

# Wilpinjong Coal Community Factsheet

May 2015, Issue 2



## Extension Project

**Wilpinjong Coal Mine is located in the developing western coalfields of NSW and produces high quality thermal coal for domestic and export markets.**

Peabody Energy is seeking planning approval for an extension of the life of the Wilpinjong Coal Mine, within its existing Mining Lease and Exploration License tenements. If approved, The Wilpinjong Extension Project (the Project) would involve approximately 800 hectares of open-cut extensions, including development of a new open-cut pit in Slate Gully.

The Project will be subject to a rigorous assessment of potential environmental impacts via a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As part of this process, Peabody will be required to demonstrate to the NSW Government that it can manage or mitigate impacts to the Government's satisfaction, before the Project can be approved.

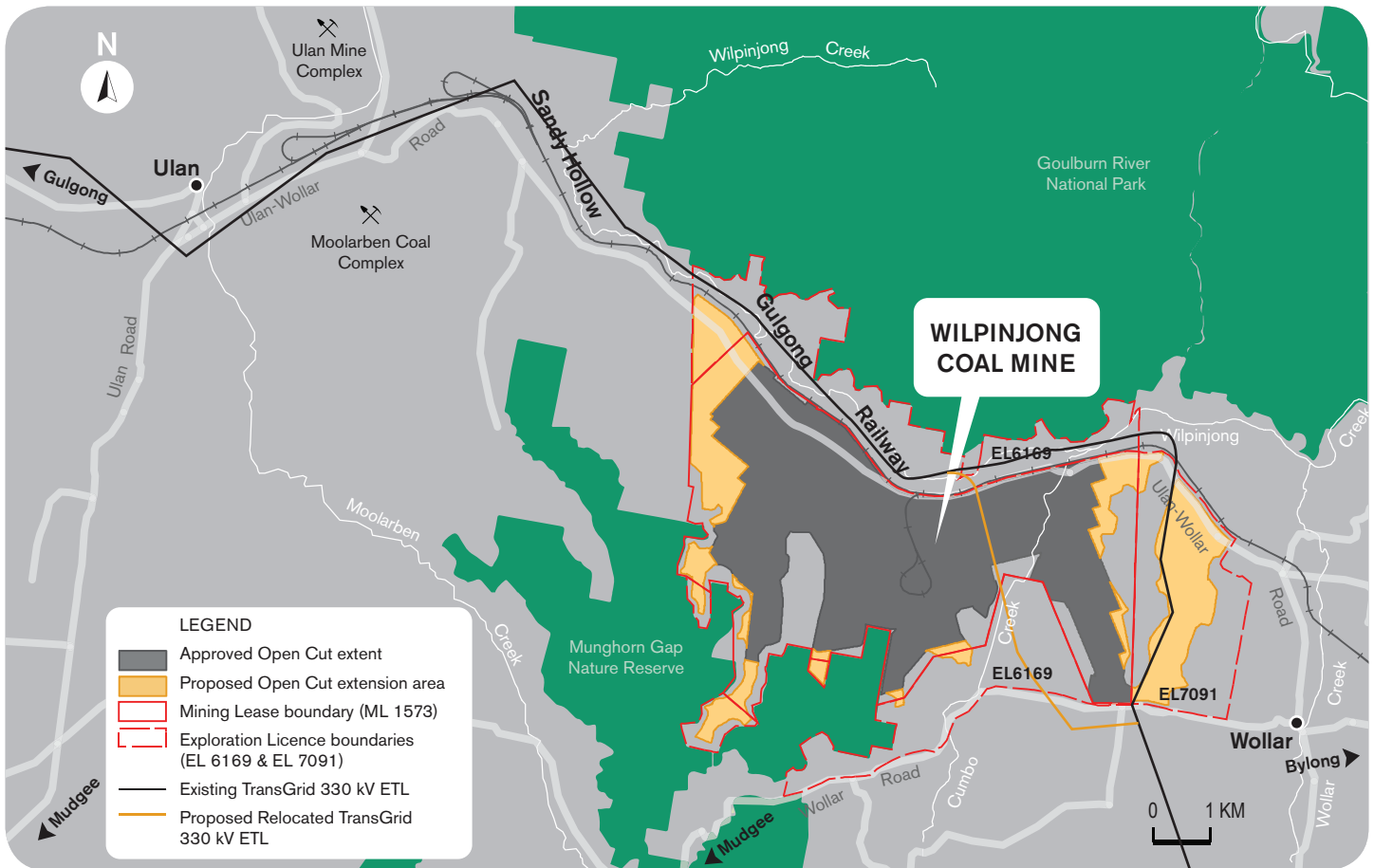
More detail about the Project is available:

- On Wilpinjong's website – (*See, Community Factsheet Issue 1, December 2014*)
- On NSW Department of Planning & Environment website (Major Projects Assessments page)
- By contacting us (*See, page 4 of this fact sheet*).

Peabody is committed to keeping the community up-to-date about Wilpinjong's operations and encourages community participation in the EIS process.

Wilpinjong Coal Mine is a significant contributor to the local economy and an important asset to the people of NSW. The mine provides low-cost domestic coal to AGL (formerly Macquarie Generation) which accounts for approximately 7-10 % of NSW energy consumption, securing the energy needs of thousands of NSW residents.

# Extension Project



## PROJECT UPDATE

EIS studies including studies into noise, air quality, surface and groundwater, biodiversity, cultural heritage, social and community infrastructure are underway. Some preliminary findings are outlined in this update, and the community will be kept up-to-date with details of studies as they conclude.

### Key Project Developments

- The Project's Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) were received. These provide an overview of the studies Wilpinjong must address as part of the Project's EIS. To view the SEARs go to: [http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=6764](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6764)
- A Site Verification Certificate confirmed no 'Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land' exists within the Project area.
- The Project was referred to the Federal Government under the *EPBC Act* and was deemed a 'Controlled Action' in March 2015. This means the Project will undergo assessment under the *EPBC Act* via the bilateral agreement with the NSW government.

## SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### Community interviews

As part of the Project's Social Impact Assessment, specialist company, Elliot Whiteing has completed face-to-face interviews with a number of local stakeholders. These included existing and former Wollar area residents, government agencies, business and community organisations. The interviews focused on potential social impacts and benefits that could arise from the Project.

### Community survey

A wider community survey, advertised in the Mudgee Guardian ran on-line between 9 February and 20 March 2015. Reply paid hardcopy community surveys were also made locally available. Approximately 25% of community survey participants were from Wollar, Mogo Road or Barigan Valley, with the remainder primarily from the rest of the Mid-Western Regional Council area.

Key potential social benefits identified by respondents included:

- **Broader Mid-Western Regional Council area:**
  - Economic growth, increase in population and employment, greater building activity and business opportunities, more rates for Council infrastructure

If approved, the Project would provide job security for the mine's approved 500-strong workforce and continued delivery of the positive social and economic contributions of the mine to local communities and the broader region.

Key potential social concerns identified by respondents included:

- **Wollar area:** Stress and uncertainty about the future, impacts on social and community values, loss of local services
- **Broader Mid-Western Regional Council area:** Inflation of housing and living costs, strain on local services

Detailed survey findings will be available in the EIS.

## Employee survey

As part of the Social Impact Assessment, Elliot Whiteing conducted a survey of 325 Wilpinjong employees and contractors. Draft findings indicate that of the survey participants approximately:

- 88% identified they resided in the Mid-Western Regional Council area (55% in Mudgee)
- 90% donated to a charity or community organisation on an annual basis, and half participated in a community voluntary organisation
- 76% did their weekly shopping in Mudgee.

- The Project would extend the benefits of Wilpinjong employee investment and participation in the community.
- Wilpinjong employment would increase to up to 625 people at its peak (2018-2024).

Wilpinjong Coal would like to thank all participants in the SIA interviews and surveys for their input to this important component of the Project assessment.

## HERITAGE STUDIES

Heritage specialists Niche Environment and Heritage and South East Archaeology have completed Historical and Aboriginal heritage surveys of the Project area. The Aboriginal heritage surveys were undertaken accompanied by representatives of the Registered Aboriginal Parties.

These studies identified a range of heritage sites within the open cut extension areas or surrounds, which include:

- Remnants of a shale oil mine located in Slate Gully, including a historical mine shaft
- Various locally-significant heritage buildings, or ruins
- Rock shelters with Aboriginal artefacts and/or art
- Aboriginal artefacts, artefact scatters and scarred trees
- Cultural values identified by the contemporary Aboriginal community.

Peabody will implement measures to manage potential impacts to heritage sites. Management and mitigation measures will be documented in the heritage assessment reports.

## OTHER STUDIES

**Traffic:** Additional traffic surveys on Ulan Road and Ulan-Wollar road are being undertaken to document recent reductions in local traffic associated with the industry downturn.

**Air quality and operational noise** assessments for the Project are progressing, and it is anticipated an update on noise and air quality modelling for the Project will be presented in the next community factsheet.

**Flora and fauna surveys** are currently being conducted on some potential biodiversity offset areas on Peabody-owned land.



Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Survey

# Consultation

## NSW Government Planning Approval Process: State Significant Development

Applicant lodges application for Site Verification Certificate with Department of Planning & Environment (DP&E)

DP&E issues Site Verification Certificate

Applicant requests Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS, formerly DGRs)

Applicant lodges Referral under Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*

Commonwealth Minister decides if the Project is a "controlled action"

### STEP 1

Preparation of Environmental Impact Statement

DP&E prepares and issues SEARS and places them on DP&E website

Applicant consults with the community, Council and Agencies and prepares Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Applicant lodges Development Application and EIS. DP&E determines whether the Development Application meets the requirements and is OK to exhibit

### STEP 2

Exhibition and Consultation

Department exhibits Development Application and EIS and seeks submissions from the community, Council and Agencies

Applicant lodges response to submissions

### STEP 3

Assessment and Determination

DP&E finalises assessment and consults with Council and Agencies on draft conditions of consent

Determining authority (DP&E or Planning Assessment Commission) makes determination

DP&E issues notice of determination

## How can I get involved?

Wilpinjong is committed to consulting with community and government stakeholders to better understand potential project issues and to explain the assessed project impacts.

Local community members will have opportunities to provide input into the Project EIS during:

- Continued monthly local community drop-in sessions at the Wollar General Store
- The EIS public exhibition period.

Peabody will continue to keep the community informed about the Project and additional opportunities for input into the process as the EIS proceeds via subsequent factsheets.



To register your interest for future information:

Phone: 1300 606 625

Email: [iflood@peabodyenergy.com](mailto:iflood@peabodyenergy.com)

Visit: Wollar General Store between 1.30-4.30pm on first Thursday of the month

[www.peabodyenergy.com](http://www.peabodyenergy.com)