hectares of the EEC which represents 1.59% of its estimated extent of 333 hectares.

BCD notes that both EECs have a very limited geographic distribution by having an extent of occurrence of < 1,000 square kilometres. Weeds have also caused a decline in the environmental quality and biotic interactions within both EECs, hampering the recruitment and establishment of characteristic species, even in areas of active management such as the Carrington Billabong for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC and the Warkworth Mine's Northern Offset for Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. As a result of these two factors BCD considers the project represents a risk of SAII to both EECs.

The response to management for both EECs is likely to be dependent upon the nature and frequency of management actions. Both EECs are highly susceptible to weed incursion, to the point where groundcover, shrub layer and canopy species are unable to establish. That is because of weed competition, not because of any reproductive characters that limit the ability of the plants in the EECs to set seed or that the weeds or other key threatening processes cannot be controlled. Thus, both EECs are likely to respond to management, but only if the management is effectively able to reduce the establishment of weeds in areas of active planting, natural recruitment and continue into the plant establishment phase.

The proponent provided an e-mail, dated 24 February 2023, which outlined that the project, if approved, would result in the avoidance of clearing of 8.95 hectares of known Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC and up to 14.28 hectares of possible Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC by not conducting approved clearing associated with the South Lemington Pit 1 Coal Mine.

Recommendation 1

BCD recommends that if the project is approved that it includes specific conditions of consent that will minimise the impact of the project on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC and Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney basin Bioregion EEC. BCD further recommends that management and mitigation strategies for these EECs are produced, and this is done in consultation with Planning and Assessment Group and with BCD.

2. The effectiveness of threatened flora survey effort needs to be demonstrated

The effectiveness of threatened flora survey effort for the candidate species and site has not been fully demonstrated. Table 4.1 'Species-credit Species Surveys' states that targeted threatened flora surveys were undertaken using the two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach. However, as described in Section 4.4 of 'Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method' (EES, 2020) this survey method applies only where suitable habitat for a particular species is larger than 50 hectares, and this has not been demonstrated in the BDAR. BCD notes that only vegetation zones 13, 19 and 20 are larger than 50 hectares.

Targeted surveys for threatened plants for BAM assessments are usually done by parallel transects, the width of the transects is proportional to the size of the targeted plant species and density of the vegetation.

Recommendation 2

The proponent should provide the following information to demonstrate the effectiveness of the two-phase grid-based systematic survey technique applied for this assessment:

- A table of candidate threatened plant species surveyed for this project with the area of suitable habitat within the Project area given in hectares by Vegetation Zone and by Plant Community Type (PCT), and a total area within the subject land; the number of circular survey areas per Vegetation Zone, per PCT and in the Project area; and the area surveyed by these circular survey areas by Vegetation Zone, by PCT and for the subject land.
- A description of how the two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach was applied for this project, including details of how the one kilometre grids that were sampled were chosen, and a discussion on any assumptions and limitations of the use of this method.

3. Targeted surveys must be demonstrated to have met the required survey effort and used the appropriate methods

Table D.2 'Targeted Species-credit Species Survey Effort' of the BDAR does not provide sufficient information to demonstrate how survey effort has met the appropriate survey methods and met the minimum survey effort required for each of the candidate species considered for this project. This is required as outlined in Appendix K 'Requirements for a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report and a Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report' of the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 3

Columns should be added to a revised version of Table D2.2 of the BDAR that cover:

- 'Minimum survey effort requirements'
- 'Survey requirements met?' (to be answered by 'Yes', 'No' or 'Partially').

A 'Notes' column may be added, or the same text otherwise provided to explain why survey effort and survey methods used may not have met survey requirements.

4. Further assessment of the presence of koalas is required

Section 4.1.3.1 'Key Resources' of the BDAR identifies that survey requirements for the koala changed during the period that the BDAR was being prepared, and after most targeted surveys for the koala has been undertaken. Nevertheless, the survey effort outlined in the BDAR for the koala does not meet the survey requirements applicable at the time of submission. BCD recommends that for under-surveyed areas of potentially suitable koala habitat that additional surveys are undertaken, or the species is assumed to be present, or an expert report is prepared.

Recommendation 4

Further assessment should be undertaken for the potential presence of the koala where survey effort does not meet BCD's survey requirements. The additional assessment may be in the form of additional targeted threatened species survey, done in accordance with current survey guidelines, or from the provision of an expert report, or by assuming the presence of the koala in areas of suitable habitat.

5. Further information is required on the timing of surveys for threatened species

Appendix D 'Threatened Species Assessment and Survey Methodology' and the BAM Calculator file shows that the targeted surveys for some threatened species were either partially (e.g., Gang-gang Cockatoo, Eastern Pygmy Possum, and *Thesium australe*), or fully

(e.g., *Cryptostylis hunteriana*) done outside of the specified survey months. Further details are required to demonstrate that BCD's minimum survey requirements have been followed and that the minimum survey effort has been done; if not those species will require further surveys (in the appropriate months), or an assessment by an Expert Report or to be assumed to be present and offset accordingly.

Recommendation 5

Further information should be provided about the survey effort undertaken within the specified months for targeted surveys for all candidate species-credit species, and that surveys within the specified months are compared against the required survey effort. If some species have been inadequately surveyed then further surveys (done in the appropriate months), an expert report, or the species is assumed to be present and offset accordingly.

6. The common Planigale requires pitfall trapping

The survey requirements for the common Planigale (*Planigale maculata*) have not been met. The appropriate survey technique for this species is pitfall trapping however, Table 4.1 'Species-credit Species Surveys' of the BDAR states that the following survey has been conducted for common Planigale:

- Nocturnal spotlighting; and
- Remote camera survey

The Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection in BioNet states that 'surveys must be undertaken using pitfall traps.' Where that is not possible, due to rocky ground, for example, then the alternative is an expert report. BCD therefore recommends that the proponent survey for this species using pitfall traps, or provides an expert report, or assumes that the species is present in all insufficiently surveyed areas of potentially suitable habitat and provides a suitable offset. This would meet Section 5.3 'Threatened Species Survey Requirements' of the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 6

Areas of suitable habitat for the common Planigale in the subject land should be surveyed using pitfall trapping, or the species is assessed by an expert report, or that the species is assumed to be present and then offset in accordance with the Biodiversity Offset Scheme.

7. The southern Myotis species polygons do not encompass the entirety of all waterbodies

Section 4.2.2.1 'Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*)' of the BDAR outlines that habit polygon mapping for the southern Myotis was calculated on the direct impacts to the population by buffering all recorded individuals by 30 metres. This approach does not cover all waterbodies within the project site.

Under the BAM 2020, for fauna species assessed by area (as per the threatened biodiversity data collection (TBDC)), the species polygon is meant to be used to measure the area of suitable habitat on the subject land.

The '*Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats - NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method,* outlines that '*All habitat on the subject land where the subject land is within 200m of a waterbody with pools/ stretches 3m or wider including rivers, creeks, billabongs, lagoons, dams and other waterbodies on the subject land'* should be included in the species polygon for the southern Myotis.

Recommendation 7

The species and habitat polygons for the southern Myotis should be updated to include waterbodies as outlined in the BAM 2020 and associated guidance documents.

8. Exclusion of some species from assessment

Table D1 'Threatened Species Excluded from Assessment' of the BDAR provides justification for the exclusion of species from assessment. BCD notes the following regarding excluded species:

- Stephens banded snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensii*) – the TBDC notes that this species uses very old primary forest with many large old hollow bearing trees and therefore discounts this species. However, this description is provided as a general guidance and the TBDC also states that fallen timber, hollow bearing trees and areas within 500 metres of arboreal vine tangles can also provide habitat. As the Project area contains these features, the species habitat constraints, the species should not be ruled out due to lack of habitat.

- Cave-dwelling microbats (*Chalinolobus dwyeri* and Bentwings) – the BDAR does not contain enough information to quantify prescribed impacts to threatened microbats from the loss of mine shafts, and other old mine workings, and buildings in the Project area. This is required to meet Section 6.1.2 of the BAM 2020.

  Foraging *Miniopterus australis* bats were recorded on site. This species roosts in caves, tunnels, tree hollows, abandoned mines, stormwater drains, culverts, bridges, and buildings. BAM assessments that require surveys for roosting sites for this species and also require an assessment of the importance of the habitat to the migration of this species. This species is very selective for roosting habitat and will move between roosts sites depending on temporal variance. The removal of any roosting habitat should be compensated with supplementary habitat so as to not disrupt migration to the maternity roost: a significant impact to a maternity roost for this species would be considered to be a Serious and Irreversible Impact.

Recommendation 8

The assessor should not exclude the Stephens banded snake from assessment and should provide further details of potential habitat for cave-dwelling bats within the project area that could be provided by built structures and mine shafts.

9. An assessment of impacts to the water table around BAM Plot 18 may be required

Vegetation at and around BAM Plot 18, within Warkworth Sands Woodlands appears to be in a discharge zone of the local aquifer, this suggests that consideration of groundwater impacts will be required for the proposed relocation of Lemington Road in this area. During the site visit of 22 February 2023, it was noted that the vegetation in and around BAM Plot 18 included *Myriophyllum* sp., *Xyris* sp., and *Drosera burmanni*. The soil at the site was wet too, with standing water, but the presence of these wetland species suggests this is due to a local, relatively persistent source of water rather than from the heavy rain that fell before the site visit. Given that this site is downslope of part of the biodiversity offset for the Warkworth Mine, with Warkworth Sands Woodland, BCD recommends that an assessment of the local aquifer, within the sandsheet is undertaken to ensure that any development of the site will not adversely affect the aquifer and affect other areas of Warkworth Sands Woodland, by either draining the upslope section of sandsheet or blocking the flow of water.

Recommendation 9

An assessment of potential impacts to Warkworth Sand Woodland in areas adjacent to BAM Plot 18 should be undertaken if development activities in that area are likely to change local groundwater conditions.

10. Descriptions of vegetated corridors are required and how the project fits within the wider landscape

Figure 6.1 'Location of Prescribed Impacts' shows the general location of corridors within the project area. However, the BDAR does not show how the corridors in the project area fit within the wider landscape and important corridors have not been identified. This does not meet the requirements of Section 7.2.1 (c) of the BAM 2020, which requires the proponent to '*locate the proposal to avoid severing or interfering with corridors connecting different areas of habitat and migratory flight paths, to important habitat or local movement pathways.*'

Recommendation 10

The BDAR should be amended to discuss how the project fits within the wider landscape and presents a new, or revised version of Figure 6.1, or both that has clear lines that indicate probably corridors.

11. Further details are required of weed management for new areas of Warkworth Sands Woodland to be exposed to greater traffic along the re-routed Lemington Road

Table 6.4 'Assessment of Indirect Impacts' of the BDAR provides a brief discussion of indirect impacts, including from weed invasion. BCD recommends that further information is provided in relation to measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road. BCD notes that several exotic species are already present in the patch of Warkworth Sands Woodland at Archerfield (such as *Eragrostis curvula*, *Melinis repens* and *Heterotheca grandiflora*) but the patch is vulnerable to the establishment of other weeds from sandy soils nearby (such as *Bryophyllum delagoense* and *Coreopsis lanceolata*).

Recommendation 11

Further details should be provided around measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road.

12. Identify the limitations and risk of failure for measures to mitigate or management impacts

Table 5.4 'Impacts and Avoided Impacts in Easement Realignment Design' of the BDAR does not document the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts as required by Chapter 8 'Assessing the impacts of the proposal on biodiversity values' of the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 12

The BDAR should be revised include the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts, as required under the BAM 2020.

13. An assessment of likely prescribed impacts to the southern Myotis is required

The BDAR does not adequately discuss prescribed impacts in relation to southern Myotis from direct impacts to waterbodies, including dams, within the subject land.

Table 6.5 'Prescribed Impacts identified at HVO North and HVO South' discusses potential impacts to the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities, including impacts to human-made structures, impacts to connectivity, and impacts to '…water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities.' The first two potential impacts were identified as likely to occur for this project, but not the last one. Table 6.6 'Prescribed Impacts Assessment' discusses '…impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range' in relation to all threatened fauna species and native vegetation but does not discuss the likely impact on the loss of water bodies on the subject land in relation to the movement of the southern Myotis.

The BDAR should include an assessment of potential prescribed impacts of the project on the southern Myotis by the removal of water bodies in accordance with section 8.3 'Assess prescribed biodiversity impacts' in the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 13

The BDAR should be amended to include an assessment of prescribed impacts to the southern Myotis from the removal of water bodies within the subject land.

14. Further information is required about temporary and ancillary facilities associated with the project

Section 1.1.1 'HVO North' of the BDAR does not provide enough information on the likely location of ancillary or temporary construction facilities and infrastructure and the likely amount of clearing associated with them. The BDAR does not identify these areas on any maps, such as Figure 1.3 'Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project' or Figure 1.4. 'The Development Footprints HVO North and HVO South' This information is required under Section 2 'Stage 1: Biodiversity assessment' (page 5) and also Table 24 'Minimum information requirements for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report and the Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report – Stage 1: Biodiversity assessment' (page 116) of the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 14

The BDAR should be amended to provide more information on the location of temporary or ancillary construction facilities that will require additional clearing, and to show these locations on one or more maps.

15. A map of areas likely to be affected by indirect impacts is required

A map showing the location of indirect impacts from the project is required. Table A-1 'Assessment of compliance with BDAR minimum information requirements' of the BDAR states, on page A-15, that maps of indirect impact zones for the project are not applicable for this project. However, indirect impacts for the project have been identified in Section 6.2 'Indirect impacts' and described in Table 6.4 'Assessment of indirect impacts'. A map showing the location of areas of indirect impacts; specifically:

- where drawdown impacts to groundwater-dependent ecosystems are located
- where rubbish dumping on the aligned Lemington Road is a threat to any threatened species of communities
- edge effects that may impact threatened species or communities outside of the development footprint
- fugitive light, noise and dust impacts to native plant communities and threatened species.

A map, or maps, would meet the requirements of Table 25 'Minimum information requirements for the BDAR or BCAR – Stage 2: Impact assessment (biodiversity values)' (page 124) of the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 15

The BDAR should be amended to include a map, or maps of likely indirect impacts from the project in order to meet requirements of the BAM 2020.

16. Provide the assumptions and limitations to the assessment of indirect impacts

Section 6.2 'Indirect impacts' of the BDAR does not identify or describe the limitations and assumptions of the assessment of indirect impacts for the project. This is required to meet Section 8.2.1 (c) of 'Assess indirect impacts on native vegetation, threatened ecological communities, threatened species and their habitat' for the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 16

The BDAR should include a discussion on the limitations and assumptions in the assessment of indirect impacts of the project to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020.

17. Further information is required to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020

The BDAR does not include all of the information required by BAM 2020, including:

- The BAM 2020 assesses the biodiversity values of the 'subject land', however the BDAR does not define the 'subject land' for this project.
- Figures 2.1 'Site Map', 2.2A 'Location Map – HVO North' and 2.2B 'Location map - HVO South' do not show dams and mine sites on a Map as required under Section 3.1.3 'Identify landscape features' of the BAM 2020
- Maps of Native Vegetation Extent are not presented at < 1:10,000 scale, as required by Section 4.1 'Map of native vegetation extent on the subject land' of the BAM 2020 (The maps of native vegetation extent in APPENDIX C are presented at a scale of 1:28,000)
- Threatened Ecological Communities that are dependent on or use habitat features associated with prescribed impacts are not listed, as required under Section 6.1 of the BAM 2020.

Recommendation 17

BCD recommends that additional information is provided to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020 as outlined in this letter of advice.

Flooding and flood risk

18. The proponent has not demonstrated that there will be no adverse flood impacts on the township of Singleton

The Water Assessment, prepared by Engeny Water Management 2022 (Appendix K of the Environmental Impact Statement) has not assessed flood impacts to the township of Singleton. This was justified by:

- The town is well downstream of the Project site and area of interest.
- The model intentionally lacks resolution in town as it is well beyond the expected area of interest.
- Avoidance of duplication with previous and ongoing Singleton Council flood study models.

- Comparison to the Council study (WMB, 2007) indicates the Project flood extents in town are more extensive.
- Model results in Singleton were found to be sensitive to the downstream boundary, which could result in changes to flood characteristics that would be purely a result of model anomalies rather than real impacts.

The township of Singleton is highly vulnerable to flooding. Residential properties in Dunolly and Glenridding are inundated in a 10% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood event. And a number of low-lying properties in Singleton begin to be inundated in a 5% AEP flood event. Consequently, the proponent must demonstrate that there will be no impacts to these residential areas.

BCD does not accept the proponent's justification for not assessing the impacts to the Singleton township as:

- The Singleton township is a key area of interest.
- Avoidance of duplication of flood levels cannot be used as a justification for not assessing flood impacts to residential properties.
- Flood levels that are sensitive to adopted downstream boundary conditions are a strong indicator of underlying issues in the hydraulic model, such as not extending the model far enough downstream, or modelling instabilities. Further, BCD notes that sensitivity testing for the both the BMT 2022 and WBM 2007 flood studies found that the downstream boundary water surface slope had negligible impact on predicted flood levels.

Using a model that makes conservative estimates of flood levels, does not indicate that predicted flood impacts will be conservative.

Recommendation 18

BCD recommends that the proponents flood model is peer reviewed to identify the cause of boundary condition instabilities and assess the model's suitability for assessing flood impacts. Or alternatively, the proponent seeks Singleton Council's permission to use the TULFOW model developed for the 2022 Singleton Flood Study.

19. Flood impacts less than 20 mm have not been assessed

The proponents flood impact assessment mapping does not show impacts less than 20mm. This effectively ignores any afflux less than 20 mm. However, this criterion is not consistent with other similar major projects where the maximum afflux of above-floor inundation was 10 mm.

To allow the flood impacts to be assessed, the proponent must provide mapping that shows flood impacts down to 10 mm. Where the proponent considers that achieving a maximum afflux of 10 mm is not possible or practical then justification should be provided to ensure the impacts are well understood and appropriately justified. Any justification would need to:

- Identify all residential properties that transition from not flooded to flooded in a 1% AEP event.
- Identify any sensitive receivers. These are land uses that:
  - Require ongoing functionality during and after a flood event such as hospitals and emergency services facilities.
  - Require high levels of assistance with evacuation, such as seniors housing, group homes, boarding houses, hostels, caravan parks, educational establishments, centre-based childcare facilities and hospitals

    - Store hazardous materials that pose environmental and health risks if exposed to flood waters.
- Identify impacts on the flood protection provided by key infrastructure, including levees and the role they play in flood protection for the community, such as the Singleton levee.
- Impacts on the frequency of flooding in smaller events that the 1% AEP event
- Demonstrate that there are no practical alternative design measures that could further mitigate impacts for that location.
- Demonstrate that the proposed afflux is not likely to result in unsustainable social and economic costs to the community as a consequence of flooding.
- Impacts on the frequency, depth and timing of inundation of local evacuation routes and associated impacts on existing emergency management arrangements.

Recommendation 19

BCD recommends that the proponent provides mapping that shows flood impacts down to 10 mm and clearly identifies all private land and residential dwellings where flood impacts are predicted to occur.

20. The flood impact mapping does not show private properties where impacts are predicted to occur

The proponents flood impact assessment mapping does not show private properties where impacts are predicted to occur.

Recommendation 20

BCD recommends that the proponent provides mapping that clearly identifies all private land and residential dwellings where flood impacts are predicted to occur.

21. Changes in the frequency and duration of flooding has not been assessed

The flood impact mapping only considers changes to flood depths and velocities. However, understanding and managing changes in flood behaviour resulting from major projects requires consideration of a broad range of aspects to understand the potential impacts on the community and identify how these impacts could be addressed. This goes beyond considering afflux in a design event, such as the 1% AEP flood. It should also consider changes in the frequency and duration of flooding as key indicators of adverse flood impacts on the community.

Recommendation 21

BCD recommends that the proponent assesses the change to the frequency and duration of flooding on all impacted private property.

22. Insufficient information has been provided to determine the extent of flooding impacts on private property

The flood assessment, prepared by Engeny Water Management 2022, identifies that 31 properties, not owned by JV partners, will have adverse flood affluxes in the range of 20-50mm. However, the affected properties are not identified on the flood impact mapping provided. Consequently, it is difficult for landholders to understand the impacts to their dwellings and property.

Recommendation 22

BCD recommends that the proponent provides mapping, at a suitable scale, such that all impacted private landholders can clearly understand the predicted change in flood behaviour on their land. This mapping should include property boundaries and residential dwellings.

23. Appropriate conditions of consent are required to ensure that adversely impacted landowners are equitably compensated

Where material impacts to private land or residential dwellings cannot be mitigated, then the proponent should consult with the affected landholders on appropriate compensation.

Recommendation 23

BCD recommends that conditions of consent are required to ensure that flood impacted landowners are equitably compensated.

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Our ref:DOC23/995817
Your ref: SSD-11826621 and SSD-11826681

Joe Fittell
Team Leader
Energy and Resource Assessments
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Joe

Subject: Response to Submissions - HVO Open Cut Coal Continuation Project

I refer to your request on the Major Projects Portal on 14 November 2023 seeking advice from the Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Group (BCS) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on the Response to Submissions (RTS) for the proposed Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project. BCS notes that the project comprises the Hunter Valley Operations South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621) and the Hunter Valley North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826681), both of which are covered by the same Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

We have reviewed the RTS against the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) provided by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to the proponent on 11 March 2021 and BCS's advice on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provided to you on 13 March 2023.

BCS considers that further work is required for the proponent to meet the Secretary's requirements for the proposed Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project.

In BCS's view the proponent should be required to:

- Further consider and assess the potential serious and irreversible impact (SAII) to microbat entities.
- Either complete additional flora surveys d to meet relevant guideline requirements, engage an expert report or assume presence.
- Amend the southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*) species polygon to include all areas of proposed impact within a 200 metre (m) buffer of any medium to large permanent creeks, rivers or other waterbodies.
- Provide further information and surveys for species candidate species.
- Provide additional information to determine the prescribed impact related to the mine rehabilitation areas and Category 1 – Exempt lands.
- Complete Section 6.1.4 and 8.3.4 of the *Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020* (BAM) and assess this within the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR).
- Amend Section 5.5 of the BDAR to include proposed mitigation measures for impacts to man-made structures, non-native vegetation and hydrological processes. BCS recommends an adaptive management plan be provided for areas of predicted drawdown.
- Amend the BDAR to specify why the future vegetation integrity (VI) loss does not equate to zero, and how remaining attributes will be maintained.

- Amend the BAM-Calculator (BAM-C) to accurately reflect site values and targeted species surveys completed.

BCS has recommended further actions to address these remaining issues in Attachment A.

BCS's summary and review of the additional and appropriate measures for minimising SAII risk is in **Attachment B**. The proponent should further develop additional and appropriate measures in consultation with BCS.

BCS requests that the Condition of Approval specifies that the proponent be required to develop all plans related to biodiversity, flooding or coastal management in consultation with, and to the satisfaction of, BCS.

If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact BCS via huntercentralcoast@environment.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Joe Thompson
Director Hunter Central Coast Branch
Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Group

19 June 2024

Attachment A - BCS comments on Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project - Response to Submissions

Attachment B – BCS comments on Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project - Additional and Appropriate Measures

Attachment 1

BCS Comments on Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project – Response to Submissions

In preparing this advice BCS has reviewed the following documents:

- Biodiversity Development Assessment Report – Hunter Valley Continuation Project prepared by Umwelt dated November 2023 (referred to as 'BDAR')
- Addendum to the HVO Continuation Project Biodiversity Development Assessment Report: Additional Targeted Surveys prepared by Umwelt on 14 February 2024 (referred to as 'Addendum report')
- Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (SSD- 11826681 and SSD 11826621) - Biodiversity and groundwater clarifications prepared by EMM dated 16 May 2024 (referred to as 'Groundwater and SAII Report')

Detailed feedback about the applicant's response to the BCS EIS submission is provided in the table below.

Key Assessment Issues

1.	***Serious and Irreversible Impacts (SAII)***	<u>Threatened microbats</u> Table D.1 of the BDAR states "*Habitat searches undertaken in…2020 did not record the habitat constraints required…Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts…did not result in identification of roosting microbats*." However, the BDAR identifies that suitable habitat such as old buildings, mine shafts and workings exist at the site. Microbats will roost in buildings that are in frequent use and therefore all buildings should be treated as potential roosting and breeding habitat for the target species. The BDAR should also detail the methodology used for potential roost assessment (i.e. specific methodology used for culvert searches). The BDAR does not include an assessment of SAII microbat species. This is required under Section 9.1 of the *Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020* (BAM) <u>Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland and Warkworth Sands Woodland Ecological Endangered Communities</u> Section 7.16(3) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) states that the Minister for Planning is "*required to determine whether there are any additional and appropriate measures that will minimise those impacts if consent or approval is to be granted*", if a SAII is considered likely. BCS's previous advice of 13 March 2023 stated that a SAII is likely for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC), based on the proposed project footprint. BCS notes that the revised footprint avoided an additional 4.9 hectares (ha) of impacts to Warkworth Sands Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC), with the proposed impact now equating to 0.3ha. The revised footprint does not include further avoidance to Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland CEEC. BCS recommends that the proponent develop additional and appropriate measures, in accordance with section 7.16(3) of the BC Act, that are commensurate with the residual impact of the project on both CEECs. This is discussed further in **Attachment B**.

		Recommended action: *The BDAR should be amended to include the detailed methodology used for potential roost assessment (i.e. specific methodology used for culvert searches).* *The BDAR should be amended to include a SAII impact assessment for microbats in accordance with section 9.1 of the BAM.*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

2.	***The effectiveness of threatened flora survey needs to be demonstrated***	Section 4.4 of *Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method* outlines that a two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach may be used within areas of suitable habitat greater than 50ha. The proponent should demonstrate that more than 50ha of habitat exists within the site for this method to be applied. BCS's previous advice of 13 March 2024 recommended that suitable habitat be displayed in hectares by vegetation zone and plant community type (PCT). Section 4.1.3.1 of the BDAR outlines that the proponent did not use vegetation zones and condition of PCTs to determine suitable habitat. However, the BDAR does describe that suitable habitat was considered by stating that some survey was undertaken in '*exotic condition zones*' and areas with '*VI scores below the minimum offsetting threshold*' however, these areas were '*determined to be substantially degraded and highly unlikely to contain threatened flora species*'. The BDAR does not state which species are being referred to or provide reasoning for this approach. As outlined in section 5.2.3 of the BAM, the assessor must include a description in the BDAR of the microhabitats assessed as required by the species (this must be based on evidence such as published literature) and the assessor must provide their reasons for determining a candidate species credit species is unlikely to have suitable habitat on the subject land (or specific vegetation zones). Table 4.1 of the BDAR demonstrates that the only PCT within the development footprint more than 50 ha is PCT 1691: Narrow-leaved ironbark – Grey Box grassy woodland of the central and upper Hunter. However, the BDAR uses the grid search method in PCT 1692: Bull Oak grassy woodland of the central Hunter Valley and discontiguous areas of PCT 1691. PCT 1692 only equates to 35.6 ha of the development footprint and so this PCT does not offer greater than 50 ha of potential habitat (see figure 1 below). The discontiguous areas of PCT 1691 do not consists of areas greater than 50 ha (see figure 2 below).

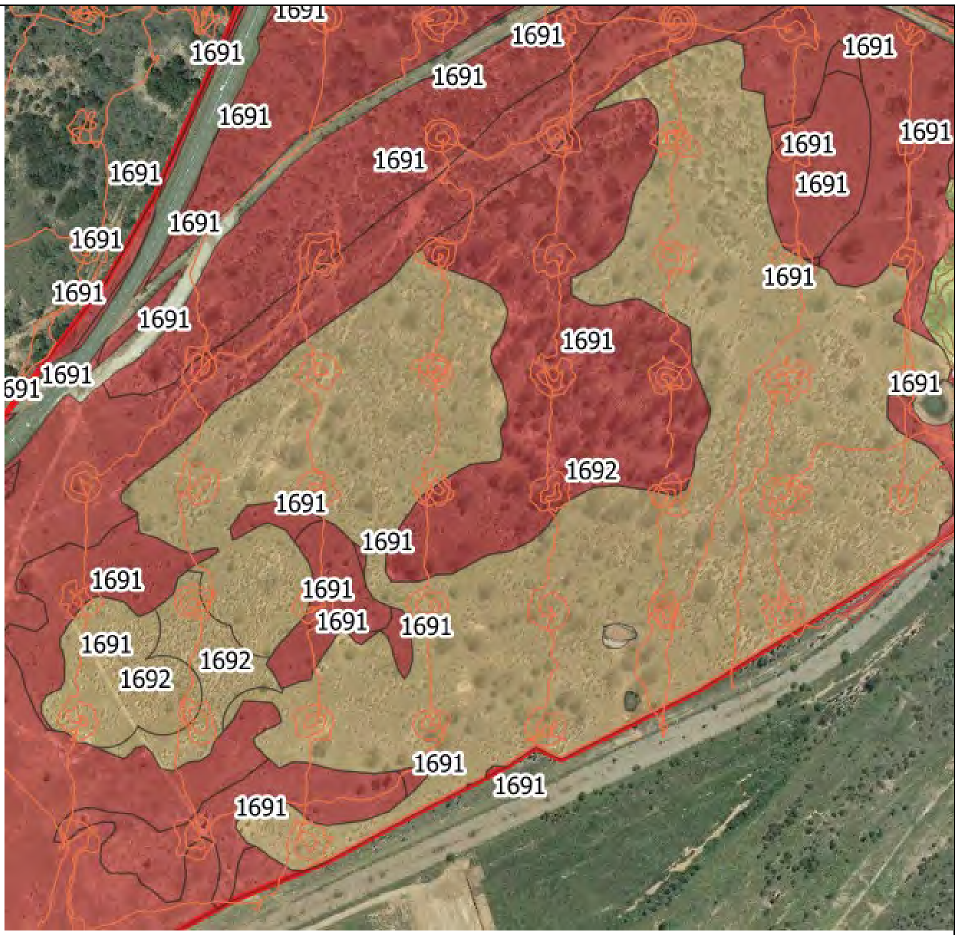


Figure 1

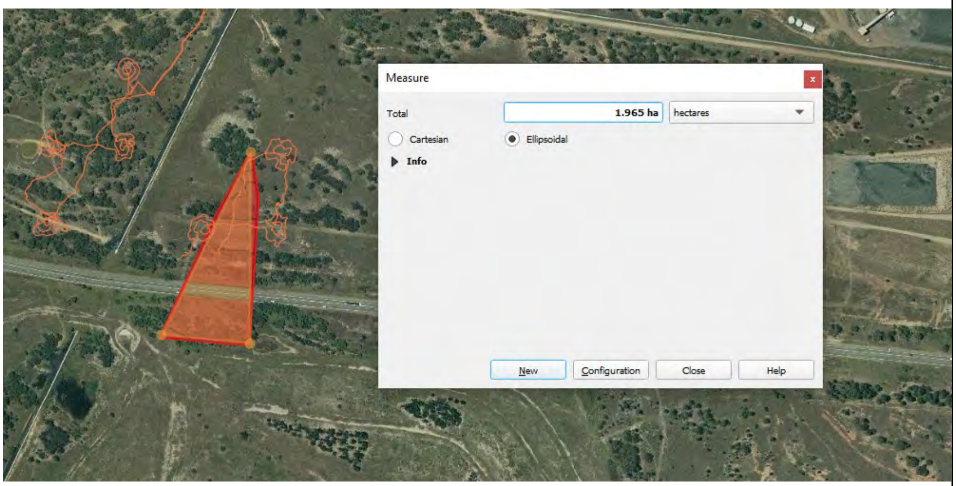


Figure 2

There are also areas of PCT 1691 that have not been surveyed at all (see figure 3 below).

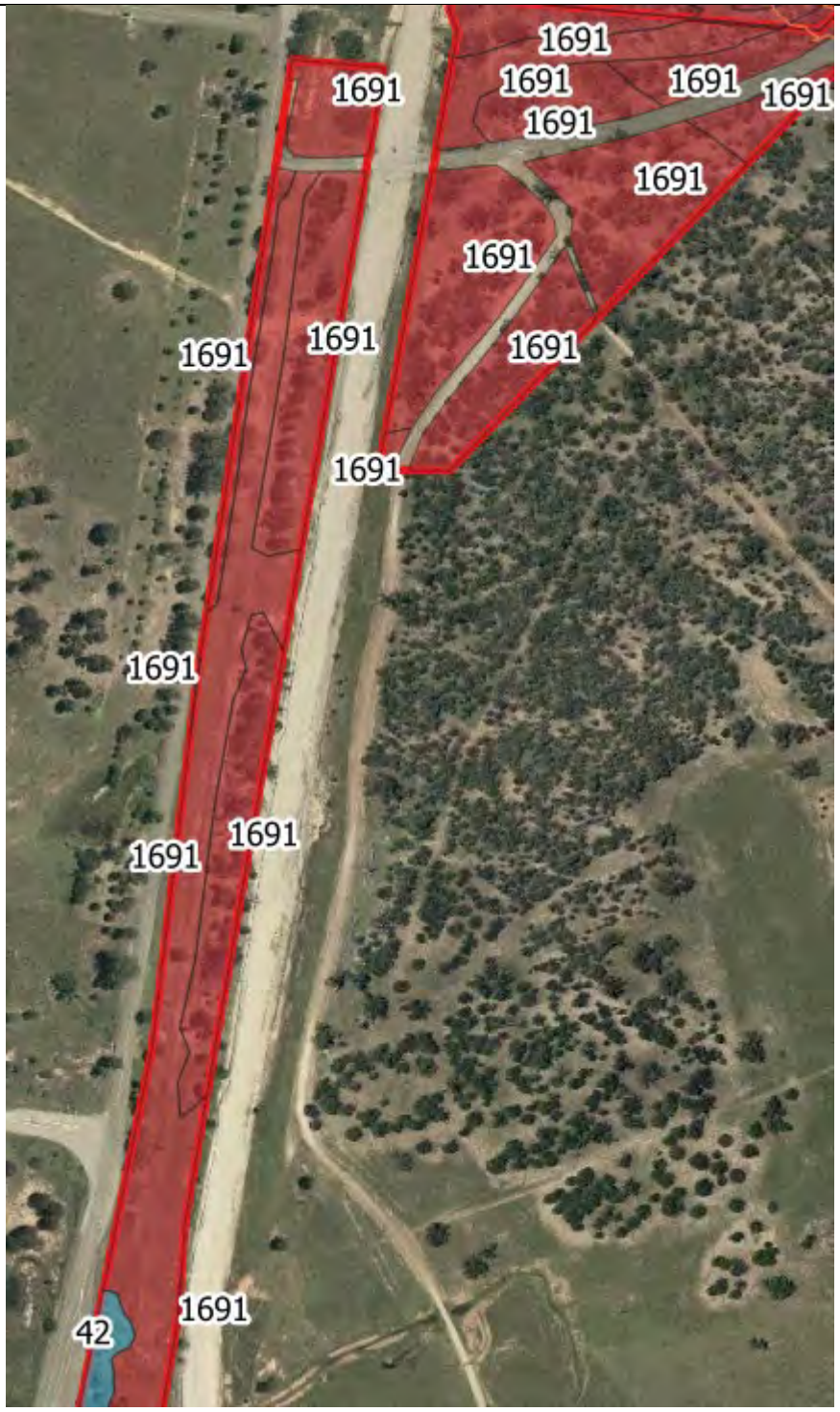


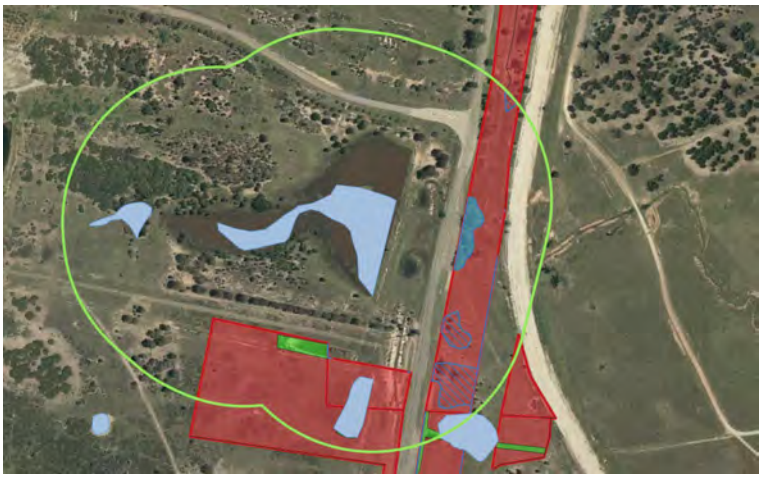
Figure 3

This means BCS does not consider that the proponent has surveyed targeted threatened flora in accordance with relevant guidelines and the Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection (TBDC).

Recommended action:

The proponent should undertake flora surveys that meet the requirements of relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Otherwise the proponent may choose to engage an expert to prepare a report on why alternative approaches are appropriate or assume presence.

	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

3.	***Southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*) polygons are incomplete***	The *'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats - NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method*, outlines that 'All habitat on the subject land where the subject land is within 200m of a waterbody with pools/ stretches 3m or wider including rivers, creeks, billabongs, lagoons, dams and other waterbodies on the subject land' should be included in the species polygon for the southern myotis. However, the polygons provided in the BDAR only partially include the habitat to be impacted as seen in the example in Figure 4 below. This example shows a waterbody (light blue polygon), a 200m buffer of the waterbody (lime green polygon line), the project footprint (red polygon) and myotis species polygon (blue hatching).  **Figure 4** As stated in the guideline, the polygon should include all proposed areas of impact surrounding the 200m buffer. **Recommended action:** *The southern myotis species polygon should be amended to include all areas of proposed impact within a 200m buffer of any medium to large permanent creeks, rivers or other waterbodies.*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

4.	***Further information is required on the for threatened species survey effort***	Austral toadflax (*Thesium australe*) and leafless tongue orchid (*Cryptostylis hunteriana*) Section 4.2 of the *Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method* sets out the maximum distance between parallel field traverses. Table 1 of this guide states that the maximum traversal distance for orchids and herbs within open vegetation is 10m, and 5m within dense vegetation. The data package provided to BCS on 13 March 2024 shows distances of up to 17.5m between field transects within dense vegetation (see

figure 5 below). This does not meet the requirements of the guideline. The proponent should complete additional surveys to address this.

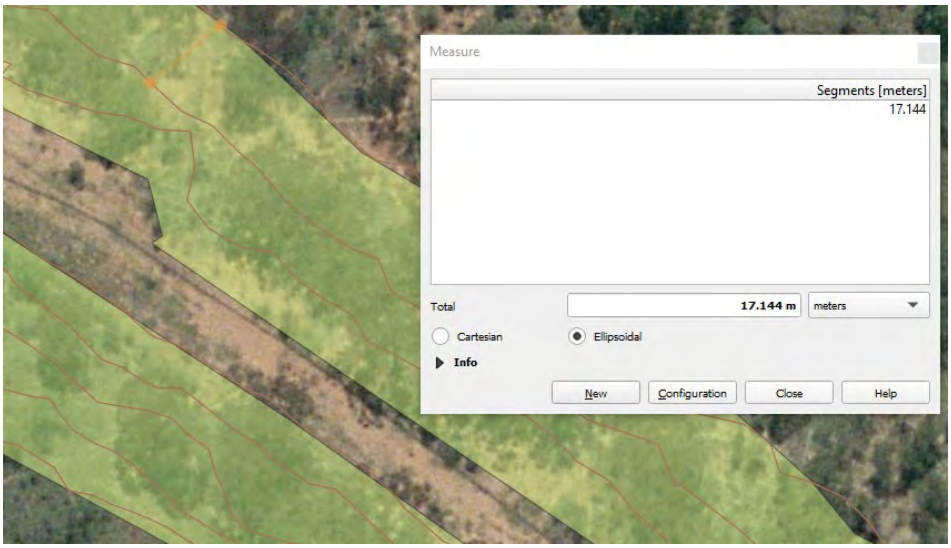


Figure 5

<u>Gang-gang cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) and glossy-black cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)</u>

The TBDC listings for the gang-gang cockatoo and glossy-black cockatoo require the potential nest trees within the site to be identified and monitored during breeding season. In lieu of NSW guidelines, the TBDC states 'assessors must undertake a species survey using best practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys.'

The shapefile *FAUNA_Umwelt_DiurnalCallPlaybackBirdSurveyLocations* lists regent honeyeater and swift parrot as the target bird species for surveys conducted in August 2023. Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR states targeted surveys were completed for gang-gang cockatoo in October 2023, however, the shapefile does not include track data from October 2023.

The proponent should provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it has done targeted surveys for glossy-black cockatoos and gang-gang cockatoos, and that the method can be replicated.

<u>Stephen's banded snake (*Hoplocephalus stephensii*)</u>

The *Threatened reptiles: Biodiversity Assessment Method survey guide* states that a minimum 120 person-minute survey is required to be replicated 4 times. It also states that suitable habitat for this species is '*hollow bearing trees, arboreal vine tangles, fallen/standing dead timber including logs (or within 500 m of these habitats)*".

Table 2.2 of the Addendum report states that the proponent spent a total of 7 nights surveying over a total of 16 person hours. It also states that "*Nocturnal road surveys were also undertaken for opportunistic sightings, however these were not in accordance with the survey guidelines as they were not undertaken within suitable habitat and exceeded the required travelling speed of 5 kilometres per hour at times*."

		Section 2.3 of the Addendum Report also notes that the "*small size of the patches of suitable habitat within associated PCTs precluded the necessity to survey within 500 metres of suitable habitat*". Shapefile *ECO_4948_Umwelt_SBS_SpotlightingTransects_231219_GDA20z56* does not include legible dates and timing of surveys, it also includes the road surveys within the transects despite the Addendum Report acknowledging that the road surveys were not conducted in accordance with guidelines. The proponent should provide a shapefile that clearly defines spotlight surveys and the date and time of surveys. Given the information available, BCS cannot determine if surveys met relevant guideline requirements. BCS also does not agree that the presence of small patches of habitat 'precludes' surveying within 500m of suitable habitat. The guideline states that surveys should be conducted within 500m of suitable habitat. <u>Pale-headed snake (*Hoplocephalus bitorquatus*)</u> Section 4.2 of the *Biodiversity Assessment Method Operational Manual – Stage 1* states that the TBDC is updated regularly to include the best available information and to add new listings under the BC Act. Therefore the BDAR should be consistent with the TBDC on the date it is finalised. As such, pale-headed snake surveys should comply with the *Threatened reptiles: Biodiversity Assessment Method survey guide* which requires a minimum spotlight survey effort of 120 person minutes for 4 nights and 72 funnel trap nights. This means the proponent needs to do additional survey for this species. <u>Eastern pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*)</u> Section 5.3.2(c) of the BAM states that assessors should 'use best-practice methods that can be replicated for repeat surveys, if the Department has not published guidelines.' BCS considers that Commonwealth guidelines provide best-practice methods in lieu of the Department releasing survey guidelines for eastern pygmy possum. The Commonwealth's *Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals* recommends: cameras be deployed for at least 14 nights, and approximately 10 cameras be deployed per hectare Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR notes 9 camera traps were commissioned over the 609.5 ha development footprint. Considering the above, additional camera traps should be deployed to comply with the Commonwealth guidelines. <u>Green and golden bell from (*Litoria aurea*) and green-thighed frog (*Litoria brevipalmata*)</u> Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR states that green and golden bell frog and green-thighed frog surveys included a total of 8 person hours over 4 consecutive nights across 17 dams, drainage lines or rover locations. The *NSW Survey Guide for Threatened Frogs* requires the surveyor to survey for a minimum 480 mins per 500m transect with each site repeated 4 times. Additionally, the green-thighed frog requires surveys to be done after flooding rain. Given this, the proponent should do additional amphibian surveys to comply with relevant survey guidelines.

		Raptors Table D2 of Appendix D of the BDAR states that targeted bird of prey searches were conducted throughout the site. The data package did not include a GIS file including raptor transects. The proponent should provide this to allow BCS to determine if surveys were conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines. Forest owls The shapefile *FAUNA_Umwelt_HollowBearing Trees_231220* includes a visual record of a barn owl (*Tyto alba*). Barn owls calls are very difficult to differentiate from masked owls (*Tyto novaehollandiae*). There are several masked owl BioNet records within and surrounding the footprint which indicates that the recording could have been a masked owl. BCS discussed this with the consultant during a site inspection on 19 February 2024. The proponent should provide further evidence (i.e. photographs) to determine presence of barn owl and absence of masked owl. If the proponent cannot provide further evidence, the precautionary approach should be applied and masked owl assumed present. BCS also notes best-practice survey methodology for forest owls is night monitoring of each potential nest location for a minimum of two nights, with surveys commencing 30 minutes prior to dusk and continuing for 60 minutes after sunset. Microbats Section 4.2.2 of the BDAR states 'large-eared pied-bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*) and little bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus australis*) were positively recorded, however no areas containing breeding habitat occur'. Appendix H of the BDAR also states there are 'no mine shaftings, workings, or old buildings within the Development Footprints'. BCS has analysed aerial imagery and made observations during the site inspection on 19 February 2024. This shows that the proposed footprint contains buildings, which is noted as roosting habitat within the TBDC for the large-eared pied-bat. The proponent should do additional surveys, in accordance with the *'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats,* within all building/structure proposed for removal. Table D1 of Appendix D of the BDAR notes targeted microbat searches of culverts were completed as part of the Commonwealth assessment. All survey information in relation to BC Act listed species should be included in the BDAR. The above species are also both considered SAII entities. This means the proponent needs to do an assessment for SAII in line with the requirements set out in section 9.1 of the BAM. **Recommended action:** *Additional surveys should be done for Austral toadflax (Thesium australe) and leafless tongue orchid (Cryptostylis hunteriana)* *The proponent should provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that targeted surveys for gang-gang cockatoo (Calyptorhynchus completed) and glossy-black cockatoo (Callocephalon fimbriatum) have been undertaken, and that the method can be replicated.* *The proponent should provide a shapefile for stephen's banded-snake (Hoplocephalus stephensii) with the spotlight surveys only and include*

		the specific date and time of surveys so that it can be established that surveys were conducted in accordance with the guideline. *Additional surveys should be done for the proposed road upgrade to meet BAM requirements for the pale-headed snake (Hoplocephalus bitorquatus), eastern pygmy possum (Cercartetus nanus), green and golden bell from (Litoria aurea), green-thighed frog (Litoria brevipalmata) and microbats. Species surveys should be conducted in accordance with relevant guidelines and the TBDC. Any proposed deviations from species survey must be first approved by BCS.* *The GIS data for raptor transects should be provided to BCS.* *Further evidence should be provided (i.e. photographs) to determine presence of barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and absence of masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*). If further evidence cannot be provided, the precautionary approach should be applied and masked owl assumed present.* *Additional surveys for microbat species should be completed in accordance with the 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats within all building/structure proposed for removal*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

5.	***Prescribed impacts have not been adequately assessed***	Prescribed additional biodiversity impacts (prescribed impacts) must be assessed as part of the Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS), in line with clause 6.1 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017. Prescribed impacts relevant to this proposal (including direct and indirect impacts) are impacts: on the habitat of threatened entities including: karst, caves, crevices, cliffs, rocks and other geological features of significance,or human-made structures, or non-native vegetation on areas connecting threatened species habitat, such as movement corridors that affect water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened entities (including from subsidence or upsidence from underground mining) Section 4.3.4 of the *Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 2* outlines that the location of prescribed impacts, including polygons identifying the extent of the impact, must be mapped on the Site and Location maps included in the BDAR. Section 6.1.2 of the BAM requires that for non-native vegetation, a BDAR must: provide a description of the type of human-made structure or non-native vegetation habitat prepare a list of threatened species that use these features as habitat

		describe how each threatened species could, or does, use the human-made structure or non-native vegetation as habitat (based on published literature and other reliable sources). Approximately 356 ha of Category 1 - Exempt land and 1,153 ha of mine rehabilitation would be impacted by the proposal. Table 6.6 of the BDAR lists hunter valley delma (*Delma vescolineata*) as the only threatened entity likely to inhabit Category 1 – Exempt lands. It is likely additional threatened species would use the 1,153ha of mine rehabilitation. The proponent should provide additional information so that BCS can fully understand the prescribed impacts related to the mine rehabilitation areas. This should include: the vegetation types and formations within the mine rehabilitation areas all habitat features within the mine rehabilitation areas and Category 1 – Exempt lands details of targeted threatened species surveys completed within the mine rehabilitation area to determine presence of threatened species The BDAR currently does not include information on the PCT/Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) or threatened entities which exist or may use the areas of predicted drawdown outside of the development footprint. Section 2.1 of the Groundwater and SAII Report states that the "*groundwater drawdown spatial information provided to BCD represents the predicted maximum cumulative alluvial drawdown. This predicted drawdown is due to mining effects from a number of approved mining operations within the groundwater model domain*" and that the "*10 m drawdown contours evidenced within are not a result of the Project*". Section 4.3.5 of the *Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 2* (BAM Ops – Stage 2) states that cumulative impacts from the proposed development and other large-scale or similar developments within the region should be considered and discussed in the BDAR. Neither the BDAR or the Groundwater and SAII Report consider the impact to water quality in groundwater discharges given that the aquifers would no longer be confined systems. The BDAR should consider the short term and long term impact of altered baseflow and stream flows to the PCTs and threatened species within the area. The proponent should: amend the BDAR to consider cumulative impacts, with section 6.1.4 and 8.3.4 of the BAM completed and assessed provide GIS shapefiles of the PCT/TECs within the areas of predicted drawdown amend Section 5.5 of the BDAR to include proposed mitigation measures for impacts to man-made structures, non-native vegetation and hydrological processes provide an adaptive management plan be provided for areas of predicted drawdown in line with Section 8.5 of the BAM outlines that an adaptive management plan should be used to address impacts that are infrequent or difficult to measure **Recommended action:**

		Additional information is required to determine the prescribed impact related to the mine rehabilitation areas and Category 1 – Exempt lands. Information should include: *the vegetation types and formations within the mine rehab areas* *all habitat features within the mine rehabilitation areas and Category 1 – Exempt lands* *details of targeted threatened species surveys undertaken within the mine rehabilitation area to determine presence of threatened species* *Section 6.1.4 and 8.3.4 of the BAM should be completed and assessed within the BDAR. The proponent should provide GIS shapefiles of the PCT/TECs within the areas of predicted drawdown.* *Section 5.5 of the BDAR should be amended to include proposed mitigation measures for impacts to man-made structures, non-native vegetation and hydrological processes. BCS recommends an adaptive management plan be provided for areas of predicted drawdown.*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

6.	***Identify the limitations and risk of failure for measures to mitigate or management impacts***	The proponent has amended Section 5.4 of the BDAR to include a statement suggesting mitigation strategies are well known and represent a low risk of failure. Section 8.4.2 (b) (c) of the BAM specifically requires the a proponent to: identify any measures for which there is risk of failure evaluate the risk and consequence of any impacts likely to remain after mitigation measures are applied The proponent must provide the above for each proposed mitigation measure. The BDAR should be amended to include the above. **Recommended action:** The BDAR should be amended to include the following: identify any measures for which there is risk of failure; and evaluate the risk and consequence of any impacts likely to remain after mitigation measures are applied
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

7.	***Further information is required to demonstrate the future vegetation integrity (VI) score in the BAM***	As set out in section 8.1.1 of the BAM, the value of the attributes in the future can be amended to reflect the impacts from partially clearing a vegetation zone, including areas such as asset protection zones and easements. The BAM also states that the assessor must map these areas of the vegetation zone as a separate management zone, refer to these areas in the BDAR, and in the BDAR specify how the remaining attributes will be maintained. If it is likely these attributes will continue to degrade, the BDAR should assume full loss. And the BAM specifies that

	Calculator (BAM-C)	the future value of an attribute must not be higher than the current observed value for that attribute. The future value for each attribute must be 0 when a proposal will clear that attribute or all the vegetation in the development footprint, or equivalent area for other types of proposals on the subject land. The proposal's BAM-C file shoes that multiple management zones have a total VI loss that does not equate to zero. The reasons for this should be explained in the BDAR. **Recommended action:** *The BDAR should be amended to specify why the future VI loss does not equate to zero, and how remaining attributes will be maintained.* *The BDAR should include a figure demonstrating each management zone.*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

8.	***Further information is required for BAM-C ecosystem credit species***	The BDAR does not include microbats and birds as confirmed predicted species from grassland vegetation zones even though this was in the BDAR submitted with the EIS. The BAM allows ecosystem species to be removed if they do not meet any one of the criteria outlined in section 5.2.1.2 (a-f) of the BAM. However, the BAM requires that if any past surveys of the subject land have recorded the presence of a threatened species or it has been incidentally observed on site, the species must be assessed regardless of whether the relevant criteria have been met. The BDAR does not justify excluding microbats or birds in grassland vegetation zones. BCS requests the BDAR be amended to include justification for excluding ecosystem credit species, in line with the requirements of the BAM. **Recommended action:** *The BDAR should be amended to include justification for exclusion for ecosystem credit species per the BAM.*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

9.	***Further information is required for BAM-C species credit species***	The proponent has removed the pink-tailed legless lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) from the assessment citing an absence of rocky areas. However, BCS observed rocky areas within the footprint during our site inspection on 19 February 2024. As the habitat constraint exists within the development footprint, the proponent should not exclude this from its assessment. The proponent needs to do targeted surveys for pink-tailed legless lizard. The proponent also excluded the stephens' banded snake, large-eared pied bat and both *Miniopterus* species as confirmed candidate species. However, each species were targeted for surveys. The BAM-C should accurately reflect site values and surveys undertaken.

		Recommended action: *Targeted surveys are required for pink-tailed legless lizard.* *The BAM-C should be amended to accurately reflect site values and targeted species surveys undertaken.*
	Extent and Timing	Pre-determination

Attachment B

BCS comments on Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project - Additional and Appropriate Measures

In preparing this advice BCS has reviewed the following documents:

- Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project (SSD- 11826681 and SSD 11826621) - Biodiversity and groundwater clarifications prepared by EMM dated 16 May 2024 (hereafter referred to as 'Groundwater and SAII Report')

In accordance with Section 7.16(3) of the BC Act, if the Minister for Planning is of the opinion that a State Significant Development proposal is likely to have a serious and irreversible impact (SAII) on biodiversity values, the consent authority must take those impacts into consideration in determining whether to grant consent or approval. They must also determine whether there are any additional and appropriate measures that will minimise those impacts if consent or approval is to be granted. BCS may provide advice and help in developing suitable additional and appropriate measures, at the request of the consent authority.

'Minimising' an impact is recognised in the 'avoid, minimise, offset' hierarchy established by the BC Act. It requires, firstly, that appropriate and sufficient steps be taken by the proponent to avoid the impact in full, or if the impacts cannot be avoided, then to minimise impacts to biodiversity values (including likely SAII), before the proponent adopts measures to offset residual impacts on biodiversity values.

Where the Minister for Planning has determined a project is likely to result in a SAII, and the consent authority approves the application, the BC Act sets out a requirement that proponents commit to additional and appropriate measures as part of a condition of consent, and that the condition:

- Describes the measure proposed, including details on the quantum of area in hectares for any land-based measure and/or funding amount.
- Specifies any mechanism, program or action proposed to deliver the measure.
- Specifies the timing within which the measure must be delivered.
- Specifies any ongoing monitoring or management measures associated with the measure

The proponent for the project has proposed additional and appropriate measure to minimise SAII. Our evaluation of this proposal and recommendations for the consent authority are set out in the table below. The below recommendations are specific to this proposal only and should not be considered as precedent.

SAII Entity	SAII Quantum	Proposed Additional and Appropriate Measure	BCS comments and recommendations on Additional and Appropriate Measures proposal
Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC	The project would impact up to 1.2 ha of the community. Consistent with SAII Principle 1 and 2	The Groundwater and SAII Report refers to a 6ha area which is located adjacent to remnant areas of Hunter Floodplain Red Gum EEC. The Groundwater and SAII Report includes the following actions: • Fencing and access control: Establish and maintain fencing to exclude stock and support the expansion of the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC over time. • Passive regeneration: the proponent will carry out passive regeneration actions to support river red gum natural recruitment. This includes removing stock, restricting access by stock, vehicles and people, weeding and controlling feral animals. • Assisted revegetation: Assisted regeneration is necessary to establish a diverse, native understorey and groundcover in the river red gum woodland. This includes supplementary planting of native grasses, forbs and shrubs tubestock and seeds. It may also include ripping the soil and weed control. • Weed and pest control: Implementing an appropriate weed and pest control program, and selecting targeted species based on the results of ecological monitoring. • Ecological Monitoring: Designing and implementing an updated ecological monitoring	In response to the Groundwater and SAII Report, the proponent has not provided any information about the vegetation condition within the 6ha site or its equivalency with the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum EEC. If the proponent provided evidence on the current vegetation condition and restoration actions on this site, it would provide further certainty to the consent authority on: • the extent of Box Gum Woodland CEEC within the proposed additional and appropriate measure site • the likelihood of success for any proposed restoration actions. BCS recommends the consent authority does not allow any additional credit generation for candidate threatened species within the nominated additional and appropriate measures area as the Final Determination for the community is broadly inclusive of all associated threatened species.

		program that will assess the success of the rehabilitation and restoration strategy, as well as inform ongoing management actions.	
Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC	The project would impact up to 0.6 ha of the community. Consistent with SAII Principle 3	The Groundwater and SAII Report refers to a 2.3 ha area which is recognised as 'possible Warkworth Sands Woodland'. The area is located within the proposed South Lemington BSA site. The Groundwater and SAII Report includes the following actions: • Carefully thinning bulloak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) where this is the dominant canopy species. • Planting species characteristic to Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC (e.g. Angophora floribunda, Banksia integrifolia, Brachyloma daphnoides, Hibbertia linearis, Pimelea linifolia, Grevillea montana, Acacia filicifolia, Pteridium esculentum and Imperata cylindrica). • Implementing active weed management, ensuring exotic species are not impacting the improvement of native species richness. • Developing a Rehabilitation and Restoration Management Plan and submitting this to the Planning Secretary for approval at least two years prior to the planned disturbance of Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC.	In response to the Groundwater and SAII Report, the proponent should provide further information on the vegetation condition within the proposed 2.3 ha area. BCS recommends the consent authority does not allow any additional credit generation for candidate threatened species within the nominated additional and appropriate measures area as the Final Determination for the community is broadly inclusive of all associated threatened species.

Your ref: PAE-100283210
Our ref: DOC25/1016746-2

Jack Turner
Team Leader, Resource Assessments
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

By email: jack.turner@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Jack

Subject: HVO North and South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826681 and SSD - 11826621) (Singleton Shire)

Thank you for your Major Projects Portal request, dated 24 November 2025, seeking advice from the Conservation Programs, Heritage & Regulation Group (CPHR) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on Advice for the HVO North and South Open Cut Coal Continuation (SSD-11826681 and SSD -11826621) (Singleton Shire) project.

We have reviewed the Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project, Amendment Submissions Report against the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) provided by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to the proponent on 15 October 2025 (DOC25/744898-15).

CPHR considers that further work is required for the proponent to meet the Secretary's requirements for the project.

The following key issues remain:

- CPHR recommends further avoidance of the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Endangered Ecological Community* (EEC)
- all established and proposed offset / rehabilitation areas associated with the project should be delineated to ensure there are no impacts or cross over with the proposed works, and that the proposed offset areas associated with this project do not correlate with existing offset / rehabilitation areas.

CPHR's recommendations are provided in **Attachment A**. All plans required as a Condition of Approval that relate to biodiversity, flooding or coastal management should be developed in consultation with, and to the satisfaction of, CPHR.

It is noted that in line with previous conditions of consent, the determining authority should be satisfied that all offset / rehabilitation areas associated with the project are offset and protected in perpetuity (using a suitable mechanism such as a biodiversity stewardship agreement). Without confidence that previous commitments to offsetting and rehabilitation have been fulfilled, it is

difficult to determine whether these areas are adequately protected from further impacts and are without overlap with one another.

It is also noted that land categorisation for the project is being dealt with by separate consultation and correspondence with the proponent (DOC25/744898-16)

If you have any questions about this advice, please do not hesitate to contact the Hunter Central Coast Planning Team at huntercentralcoast@environment.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Joe Thompson
Director Hunter Central Coast

Conservation Programs, Heritage & Regulation Group (CPHR)

23 December 2025

Enclosure: Attachment 1

Attachment 1 HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621) – Response to Submissions

In preparing this advice CPHR has reviewed the following documents:

- Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project, Amendment Submissions Report, EMM, November 2025.
- Hunter Valley Operations Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, EMM, July 2025. (BDAR)

Key Assessment Issues

No	Comments	Recommendation
1	CPHR considers that the reported 0.28% of the EEC that is proposed to be impacted may quantify a significant and irreversible impact (SAII) to a species listed under principle 2. Any impacts – direct OR indirect, to this species are capable of being considered a SAII as the community is listed under principle 2 and is known to have a very limited geographic distribution. It is recommended that the impacts to known *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* be avoided entirely.	CPHR recommends that conditions of approval in line with previous consent conditions associated with *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* are set. The proposal should avoid all stands of the *Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC* within the site.
2	It is recommended that the BDAR identify previous commitments to offset or rehabilitate the subject land. The BDAR should demonstrate that the proposed activity does not impact upon these areas. It is currently unclear whether proposed offset or rehabilitation areas within this proposal overlap with those that have been previously committed to. For example, the BDAR proposes 6.6 ha be offset as part of the proposed 'Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Area'. However, it is unclear whether this area has already been committed to be offset under a previous consent.	CPHR recommends that all previous offset / rehabilitation areas associated with Hunter Valley Operations be mapped as well as the proposed project works and restoration area.

Your ref: PAE-92191465
Our ref: DOC25/744898-15

Jack Turner
Team Leader
Dept Planning Housing & Infrastructure

Dear Jack,

Subject: Amendment Report for the HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project SSD-11826681 and HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621)

Thank you for your Major Projects Portal requests dated 28 August 2025 seeking advice from the Conservation Programs, Heritage & Regulation Group (CPHR) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on an Amendment Report for the HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project SSD-11826681 and HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621). A further request has been made to prepare one response for both projects.

CPHR has reviewed the Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project Amended Report (dated August 2025), along with all relevant attachments and appendices, with a focus on biodiversity impacts.

During this assessment, CPHR identified several key concerns, including:

- The proposed impacts on the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) appear to breach existing consent conditions and may pose a risk of Serious and Irreversible Impact.
- CPHR recommends that the proponent establish appropriate long-term security arrangements for the Offset Area, in line with Consent Condition 29.

Further detail on these issues, including specific comments and recommendations, is provided in **Attachment 1**.

The review also considered the proponent's responses to CPHR's previous comments and recommendations provided in correspondence dated 13/03/2023 (DOC23/57326-18). Many of these have been satisfactorily addressed. A comprehensive assessment of these responses is included in **Attachment 2**.

This advice is additional to the previous letter addressing land category associated with Hunter Valley Operations dated 11/09/2025 (DOC25/744898-16) titled HVO North & South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project – Land Category Assessment.

CPHR notes that advice relating to the Squirrel glider and Eastern pygmy possum is being dealt with via a separate process via the BOS Helpdesk.

If you have any further questions about this issue, please contact the Hunter Central Coast Planning Team at huntercentralcoast@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours Sincerely



Joe Thompson
Director Hunter Central Coast
Conservation Programs, Heritage & Regulation Group (CPHR)

15 October 2025

Enclosure

Attachment 1 - Key Assessment Issues

Amendment Report for the HVO North Open Cut Coal Continuation Project SSD-11826681 and HVO South Open Cut Coal Continuation Project (SSD-11826621)

In preparing this advice CPHR has reviewed the following documents:

- Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project, Amendment Report, EMM, August 2025.
- Hunter Valley Operations Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, Umwelt, July 2025. (BDAR)

No	Comments	Recommendation
1	The BDAR continues to identify impacts to the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC, which the Department considers may pose a risk of Serious and Irreversible Impact (SAII). Condition 31 of the consent explicitly states that "the applicant must protect all stands of the Hunter Lowland Red Gum Forest (also identified as Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Complex in the EA) endangered ecological community within the site, and adjacent lands under the control of the Applicant". The proposed impacts are in direct contradiction to this consent condition. Furthermore, while the proposed restoration area is larger in size (6.6 ha), it does not represent a like-for-like offset for the impacted area. The restoration site comprises grasslands and exotic pasture with low to moderate native ground cover and contains only one *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. This is not comparable to the ecological value of the impact zone. It is also notable that the proposed restoration area borders habitat that appears to be significantly more suitable, including six *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* specimens, raising questions about site selection. Additionally, the indirect impacts to Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC have not been adequately addressed.	It is recommended that the proposal be revised to avoid any further impact on the Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC). If avoidance is not feasible, the proponent should engage with the Department to identify and secure an area of equal or greater ecological value for protection and rehabilitation. This offset area must not be subject to any existing or proposed rehabilitation or conservation agreements. Ensure that any potential indirect impacts to the Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC have been assessed and subsequently avoided and/or mitigated.
2	In accordance with the BC Act and The Departments website, the current Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) must be prepared	It is recommended that the proponent makes suitable arrangements to provide the appropriate long-term security for the Offset Area in accordance with Condition 29.

	following the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) and in accordance with the requirements for modifications. The BDAR will need to: • Outline available information about the original impact of the development and consider any measures already taken to avoid, minimise or offset the impact on biodiversity values in connection with the approval before the proposed modification. • Identify those offset requirements that have been discharged with documentary evidence. • Assess any new impacts on biodiversity values resulting from the modification of the development in accordance with the BAM. • Identify offset requirements and any new measures to avoid and minimise impacts in accordance with the BAM. The BDAR must clearly outline how offset obligations for the previous impact(s) remain unmet and provide accurate and transparent information to support a proper assessment. There is a requirement to satisfy condition 29 of the consent. It appears that the applicant has yet to implement the biodiversity offset strategy as described in the Warkworth Mine EIS, and outlined under Consent Condition 29 and Table 15. CPHR has reached out to BCT and POTSE, they have no record of a BSA for this site. It is understood that a pre-submission meeting has occurred, and initial work is to have begun, with further consultation scheduled for late Oct/early Nov. The development of the Biodiversity Offset Strategy and selection of the Offset Site was based on addressing the ecological impacts of the previous approval and was designed to mitigate impacts for the threatened species that were lost. The establishment of the BSS to meet the offset obligation is an important element to support the current application and its proposed impacts. Without such it is unclear how impacts to threatened species can be justified and supported.	It is recommended that all offset areas associated with previous approvals (being the establishment of Biodiversity Stewardship Sites (BSS)), be established in parallel with the Mod to ensure compliance with all previous approvals and support the current modification application.

Attachment 2 – Review of Previous Comments and Amendments

Ref	Previous Comment	Previous Recommendation	Proponent Response	CPHR (BCD) Response
1	The BDAR outlines that the project will clear 1.5 hectares of the EEC, which is about 0.35% of its estimated extent of 436 hectares. Section 5.2.3 of the BDAR describes measures that have been undertaken to avoid impacts to this EEC, including the avoidance of impacts to about 255 of the 269 River Red Gums that are in the vicinity of the transmission line that forms the part of the project that will cause impacts to this EEC. Table 6.9 states that the project triggers SAII Principle 3 for the Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. The project would clear 5.2 hectares of the EEC which represents 1.59% of its estimated extent of 333 hectares. BCD notes that both EECs have a very limited geographic distribution by having an extent of occurrence of < 1,000 square kilometres. Weeds have also caused a decline in the environmental quality and biotic interactions within both EECs, hampering the recruitment and establishment of characteristic species, even in areas of active management such as the Carrington Billabong for Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC and the Warkworth Mine's Northern Offset for Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. As a result of these two factors BCD considers the project	BCD recommends that if the project is approved that it includes specific conditions of consent that will minimise the impact of the project on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland in the NSW North Coast and Sydney Basin Bioregion EEC and Warkworth Sands Woodland in the Sydney basin Bioregion EEC. BCD further recommends that management and mitigation strategies for these EECs are produced, and this is done in consultation with Planning and Assessment Group and with BCD.	Further avoidance measures have been undertaken to ensure that the Project has no direct impact to Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC and a further reduction of impacts on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC (refer to Section 5.0) Additional recommendations are provided in Section 5.6 of the revised BDAR in relation to additional measures for: • Weed management. • Protection and habitat restoration. • Establishment of native vegetation. • Monitoring and adaptive management. A Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Restoration Site is proposed to provide an 'additional measures' offset for impacts associated with SAII (refer to Section 9.0).	The additional avoidance measures to direct impacts for the Warkworth Sands Woodland CEEC are noted, however there is insufficient evidence to ensure that indirect impacts have been adequately assessed and mitigated or avoided. The impact on Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland EEC, and specifically the proposed impacts to *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* would be inconsistent with the Conditions of Consent – specifically condition 31. The restoration area, while being larger at 6.6 ha that the proposed impacts, is not like for like, or even comparable. Grasslands and exotic pastural land with one (1) *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* does not adequately offset the proposed impacts.

	represents a risk of SAII to both EECs.			
2	Proponent should provide the following information: • Table of candidate threatened plant species surveyed for the project. Table to include: Area of suitable habitat within Project area (h) by VZ and PCT and a total area within the subject land; number of circular survey areas per VZ, per PCT, and in Project area; are surveyed by these circular survey areas by VZ, PCT, and for the subject land. • description of how 2-phase grid method was applied including details of how the 1 km grids sampled were chosen, and a discussion on any assumptions and limitations of the use of this method. As described in Section 4.4 of 'Surveying threatened plants and their habitats: NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method' (EES, 2020) this survey method applies only where suitable habitat for a particular species is larger than 50 hectares, and this has not been demonstrated in the BDAR. BCD notes that only vegetation zones 13, 19 and 20 are larger than 50 hectares.	The proponent should provide the following information to demonstrate the effectiveness of the two-phase grid-based systematic survey technique applied for this assessment: • A table of candidate threatened plant species surveyed for this project with the area of suitable habitat within the Project area given in hectares by Vegetation Zone and by Plant Community Type (PCT), and a total area within the subject land; the number of circular survey areas per Vegetation Zone, per PCT and in the Project area; and the area surveyed by these circular survey areas by Vegetation Zone, by PCT and for the subject land. • A description of how the two-phase grid-based systematic survey approach was applied for this project, including details of how the one-kilometre grids that were sampled were chosen, and a discussion on any assumptions and limitations of the use of this method.	Further detail and justification on grid-based approached provided in Section 4.1.3.1 and Table 4.1 of the revised BDAR. Targeted threatened flora surveys following the two-phase grid-based systematic approach was undertaken across all suitable habitat areas within the Development Footprints as outlined in Section 4.4.1. of the NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats (DPIE 2020e). Due to the size of the impact area and varying condition of PCTs (i.e. mosaic of vegetation zones) across the Development Footprints, it was determined that undertaking the two-phase grid method across all suitable habitat for all predicted species was the most effective way to cover the site (rather than assess habitat discretely by vegetation zone). The *NSW survey guide for surveying threatened plants and their habitats* (DPIE 2020e) does not specify a requirement to undertake the two-phase grid-based approach on a vegetation zone-basis.	Adequate.
3	Columns should be added to a revised version of Table D2.2 including: 1. 'Minimum survey effort requirements'; 2. 'Survey requirements met (answered yes, no, partially). A 'Notes' column may	Columns should be added to a revised version of Table D2.2 of the BDAR that cover: • 'Minimum survey effort requirements'.	Updated in Table D.2 of Annexure D to include information requested.	Adequate. Noted that additional surveys are required for a number of threatened species, and that those surveys are described and must occur.

	be added, or the same text otherwise provided to explain why survey effort and survey methods used may not have met survey requirements.	• 'Survey requirements met?' (to be answered by 'Yes', 'No' or 'Partially'). A 'notes' column may be added, or the same text otherwise provided to explain why survey effort and survey methods used may not have met survey requirements.		
4	For under-surveyed areas of potentially suitable koala habitat that additional surveys are undertaken, or the species is assumed to be present, or an expert report is prepared. Survey requirements for the koala changed during the period that the BDAR was being prepared, and after most targeted surveys for the koala has been undertaken. Nevertheless, the survey effort outlined in the BDAR for the koala does not meet the survey requirements applicable at the time of submission.	Further assessment should be undertaken for the potential presence of the koala where survey effort does not meet BCD's survey requirements. The additional assessment may be in the form of additional targeted threatened species survey, done in accordance with current survey guidelines, or from the provision of an expert report, or by assuming the presence of the koala in areas of suitable habitat.	Thermal drone surveys and additional SAT surveys for the koala have been undertaken. The BDAR has been updated in Table 4.2 and Table D.2 to reflect these surveys. Figure 4.2 has been updated to identify the extent of survey coverage. Table D.3 in Annexure D outlines the assessment of suitable koala habitat as described in the Koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) Biodiversity Assessment Method Survey Guide. Annexure G includes the drone report. No koalas or signs of koala were recorded during the targeted surveys.	Adequate.
5	Annexure D 'Threatened Species Assessment and Survey Methodology' and the BAM Calculator file shows that the targeted surveys for some threatened species were either partially (e.g., Gang-gang Cockatoo, Eastern Pygmy Possum, and Thesium australe), or fully (e.g., Cryptostylis hunteriana) done outside of the specified survey months. Further details are required to demonstrate that BCD's minimum survey requirements have been followed and that the minimum	Further information should be provided about the survey effort undertaken within the specified months for targeted surveys for all candidate species-credit species, and that surveys within the specified months are compared against the required survey effort. If some species have been inadequately surveyed then further surveys (done in the appropriate months), an expert report, or the species is assumed to be present and offset accordingly.	Table D.2 updated in Annexure D, where relevant. Each of the threatened species identified by BCD in their submission were adequately surveyed, with surveys undertaken during the survey windows specified in the TBDC. Additionally, surveys undertaken during sub-optimal seasons are also included in Table D.2 of Annexure D as supplementary surveys which contribute to the overall survey effort, noting that the majority of threatened species can be identified outside of the nominated survey	Adequate.

	survey effort has been done; if not those species will require further surveys (in the appropriate months), or an assessment by an Expert Report or to be assumed to be present and offset accordingly.		period and these surveys provide important contextual surveys for all species. Additional survey effort undertaken following the exhibition of the EIS included: • Additional koala SAT surveys and thermal drone surveys targeting koala. • Pitfall trapping targeting the common planigale. • Further surveys were undertaken in October 2023 and November 2023 and March, April and June 2025 that included: • Spotlighting surveys for Stephens banded snake. • Hollow tree searches for breeding activity for gang-gang cockatoo. • Threatened flora transects targeting species detectable in November (Thesium australe and Cryptostylis hunteriana). • Additional remote camera surveys and green and golden bell frog surveys. • Hollow bearing tree surveys and nesting/roosting habitat constraints • Acoustic recorded surveys • Dip netting for green and golden bell frog tadpoles and Gambusia sp.	
6	The survey requirements for the common Planigale (Planigale maculata) have not been met. The appropriate survey technique for this species is pitfall trapping however,	Areas of suitable habitat for the common planigale in the subject land should be surveyed using pitfall trapping, or the species is assessed by an expert report, or that the	Pitfall traps were installed across the Development Footprint as outlined in Table 4.1 and Annexure D. Consultation with the BCD was undertaken to determine the survey	Adequate.

	Table 4.1 'Species-credit Species Surveys' of the BDAR states that the following survey has been conducted for common Planigale: • Nocturnal spotlighting; and • Remote camera survey. The Threatened Biodiversity Data Collection in BioNet states that 'surveys must be undertaken using pitfall traps.' Where that is not possible, due to rocky ground, for example, then the alternative is an expert report.	species is assumed to be present and then offset in accordance with the Biodiversity Offset Scheme.	effort required across the Development Footprints which is considered 'large-scale'. The conclusion was where "total suitable habitat > 50 ha: 22 arrays plus one additional for every 10 ha of suitable habitat above 10 ha. For example, 60 ha of suitable habitat will require 23 arrays." The Development Footprints contain approximately 420 ha of potentially suitable habitat subject to impacts in accordance with the predicted vegetation zones in the TBDC. Based on this advice, it was calculated that a total of 59 pitfall trap arrays should be established to adequately survey for the common planigale. A total of 64 pitfall trap surveys were installed. No common planigales were recorded. Consultation with BCD was undertaken to determine the extent of surveys required.	
7	Section 4.2.2.1 'Southern Myotis (Myotis macropus)' of the BDAR outlines that habitat polygon mapping for the southern Myotis was calculated on the direct impacts to the population by buffering all recorded individuals by 30 metres. This approach does not cover all waterbodies within the project site. Under the BAM 2020, for fauna species assessed by area (as per the threatened biodiversity data collection (TBDC)), the species polygon is meant to be used to	The species and habitat polygons for the southern Myotis should be updated to include waterbodies as outlined in the BAM 2020 and associated guidance documents.	Section 4.2.2.1 of the BDAR does not state this. The southern myotis habitat polygon mapping was undertaken by clipping associated PCTs within the Development Footprint and within 200 m of a waterbody what was 3 m or wider. This included rivers (such as the Hunter River), creeks and dams within the locality of the Project. This is consistent with the requirements outlined in Table 1 of 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method	Adequate.

	measure the area of suitable habitat on the subject land. The 'Species credit' threatened bats and their habitats - NSW survey guide for the Biodiversity Assessment Method, outlines that 'All habitat on the subject land where the subject land is within 200 m of a waterbody with pools/ stretches 3 m or wider including rivers, creeks, billabongs, lagoons, dams and other waterbodies on the subject land' should be included in the species polygon for the southern Myotis.		(OEH 2018). No changes to the assessment in the revised BDAR have been undertaken.	
8	The assessor should not exclude the Stephens banded snake from assessment and should provide further details of potential habitat for cave-dwelling bats within the project area that could be provided by built structures and mine shafts.	Stephens banded snake (Hoplocephalus stephensii) – the TBDC notes that this species uses very old primary forest with many large old hollow bearing trees and therefore discounts this species. However, this description is provided as a general guidance and the TBDC also states that fallen timber, hollow bearing trees and areas within 500 metres of arboreal vine tangles can also provide habitat. As the Project area contains these features, the species habitat constraints, the species should not be ruled out due to lack of habitat.	Surveys were undertaken for this species in accordance with relevant survey guidelines however the species is no longer a candidate species, as per the TBDC, following an update to the BAM-C and TBDC in October 2024.	Adequate.
		Cave-dwelling microbats (Chalinolobus dwyeri and Bentwings) – the BDAR does not contain enough information to quantify prescribed impacts to threatened microbats from the loss of mine shafts, and other old mine workings, and buildings in the Project area.	Additional text added to the justification in Table D.1 in Annexure D noting that there are no mine shafts, workings, or old buildings within the Development Footprints.	Adequate.

		Foraging Miniopterus australis bats were recorded on site. This species roosts in caves, tunnels, tree hollows, abandoned mines, stormwater drains, culverts, bridges, and buildings. BAM assessments that require surveys for roosting sites for this species and also require an assessment of the importance of the habitat to the migration of this species. This species is very selective for roosting habitat and will move between roosts sites depending on temporal variance. The removal of any roosting habitat should be compensated with supplementary habitat so as to not disrupt migration to the maternity roost: a significant impact to a maternity roost for this species would be considered to be a Serious and Irreversible Impact.	Additional text added to the justification in Table D.1 in Annexure D noting that there are no mine shafts, workings, or old buildings within the Development Footprints. Furthermore, targeted searches of culverts in October 2023 (undertaken as part of the Commonwealth assessment for the Project) did not result in the identification of roosting microbats. As there was no roosting habitat identified in the Development Footprint, or nearby further assessment of the disruption to migratory patterns. As there is no impact to roosting or maternity habitat of Miniopterus australis, the species is not at risk of a SAII.	Adequate.
9	Vegetation at and around BAM Plot 18, within Warkworth Sands Woodlands appears to be in a discharge zone of the local aquifer, this suggests that consideration of groundwater impacts will be required for the proposed relocation of Lemington Road in this area. During the site visit of 22 February 2023, it was noted that the vegetation in and around BAM Plot 18 included Myriophyllum sp., Xyris sp., and Drosera burmanni. The soil at the site was wet too, with standing water, but the presence of these wetland species suggests this is due to a local, relatively persistent source of water rather than from the heavy	An assessment of potential impacts to Warkworth Sand Woodland in areas adjacent to BAM Plot 18 should be undertaken if development activities in that area are likely to change local groundwater conditions (e.g. by either draining the upslope section of sandsheet or blocking the flow of water)	Further discussion on this provided in Table 6.4 of the BDAR including a graphic (Figure 6.2) from the groundwater assessment demonstrating that the community relies on the perched aquifer and will not be altered by groundwater impacts.	Adequate.

	rain that fell before the site visit. Given that this site is downslope of part of the biodiversity offset for the Warkworth Mine, with Warkworth Sands Woodland, BCD recommends that an assessment of the local aquifer, within the sandsheet is undertaken to ensure that any development of the site will not adversely affect the aquifer and affect other areas of Warkworth Sands Woodland, by either draining the upslope section of sandsheet or blocking the flow of water.			
10	Figure 6.1 'Location of Prescribed Impacts' shows the general location of corridors within the project area. However, the BDAR does not show how the corridors in the project area fit within the wider landscape and important corridors have not been identified. This does not meet the requirements of Section 7.2.1 (c) of the BAM 2020, which requires the proponent to 'locate the proposal to avoid severing or interfering with corridors connecting different areas of habitat and migratory flight paths, to important habitat or local movement pathways.'	The BDAR should be amended to discuss how the project fits within the wider landscape and presents a new, or revised version of Figure 6.1, or both that has clear lines that indicate probable corridors.	Table 6.4 (formerly Figure 6.1) updated to show regional corridors based on native vegetation mapped on SVTM. Further justification is provided in Table 6.6 of the BDAR, demonstrating that HVO is not located within an important regional corridor and that the project will not result in the severing of regional corridors.	Adequate.
11	Figure 6.4 'Assessment of Indirect Impacts' of the BDAR provides a brief discussion of indirect impacts, including from weed invasion. BCD recommends that further information is provided in relation to measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road. BCD	Further details should be provided around measures to be implemented to prevent new weeds from becoming established in Warkworth Sands Woodland from the re-routed Lemington Road.	Additional recommendations are provided in Section 5.6 of the revised BDAR in relation to additional measures for: • Weed management. • Protection and habitat restoration. • Establishment of native vegetation.	Section 5.7. Adequate and supported.

	notes that several exotic species are already present in the patch of Warkworth Sands Woodland at Archerfield (such as Eragrostis curvula, Melinis repens and Heterotheca grandiflora) but the patch is vulnerable to the establishment of other weeds from sandy soils nearby (such as Bryophyllum delagoense and Coreopsis lanceolata).		• Monitoring and adaptive management.	
12	Table 5.4 'Impacts and Avoided Impacts in Easement Realignment Design' of the BDAR does not document the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts as required by Chapter 8 'Assessing the impacts of the proposal on biodiversity values' of the BAM 2020.	The BDAR should be revised include the limitations and risk of failure of the proposed measures to mitigate or manage impacts, as required under the BAM 2020.	Additional text is provided at Table 5.8 and Section 5.5 of the BDAR to confirm that the impact minimisation and mitigation strategies are well known and represent a low risk of failure. These strategies are implemented widely across mining projects in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere and will be documented in a BMP.	Adequate.
13	The BDAR does not adequately discuss prescribed impacts in relation to southern Myotis from direct impacts to waterbodies, including dams, within the subject land. Table 6.5 'Prescribed Impacts identified at HVO North and HVO South' discusses potential impacts to the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities, including impacts to human-made structures, impacts to connectivity, and impacts to '…water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes that sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities.' The first two potential impacts were identified as likely to occur for this project, but not the last one. Table 6.6	The BDAR should include an assessment of potential prescribed impacts of the project on the southern Myotis by the removal of water bodies in accordance with section 8.3 'Assess prescribed biodiversity impacts' in the BAM 2020.	Additional prescribed impact assessment included in Table 6.7 and shown on Figure 6.4.	Adequate.

	'Prescribed Impacts Assessment' discusses '…impacts on the habitat of threatened species or ecological communities associated with the connectivity of different areas of habitat of threatened species that facilitates the movement of those species across their range' in relation to all threatened fauna species and native vegetation but does not discuss the likely impact on the loss of water bodies on the subject land in relation to the movement of the southern Myotis.			
14	Section 1.1.1 'HVO North' of the BDAR does not provide enough information on the likely location of ancillary or temporary construction facilities and infrastructure and the likely amount of clearing associated with them. The BDAR does not identify these areas on any maps, such as Figure 1.3 'Hunter Valley Operations Continuation Project' or Figure 1.4. 'The Development Footprints HVO North and HVO South' This information is required under Section 2 'Stage 1: Biodiversity assessment' (page 5) and also Table 24 'Minimum information requirements for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report and the Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report – Stage 1: Biodiversity assessment' (page 116) of the BAM 2020.	The BDAR should be amended to provide more information on the location of temporary or ancillary construction facilities that will require additional clearing, and to show these locations on one or more maps.	The proposed location of ancillary or temporary construction facilities is now shown on Figure 1.4 of the BDAR. While these locations are indicative only, the proponent confirms that these will be cited in existing approved disturbance areas or within the proposed Development Footprints. Ancillary or temporary construction facilities will not be constructed outside these boundaries and therefore no additional impacts are proposed.	Adequate.
15	A map showing the location of indirect impacts from the project is required. Table A.1 'Assessment of	The BDAR should be amended to include a map, or maps of likely indirect impacts from the project in	Figure 6.1A and Figure 6.1B shows Wollombi Brook and Hunter River (respectively) alluvium- maximum	Adequate.

	compliance with BDAR minimum information requirements' of the BDAR states, on page A-15, that maps of indirect impact zones for the project are not applicable for this project. However, indirect impacts for the project have been identified in: Section 6.2 'Indirect impacts' and described in Table 6.4 'Assessment of indirect impacts'. A map showing the location of areas of indirect impacts; specifically: • where drawdown impacts to groundwater-dependent ecosystems are located • where rubbish dumping on the aligned Lemington Road is a threat to any threatened species of communities • edge effects that may impact threatened species or communities outside of the development footprint • fugitive light, noise and dust impacts to native plant communities and threatened species. A map, or maps, would meet the requirements of Table 25 'Minimum information requirements for the BDAR or BCAR – Stage 2: Impact assessment (biodiversity values)' (page 124) of the BAM 2020.	order to meet requirements of the BAM 2020.	cumulative drawdown during operations. Figure 6.2 shows the maximum predicted incremental drawdown during operations in the Hunter River alluvium. Figure 6.3 now shows edge effects around Lemington Road realignment and indicative habitat connectivity in the locality and region based on the SVTM native vegetation extent.	
16	Section 6.2 'Indirect impacts' of the BDAR does not identify or describe the limitations and assumptions of the assessment of indirect impacts for the project. This is required to	The BDAR should include a discussion on the limitations and assumptions in the assessment of indirect impacts of the project to	Section 6.2 updated with a statement relating to the confidence of the indirect impacts assessed in the BDAR, based on a long history of assessment and monitoring of	Adequate.

	meet Section 8.2.1 (c) of 'Assess indirect impacts on native vegetation, threatened ecological communities, threatened species and their habitat' for the BAM 2020.	meet the requirements of the BAM 2020.	impacts to biodiversity due to mining in the Hunter Valley over the last 20 years.	
17	BCD recommends that additional information is provided to meet the requirements of the BAM 2020 as outlined in this letter of advice.	The BDAR does not include all of the information required by BAM 2020, including: • The BAM 2020 assesses the biodiversity values of the 'subject land', however the BDAR does not define the 'subject land' for this project.	Definition of 'Subject Land' now included in Section 1.2 of revised BDAR.	Adequate.
		• Figure 2.1 'Site Map', Figure 2.2A 'Location Map – HVO North' and Figure 2.2B 'Location map - HVO South' do not show dams and mine sites on a Map.	Figure 2.2A and Figure 2.2B have been updated to show dams and surrounding mining sites.	Adequate.
		• Maps of Native Vegetation Extent are not presented at < 1:10,000 scale, as required by Section 4.1 'Map of native vegetation extent on the subject land' of the BAM 2020 (The maps of native vegetation extent in APPENDIX C are presented at a scale of 1:28,000).	Annexure C figures have been updated to be 1:10,000 scale.	Adequate.
		• Threatened Ecological Communities that are dependent on or use habitat features associated with prescribed impacts are not listed.	Features added to Table 6.6 of the revised BDAR.	Adequate.

Annexure H

Memorandum: HVO Warkworth Sands Field Investigation 2023 (Minesoils 2023)

27th October 2023

EMM Consulting
6/146 Hunter St,
Newcastle NSW 2300

Attention: Nicole Armit

Dear Nicole,

Re: Memorandum: HVO Warkworth Sands Field Investigation 2023.

Background and context

Minesoils understands Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) seeks to amend the location of the proposed Lemington Road realignment to avoid areas containing Warkworth Sands Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) within the HVO continued operations project. Minesoils' Clayton Richards (CPSS) accompanied representatives from HVO and Umwelt on Tuesday 5th September for a site inspection of the proposed new route and disturbance area. The inspection team walked the entire length of the proposed new section of the realigned road corridor observing the vegetation and soils, aiming to confirm the presence/absence of the Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC. This memorandum follows on from an initial assessment of the area undertaken in 2020 by Minesoils and Umwelt, which inspected 22 sites along eight transects within the area.

The findings of the initial assessment found two general soil types; 1. Deep Sands (Tenosol) which are uniform profiles of sand textured soils; and 2. Duplex soils (Chromosol, Sodosol and/or Kurosol), which are texture contrast soils with a Sand/Loamy Sand/Sandy Loam horizon/s overlying a clear boundary to Clay subsoil.

1. The Deep Sand profiles are considered likely to be either fully or partly aeolian derived based on the shape and smoothness of the sand grains. The depth of these profiles is also consistent with the presence of dunes formed by wind blown material to depths >1.5m as observed on site (limit of excavation).
2. The Duplex soil profiles are less clearly aeolian derived and may consist of sand, loamy sand or sandy loan in the upper A horizons. These soils also typically displayed a bleached A2 horizon lying over a clear boundary to the clay B horizon subsoils. Whilst these profiles would not generally be considered to be linked to aeolian sand deposits, and are considered the dominant soil types throughout the Hunter Valley, the definition of soil types for the Warkworth Sands EEC Woodland states a 'thin veneer' of aeolian derived sands is also considered a suitable substrate for this EEC (Benson 1981). Without a more detailed or prescriptive definition of what constitutes a 'thin veneer', there is a possibility (albeit with less confidence) that there is a 'thin veneer' of possible aeolian derived sands within the upper horizon material of these Duplex Soil profiles. Therefore, the conservative approach for the assessment was to assume that the presence of any sand layer in the upper horizon was adequate to consider the soil profile as potentially meeting the requirements for Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC deep sands through to a 'thin veneer' of aeolian derived sand.

The 2020 assessment found the depth of an upper sandy horizon ranged from 0.30m through to >1.50m, as shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**. Of the 22 sites inspected 8 sites were considered moderate or deep sands (Tenosols) and 13 sites were considered duplex soils. One site (WS13-1 Clay Soil) was considered

likely disturbed due to proximity to a dam and being located within a drainage line. The 16 sites within close proximity of the proposed realigned road corridor are shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: Sand Depths and Soil Types 2020 Assessment

Site	Sand depth (m)	Soil Type Description
WS8-36	1.50	Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS8-37	1.00	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS8-38	0.65	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS9-33	0.60	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS9-34	0.80	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS9-35	1.50	Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS10-30	0.30	Duplex Soil (Shallow)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS10-31	1.50	Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS10-32	0.60	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS11-14	0.40	Duplex Soil (Shallow)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS11-27	0.40	Duplex Soil (Shallow)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS11-28	1.00	Moderately Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS11-29	1.50	Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS12-4	1.00	Moderately Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS12-13	1.00	Moderately Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS12-23	0.40	Duplex Soil (Moderate) - (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS12-24	0.90	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS12-25	0.80	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS12-26	0.80	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)
WS13-1	0.00	Clay Soil in drainage line (may be influenced by Dam construction)
WS13-2	1.00	Deep Sand - Tenosol
WS13-3	0.60	Duplex Soil (Deep)- (Sand / Loamy Sand / Sandy Loam overlying Clay Subsoil)

Presence of aeolian sands in the proposed disturbance footprint

A review of the original proposed route for Lemington Road indicated the soils located within the disturbance corridor were deep sands (Tenosols) or deep duplex soils with sandy upper horizons. These soils would likely be more consistent with the typical profiles derived from aeolian sand dunes which form the substrate for Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC.

The 2023 inspection of the proposed revised route for Lemington Road consisted of reviewing some sites from the 2020 Assessment and digging shallow holes along the route to confirm soil type and possible sand layers conservatively considered a 'thin veneer' of possible aeolian derived sand.

The northern section of the proposed new disturbance corridor (Refer to Figure 1), which was located across most of the pasture/grassed areas, contained upper layers of sand to 0.5m deep and would likely be considered Tenosols. These sands could be considered aeolian or partly aeolian derived based on fine sand texture, rounded smooth shape of sand grains, unconsolidated nature and poor profile development throughout the solum.

The middle section to the immediate north of Archerfield Road (Refer to Figure 1) appeared to have very minimal to no sand present in the upper layers. The area appeared to have been subject to extensive sheet erosion, as the majority of the area appears to have the Clay subsoil at the surface or within 0.05m to 0.10m

of the surface. The drainage lines were infilled with coarse sand, presumed to be washed off the surrounding land. This sand in the drainage depositional areas was coarse and gritty in texture and did not appear to be of aeolian origin. This middle section of the proposed revised route contained areas of mature trees and more dense regrowth.

South of Archerfield Road the proposed disturbance is located on soils considered as Spoilic Anthroposols, which are man-made soils built of overburden (spoil) with a surface layer of fine to medium textured topsoil ranging from 0.1 to 0.3m deep. These Spoilic Anthroposols are not considered to be a likely substrate for the development of Warkworth Sands Woodland EEC and are certainly not remnant forms of soil profiles.

Summary

In summary, the main areas of the proposed amended section of the Lemington Road realignment containing deep sands (potentially aeolian) are located within the northern section of the area on improved and native pastures. The vegetated (Woodland) areas through the middle sections of the area appeared to be heavily affected by sheet erosion and had very little (<0.10m), if any sand layer at the surface.

A review of the original road alignment found the soils within the disturbance area to be more typical (deep sands and deep duplex soils with sandy A horizons) of aeolian derived soil profiles from sand dunes and interdunes where a 'thin veneer' of sand may be present.

Amended Lemington Road section – Impacts to land and soil capability and agriculture

The proposed amended section of the Lemington Road re-aligned corridor is also considered as like for like with the original corridor, with regard to general soil types (albeit shallower A horizons) and land and soil capability classification, based on close proximity to the original alignment, landform position and landform element. Therefore, the soil, land and agriculture impact assessment and soil management strategies for the proposed new corridor, remains consistent with that presented in the EIS (refer to Appendix P), and no changes are proposed.

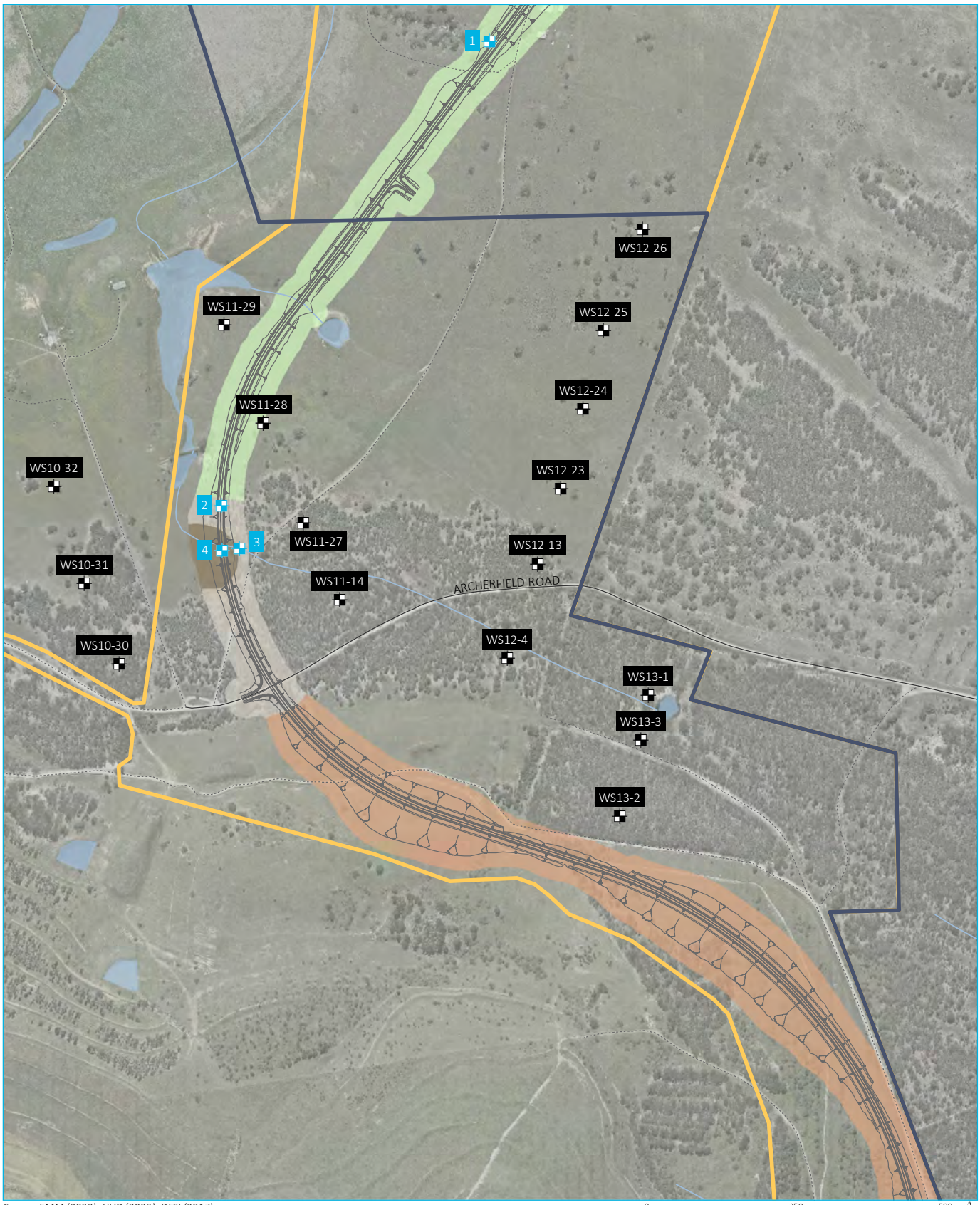
Yours sincerely,



Clayton Richards.
Principal Consultant & Director
Minesoils Pty Ltd

Mobile: 0408 474 248
E-mail: clayton@minesoils.com.au



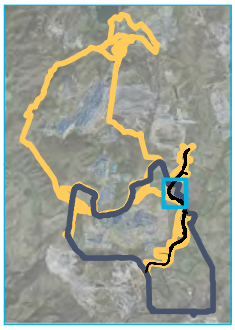


Source: EMM (2023); HVO (2023); DFSI (2017)

0 250 500 m

GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

N



KEY

- HVO North proposed development consent boundary
- HVO South proposed development consent boundary
- Revised Lemington Road realignment
- Soil test site – 2022 (EIS)
- Soil test site – 2023 (Amendment report)

Soil type

- Coarse alluvial sands
- Deep sands and deep duplex soils
- Degraded shallow duplex soils
- Spoilic anthroposols

Existing environment

- Minor road
- Vehicular track
- Named watercourse
- Named waterbody

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Soil test sites and soil types

HVO Continuation Project
HVO Warkworth Sands Field Investigation
Figure 1

EMM creating opportunities

Transect 8

Point WS8-36





Point WS8-37





Point WS8-38





Transect 9

Point WS9-33





Point WS9-34





Point WS9-35





Transect 10

Point WS10-30





Point WS10-31





Point WS10-32





Transect 11

Point WS11-14





Point WS11-27





Point WS11-28





Point WS11-29





Transect 12

Point WS12-4





Point WS12-13





Point WS12-23





Point WS12-24



Point WS12-25





Point WS12-26





Transect 13

Point WS13-1





Point WS13-2





Point WS13-3





2023 Soil Field Observations (1-4)





Site 1 - North Section Represented (Excludes gully area). Deep sand to 0.5m, layer continues.



Site 2 – Very thin veneer of sand (<5cm). Appears sheet erosion has stripped most of the A horizon. B Horizon clay layer continues.



Site 3 – No sand layer present. Appears sheet erosion has stripped all of the A horizon. B Horizon clay layer continues.





Site 4 – Drainage line comprised of deep sand (<0.5m deep). Appears alluvial from the sheet erosion of the surrounding land.

Annexure I

Botanic Gardens *Acacia pendula* Identification

BOTANIC GARDENS OF SYDNEY

National Herbarium of New South Wales

Adam CAVALLARO
Umwelt
75 York St
Teralba, NSW 2284
AUSTRALIA

BIS Enquiry No: 23076
Botanical.Is@botanicgardens.nsw.gov.au
Ph. No: (02) 4631 5135
Date: 20 May 2025

Dear Adam,

Thank you for your enquiry regarding collections from **Lemington Rd, Ravensworth, 2 Apr 2025**. We are happy to provide the following information:

Acacia pendula conf. P. Jobson 20 May 2025 – **retained.**

There will be no fee to cover the cost of identification.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Wardrop
Techinical Officer
Botanical Identification Service

Appendix E

HVO North Credit Obligations by Domain



umwelt

Table E.1 HVO North Credit Obligations by Domain

Biodiversity Feature	Domain 2b	Domain 3	Domain 4
Commonwealth TECs			
Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland CEEC	522	2981	1287
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Woodland and Derived Native Grassland CEEC	0	33	169
Non-EPBC Listed PCTs*			
PCT3431 – Central Hunter Ironbark Grassy Woodland	0	1486	2990
PCT4015 – Central Hunter Swamp Oak Riparian Forest	0	65	42
PCT4081 – Northwest River Oak-River Red Gum Forest	0	39	0
PCT4089 – Namoi-Upper Hunter River Red Gum Forest	0	14	96
Total Ecosystem Credits	**522**	**4618**	**4618**
Species Credits			
Hunter Valley Delma	622	2567	1034
Total Species Credits	**622**	**2567**	**1034**

*Offsets required for MNES habitat components.

umwelt

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NSW | ACT | WA | QLD | VIC | SA ABN 18 059 519 041