

Report

Environmental Protection Act 1994

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

This internal report is for assessment officers and the CAC to make recommendation to the delegate on whether an EIS should be required for a proposed resource project under sections 70, 73C, 143 and 232 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EP Act).

1 Introduction

1.1 CAC process

The CAC process was established by the Department of Environment and Science (department) to give due consideration and recommendations to the delegate on resource projects that may require an EIS under the EP Act.

The CAC process is outlined in Figure 1:

- **CAC process 1** is for new site-specific EA or major amendment and is led by the relevant business centre (coal, minerals or energy and extractive)
- **CAC process 2** is for voluntary EIS or EIS decisions and is led by the EIA team, with input from the relevant business centre.

Further information is available in the documents outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Department documents relating to CAC process and EIS decision

Document title	Policy register no.	Document type	Distribution	Purpose
Criteria for EIS for resource projects under the EP Act	ESR/2016/2171	Guideline	External	Criteria to support delegate in deciding if an EIS is required/appropriate
CAC terms of reference (TOR) for an EIS decision ('CAC TOR')	ESR/2023/6577	Terms of reference	Internal	Describes the purpose, role and administration of the CAC
Decisions about the requirement for an EIS ('ESR business rule')	ESR/2023/6576	ESR Business rule	Internal	States that delegation (in practice) for EIS decisions is the Executive Director
CAC recommendation on the requirement for an EIS ('CAC report')	ESR/2016/2193	Report	Internal	Report for assessing officers and CAC to make recommendations to the delegate on whether an EIS should be required

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

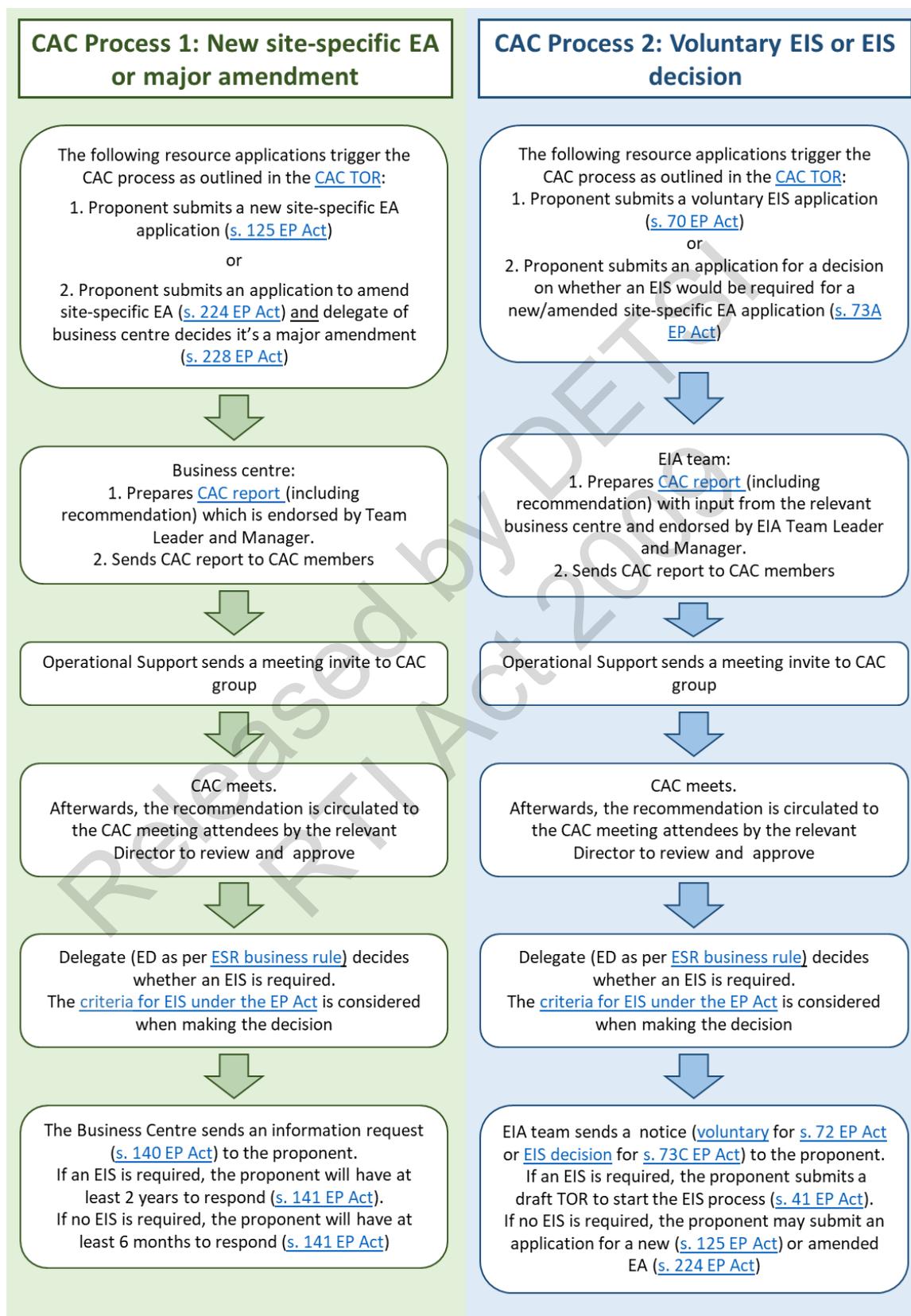


Figure 1. CAC process

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

1.2 When to use this report

This report should be used for all site-specific resource applications required to be reviewed by CAC¹ for a recommendation to the delegate on whether an EIS is required under the EP Act.

Specifically, this report should be used for:

- all site-specific resource applications for an environmental authority (EA) (s. 143 EP Act)
- applications that are major amendments to an EA (s. 232 EP Act)
- applications for voluntary preparation of an EIS (s. 70 EP Act)
- applications for: decisions on whether an EIS would be required for EA applications under s. 73A(1)(a) of the EP Act; and, if relevant, applications to prepare an EIS under s73A(1)(b) of the EP Act if the chief executive decides an EIS would not be required for an EA application.

This report should **not** be used for:

- Projects that have completed an EIS under the EP Act (unless the assessment report has lapsed under s. 59A)
- 'Coordinated projects' under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act)
- Applications types listed in **column 2, Table 1** of the department's '*Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) terms of reference (TOR) for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision*' (ESR/2023/6577) that are not required to go through the CAC process (unless there are significant issues or potential impacts).

1.3 How to use this report

Relevant business Centres:

- Nominated assessing officer to fill in the CAC report including '**Assessing officer recommendation**' in **section 3.1** based on the assessment of: Part 4A (department interests); Part 4B (trigger criteria); Part 4C (standard criteria); and Part 4D (human rights). Relevant supporting documentation, such as maps, can be attached to the report including the assessment level decision (ALD) for major EA amendments.
- The CAC report must be approved and signed by the Manager.
- The relevant business centre should forward the CAC report, at a minimum of 3 days before the recommendation is required, to CAC members.

CAC members:

- Review the report including the assessing officers recommendation in section 3.1 and attend meeting.
- After the meeting, relevant Business Centre Director or Executive Director, fill in the '**CAC recommendation**' in **section 3.2** of this report. Then circulate to the CAC members present at the meeting to review, approve, and sign (via a SharePoint link).
- The relevant Business Centre Director will send the final signed CAC recommendation to the relevant delegate to be considered and recorded with the other application records/decision notice.

¹ Refer to Table 1 [Coordinated assessment committee \(CAC\) terms of reference \(TOR\) for an environmental impact statement \(EIS\) decision](#) (ESR/2023/6577).

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

2 Application

Application details	
Project name	Hail Creek Eastern Margin Extension
Environmental authority (EA) number	EPML00661913
EA holder	Hail Creek Coal Holdings Pty Limited; Marubeni Resources Development Pty Ltd and Sumisho Coal Development Queensland Pty Ltd
EA effective date	17 April 2023
Location description	ML4738 and ML700026
Regulated activity description	Resource Activity, Schedule 3 – 13: Mining black coal; Ancillary Activity, Schedule 2 – 08: Chemical storage 3; Ancillary Activity, Schedule 2 – 31: Mineral processing, 2; Ancillary Activity, Schedule 2 – 60: Waste disposal, 1; and Ancillary Activity, Schedule 2 – 63: Sewage treatment, 1
Principal applicant (if applicable and different to the EA holder)	Hail Creek Coal Holdings Pty Limited
Applicant preferred contact	sch4p4@glencore.com.au
Agent/service details (if applicable)	N/A
Application reference number	A-EA-AMD-100576264
Case number	C-EA-100576729
Edocs file reference	101/0000016-001(E)
Application type	Amendment to site-specific EA application (ss. 232 and 143 EP Act)
Business centre	Business Centre Coal
EIS decision due (min 3bd after CAC report) ²	11/03/2024
Information request due (s140 EP Act)	15/03/2024

Application summary	
Application summary	<p>On 11 January 2024, Hail Creek Coal Holdings Pty Limited (HCC) submitted an application (A-EA-AMD-100576264) to amend the environmental authority (EA) EPML00661913.</p> <p>The application proposes an expansion of 685ha around the Eastern margin of Hail Creek Open Cut (HCOC) by extending three existing pits, developing one new pit and realigning a haul road.</p> <p>On 24 January 2024, the department determined the application to be a major amendment due to significant increase in the scale and level of environmental harm by the relevant activity.</p> <p>The assessment level decision (ALD) was issued on 08 February 2024.</p> <p>The public notification stage applies. The major amendment fee was paid on 16 February 2024, and an information request (IR) will be due on 15 March 2024.</p>

² The CAC report must be provided to CAC at least three business days (3bd) prior to the EIS decision due date.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Background:

Hail Creek Coal Holdings Pty Limited (HCC), a subsidiary of Glencore Coal Assets Australia (GCAA), operates Hail Creek Open Cut (HCOC) mine.

EPML00661913 authorises following Environmentally Relevant Activities (ERA) to be conducted on mining leases (MLs) 4738 (all ERAs) and 700026 (infrastructure only):

- Schedule 3 - 13: Mining black coal
- Schedule 2 - 08: Chemical storage 3
- Schedule 2 - 31: Mineral processing, 2
- Schedule 2 - 60: Waste disposal, 1
- Schedule 2 - 63: Sewage treatment, 1

ML4738 was granted in December 1977 and has been extended until December 2040. The construction began in 2001 with first coal produced in 2003. Mining at HCOC is through a combination of conventional open cut strip mining, and terrace truck and shovel mining methods. The Run of Mine (RoM) coal extraction rate is a maximum of 20 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa).

Amendment:

As per condition A3 of EPML00661913:

“In carrying out the mining activity authorised by this environmental authority, disturbance of land:

- (a) may occur in the areas marked ‘A’;*
- (b) must not occur in the areas marked ‘B’; and*
- (c) may occur in the areas marked ‘C’ and ‘D’ on the map that is Schedule 1 – Figure 2 to this environmental authority, but only in accordance with condition A4 (Figure 1 below).”*

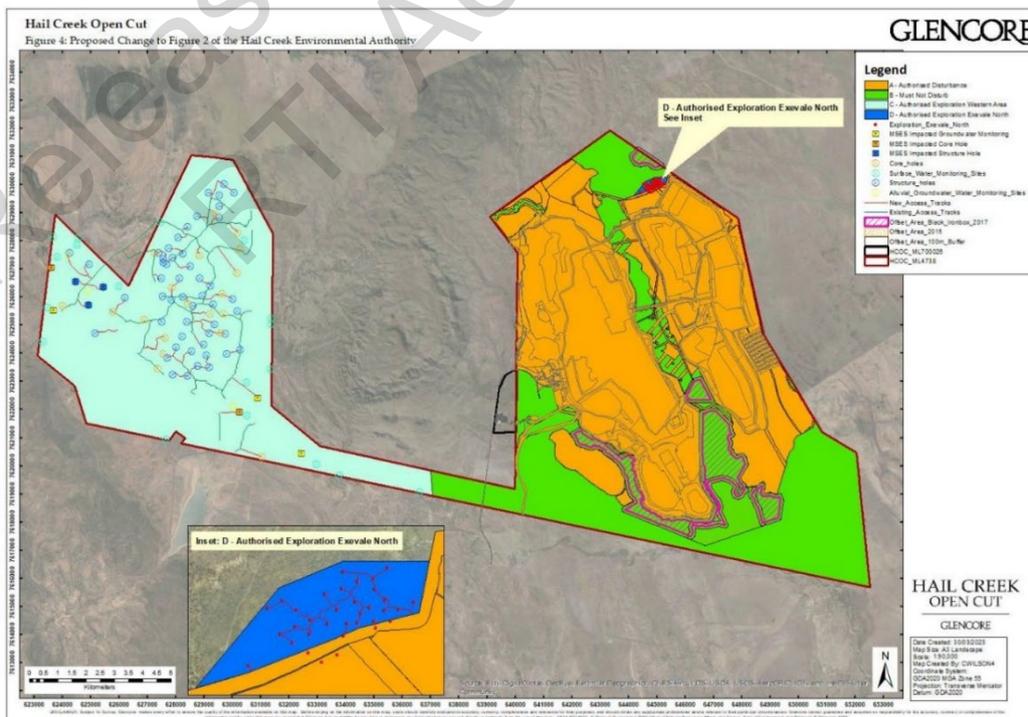


Figure 1 – Authorised Extent of Disturbance

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

The amendment proposes to carry out activities in areas marked as B by expanding HCOC's existing approved disturbance footprint for the following five areas (Figure 1):

- Area 1 - Kemmis Pit Extension: the clearing and mining of an additional 6.3ha
- Area 2 - Homevale Pit (new): clearing and mining of 136.6ha
- Area 3 - Exeveale Pit Extension: the clearing and mining of an additional 140.28ha
- Area 4 - Carrinyah Pit Extension: the clearing and mining of an additional 395.99ha
- Area 5 - Haul Road Realignment: will decrease the surface road area from 12.15ha to 8.26ha of which 5.4ha will be outside of the Approved Disturbance.

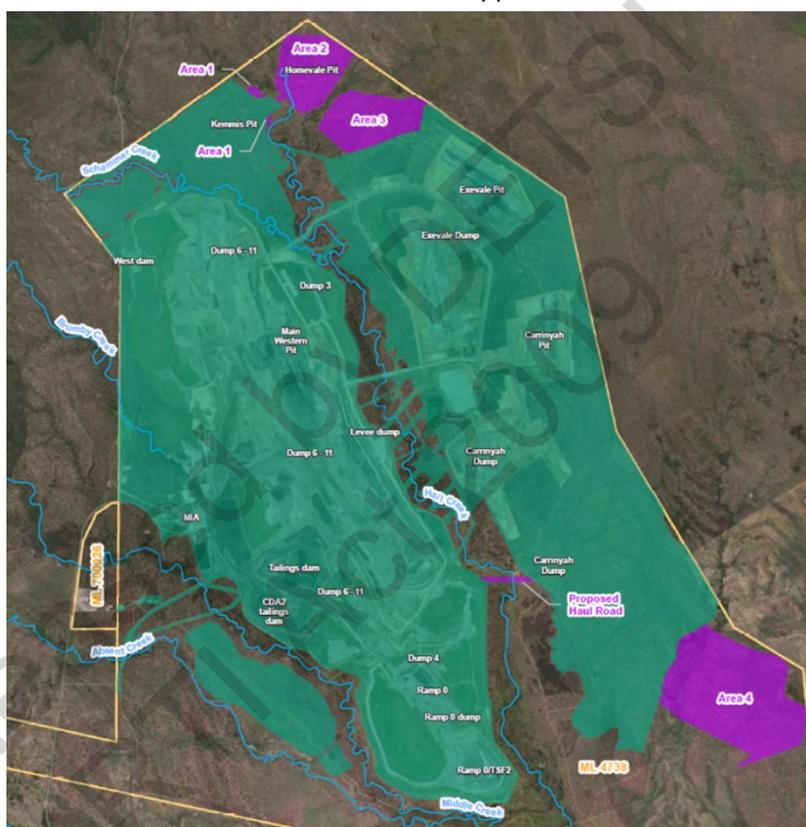


Figure 2 – Proposed Extent of Disturbance (purple areas)

The justification for the amendment has been stated as: “Due to changes in mine sequencing, improvements in mining efficiency and further resource definition, an extension to the approved mining footprint of the Carrinyah and Exeveale Pits is required to continue mining at HCOC.”

There are two offset areas located within ML4738, the Black Ironbox Offset Area and the 2015 Offset Area. Both areas are Declared Environmental Offset Protection Areas under the *Environmental Offset Act 2014*. Mining disturbance within these areas, including a buffer zone of 100m, is prohibited. However, 2.16ha of the proposed haul road is located within the 100m Buffer of 2017 Black Ironbox Offset Area (Figure 3 below). The reason for realignment has been stated as to retain a ‘Rockbar’ that is of significance to the local indigenous community and to improve driver safety by providing safer access.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision



Figure 3: Haul Road Realignment

The existing EPBC Act approval for the Hail Creek Eastern Margin Project includes the current haul road footprint. HCOG has discussed this aspect of the project with DCCEEW who will provide advice on the appropriate approval pathway.

The amendment application also proposes to divert upper portion of Hail Creek; a defined watercourse. Hail Creek traverses between existing open cut pits and a diversion is required for the operation of Homevale Pit (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Watercourse diversion (Hail Creek – purple line)

The amendment application states it does not seek to increase the approved ROM coal extraction rate (20 Mtpa), life of mine (LOM) (due to end in 2040), and/or include new ERAs. However, the proposed mining schedule will extend:

- the operational life of the CHPP from 2035 to 2043;
- the time until rehabilitation of the site is complete from 2037 to 2045; and
- the expected time until all external draining areas are allowed to be free draining from 2039 to 2047.

It is proposed to confirm the statement that LOM will not be extended via an information request (IR).

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

	<p>Impacts on EA</p> <p>The proposed amendments to EPML00661913 are as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the wording in Condition A3 the same but amend Schedule 1, Figure 2 to include disturbance post EA amendment. • Amend Table J1 - Authorised Impacts to Proscribed Environmental Matters to update total maximum extent of impact. • Inclusion of new schedule K (Watercourse diversions) as per <u>Model Mining Conditions</u>. <p>In addition, the amendment proposes to update several conditions within Schedule J that are outdated.</p>
<p>Total proposed disturbance</p>	<p>687.4ha</p> <p>Note: The proposed disturbance above includes pre-approved area of haul road realignment (2.4ha). The total new proposed disturbance is 685ha.</p>
<p>Total disturbance in MSES, MNES, ESA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 275.11ha of Regulated Vegetation (MSES, Of Concern) • 49.05ha of Vegetation Associated with a Watercourse (MSES) • 603.54ha of Connectivity area (MSES) • 600.17ha of Squatter Pigeon (Southern) habitat (MSES and MNES- Vulnerable) • 599.55ha of Koala habitat (MSES and MNES – Endangered) <p>Note: It is to note that a protected area, Homevale National Park, is located immediately east of the Project area. However, the impacts of proposed disturbance were not assessed and rather the assessment from 2015 was deemed sufficient which concluded no direct and minimal indirect residual impacts (unlikely to extend far ~30m). Further information will be required during IR stage.</p>
<p>Distance to nearest sensitive receptor</p>	<p>R1 (Fort Cooper Homestead) is located approximately 4 km south of the proposed Area 4-Carrinyah Pit Extension (Figure 5).</p>  <p>Figure 5: Location of sensitive receptors</p>
<p>Distance to nearest</p>	<p>~ 35 km north-west (straight line) of the township of Nebo</p>

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

populated area ¹	
-----------------------------	--

3. Recommendation (to be completed after sections 4A, B, C and D)

In making this recommendation, the department’s guideline *Criteria for environmental impact statements for resource projects under the Environmental Protection Act 1994* (ESR/2016/2167) assists the administering authority to carry out its functions and responsibilities in accordance with the EP Act. This includes empowerment of the right to require an EIS for a resource project if consideration of the standard criteria (and any other relevant considerations) shows an EIS should be required, irrespective of the triggers in this guideline.

3.1 Assessing officer recommendation

Recommendation—Assessing officer					
<p>After completing Parts A, B, C and D of this report, mark which of the following applies:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EIS is recommended</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EIS is not recommended</p> <p>Reasons for recommendation:</p> <p>The recommendation is based on the assessing officer’s understanding of previous decisions to require (or not) an EIS. Typically, EIS decisions are reserved for projects that are not only environmentally complex but are likely to require numerous additional approvals from many other departments and statutes. Consequently, a level of ‘coordinated assessment’ would benefit the applicant, other departments, as well as the wider community / interested stakeholders in gaining a complete picture of the project’s impacts. This application is unlikely to require that, apart from a Commonwealth approval under EPBC Act.</p> <p>As detailed in section 4.2 below, the proposed amendment is likely to raise community concerns due to Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and impacts on Koala habitat. The IR stage could be used to direct the applicant for providing robust, site specific and direct measurements of Scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions resultant from the proposed amendment. Similarly, information based on best-practice methods to adequately assess Koala presence/use of the site could be acquired during IR stage.</p> <p>Further relevant information required to determine impacts due to proposed expansion and management measures will also be achieved during IR stage.</p>					
Assessing officer:	Maryem Arshad, Senior Environmental Officer	As per email	Date:	4/03/2024	
Endorsing officer 1:	Emma Burgess, Team Leader	As per email	Date:	4/03/2024	
Endorsing officer 2:	Alison Cummings, Manager	sch4p4(6	Date:	4/03/2024	

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

3.2 CAC recommendation

Recommendation—CAC				
<p>The CAC make the following recommendation to the delegate:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EIS is recommended</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EIS is not recommended</p> <p>Reasons for recommendation:</p> <p>INSERT reasons. Where recommendations are not unanimous, record any differing views.</p>				
CAC member and position	INSERT name, position	Signature	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
CAC member and position	INSERT name, position	Signature	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
CAC member and position	INSERT name, position	Signature	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
CAC member and position	INSERT name, position	Signature	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
CAC member and position	INSERT name, position	Signature	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
CAC member and position	INSERT name, position	Signature	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

4. Assessment

Part 4A: DES Interests

4.1 Additional approval processes required (provide or attach details where necessary):

- None
- Other applications received by the department for project
- A process under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*
- Commonwealth processes under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Other INSERT details

Commonwealth approval:

The impacts to Prescribed Environmental Matters will likely require referral to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) under *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC). No such referral has been made so far.

Other:

The progressive rehabilitation and closure (PRC) plan and schedule were submitted to the department on 31 October 2023, in response to transition notice issued on 23 July 2021. The IR notice was issued by the department on 11 January 2024 with IR response due on 26 July 2024. The application proposes to further update the PRC plan on approval of the EA amendment application.

Note: Regarding a regional interests development approval (RIDA), there are no strategic (cropping and environmental) and/or priority (living and agricultural) areas mapped for currently approved and/or proposed disturbance areas.

4.2 Special considerations (attach details where necessary):

- Affects an environmentally sensitive area (A, B, or C)
- Involves a large number of individual decisions
- Is likely to generate significant community concern
- Needs policy change to approve
- Applicant suitability
- Significant issues with another Queensland Government/Australian Government authority
- Involves impacts on an existing legally secured offset area under State and/or Commonwealth legislation
- Another special circumstance which significantly elevates environmental, social, or economic risks beyond those usual for this type of project
- Other INSERT details

Community Concern:

The proposed amendment is likely to generate significant community concerns for following aspects:

- GHG emissions – HCOC mainly produces coking coal that is prepared in the primary CHPP washing process. Thermal product is, however, also produced from the secondary washing process. Due to nature of mining methods (open cut) and type of coal being produced (Thermal), there are high chances of fugitive emissions during the operations. The application does not provide any information regarding the contribution of proposed extension on GHG emissions and what abatement strategies are in place to manage those emissions. An air quality and greenhouse gas assessment (AQGHGA) was

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

completed previously in 2015 but did not assess any GHG emissions (i.e., methane) and as per the proposed application “*is not representative of current scenario.*” A report by [EMBER](#) (2023) concluded that HCM “*produced methane emissions more than 10 times that reported to regulators.*” As per Queensland Resource industry development plan (June 2022), decarbonisation commitments are critical to achieve Queensland’s emissions reduction targets for 2023 and 2050. It is proposed to seek further information that meets the requirements of the departments draft GHG emissions guideline on the GHG emissions and GHG abatement plan in relation to the proposed amendment via the IR.

- Koala habitat impact – the proposed expansion has been determined to have significant residual impacts (SRI) on 599.55 ha of Koala habitat. The application identifies only regional ecosystem (RE) 11.3.25 as ‘high quality’ koala habitat whilst other REs have been determined to be important too (e.g., RE 11.9.9) by the department’s ecology expert (Amanda Freeman). Although an offset has been proposed to be obtained under State and Commonwealth approvals (an overlapping prescribed environmental matter), there are chances for significant community concern. The koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory) was listed as endangered on 12 February 2022. Since then, there is heightened community awareness and interest for Koala and its habitat related matters.
- Watercourse diversion (Hail Creek) - watercourses are key components of landscapes and communities across Queensland. They are valued for their water supply, recreation, environmental values and for aesthetic and cultural reasons. As a result, proposals to divert watercourses can generate community interest and require regulatory approval.

‘Other’ special consideration:

- Biodiversity corridor – the northern section of the ML 4738 contains a Statewide Biodiversity Corridor that contains tracts of continuous remnant vegetation and wildlife refugia and recognises an important east-west linkage to Homevale National Park ([BPAACA report & BB-BPA Expert Panel Report v2.1](#)). Habitat loss and fragmentation in the corridor, where proposed amendment Areas 1, 2, and 3 are situated, would weaken this important linkage, and effectively isolate the habitat that remains in the central section of the mine site along Hail Creek. The proposed final land use (after closure) of grazing for this corridor also does not reflect best practice given the topography and vegetation of area.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

4.3 Pre-lodgement advice

Provide information on date, who and what advice was given during the pre-lodgement meeting.

On 26 October 2023, department sent an email (eDoc#18797503) to the applicant in regards with inclusion of watercourse diversion in this amendment application. The email also contained detailed information about EA amendment application requirements.

On 13 December 2023, A pre-lodgement meeting took place between the applicant and the department. Following advice was given by the department:

1. Significant residual impact assessment relates to the cumulative impacts of the entire project (existing and proposed).
2. Explain full extent of haul road realignment including aspects of driver safety.
3. Groundwater schedule of EPML00661913 will need significant changes/improvement specifically around the monitoring frequency. Currently it is biannually (6 monthly) which is not suitable given the compliance framework is triggered after 3 consecutive exceedances and under the current scenario there will be 18 months past the actual event before any compliance actions could be taken. A Quarterly (every 3 months) monitoring frequency was advised by the department. It was also advised to include the improvement of the GW schedule as part of this major amendment and not as a separate amendment later on. It is critical to address this issue as soon as possible towards demonstrating that site at closure is non-polluting.
4. The applicant also discussed that some of the alluvial bores are dry and thus it's hard to take sample. The department advised to still attend those bores as per monitoring schedule (discussed in point 3 above) and if it's dry just record the observation.
5. Upon inquiring the interaction with PRCP (currently awaiting IR response), the department advised that post approval of proposed amendment, a PRCP change application can be submitted which will be reassessed as new application. The department also highlighted that the proposed amendment should have reasonably minimal impact on the timeline for PRCP schedule.

At the end of meeting, the applicant advised that they would contact DCCEEW to discuss offset for MNES. The department stated that a site visit will be scheduled for the proposed major amendment.

4.4 Other issues

Provide information on any other issue not covered in this CAC report.

4.5 Key matters

If an impact is indicated, provide information on the level and significance of the impact on the matter. See notes section below for discussion of level of risk and significance of impact on the following matters:

- matters of state environmental significance (MSES) and related matters
- matters of national environmental significance (MNES)
- other biodiversity matters.
- coastal
- resource allocation

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

- tenure issues
- water issues
- air issues
- cultural and heritage issues
- impacts on surrounds and transport
- social issues.

4.5.1 Matters of state environmental significance (MSES³) and related matters

<p>High Regulated vegetation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - endangered and or concern regional ecosystems (REs) - REs that intersect with a watercourse on vegetation management (VM) watercourse map - REs that intersect with a wetland on a VM wetland map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REs that are also essential habitat for endangered and vulnerable species 	<p>High Protected wildlife habitat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - endangered and vulnerable protected flora - three types of koala habitat: bushland koala habitat, medium value rehabilitation habitat, and high value rehabilitation habitat (SEQ) - habitat for animal that is endangered, vulnerable, or special least concern
<p>Medium Connectivity areas</p>	<p>NA. Wetlands: wetland protection areas, high ecological significance wetlands, high ecological value wetlands and waterways</p>
<p>Low Protected areas</p>	<p>NA. Strategic environmental area</p>
<p>NA. Fish habitat areas</p>	<p>NA. Highly protected marine park zones</p>
<p>NA. Marine plants</p>	<p>NA. Watercourse providing for fish passage</p>
	<p>Medium Legally secured offset areas</p>

³ For definitions of MSES refer to schedule 2 of the Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Notes:

Significant residual impacts (SRI) were determined to occur to multiple prescribed environmental matters (PEMs) and are detailed in Table 1 below.

The Brigalow Belt (North) Koala population is predicted to decline by 63% between 2012 and 2032 ([Adams-Hosking et al. 2016](#)) and the Hail Creek Mine extension would contribute to this decline by resulting in loss of 599.55ha of koala habitat; 15% increase on the 3896ha of koala habitat currently authorised for disturbance (EA 2023) at the site. The previous assessments carried out by the applicant, such as Terrestrial Ecology Assessment Report (EcoSM 2015), concluded that the Hail Creek mine site supported “a reasonable abundance” of Koalas and that the Koala population that occurred on the mine site and nearby areas was “likely to be quite large and therefore potentially a key source population.”

Koala habitat in the northern section of the ML 4738 intersects a Statewide Biodiversity Corridor (Figure 6) that recognises an important east-west linkage that includes Homevale National Park. This corridor contains tracts of continuous remnant vegetation and wildlife refugia ([BPAACA report & BB-BPA Expert Panel Report v2.1](#)). Habitat loss and fragmentation in this northern section of the mining lease, where proposed amendment Areas 1, 2, and 3 are situated, would weaken this important linkage, and effectively isolate the habitat that remains in the central section of the mine site along Hail Creek. The amendment Areas 2 and 3 are likely to be particularly important for Koala as REs they support (11.9.9 and 11.4.2) are dominated by tree species identified as important to koala in the Brigalow Belt ([Youngentob 2021](#)).

More recently, WildNet recorded koala in the southern part of the mining lease in October 2019. Clearing of proposed Area 4 would weaken the remaining connectivity in the southern part of the mining lease, effectively severing the southern end of Hail Creek from the National Park. As these areas will remain voids, there is also little prospect of connectivity being restored.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

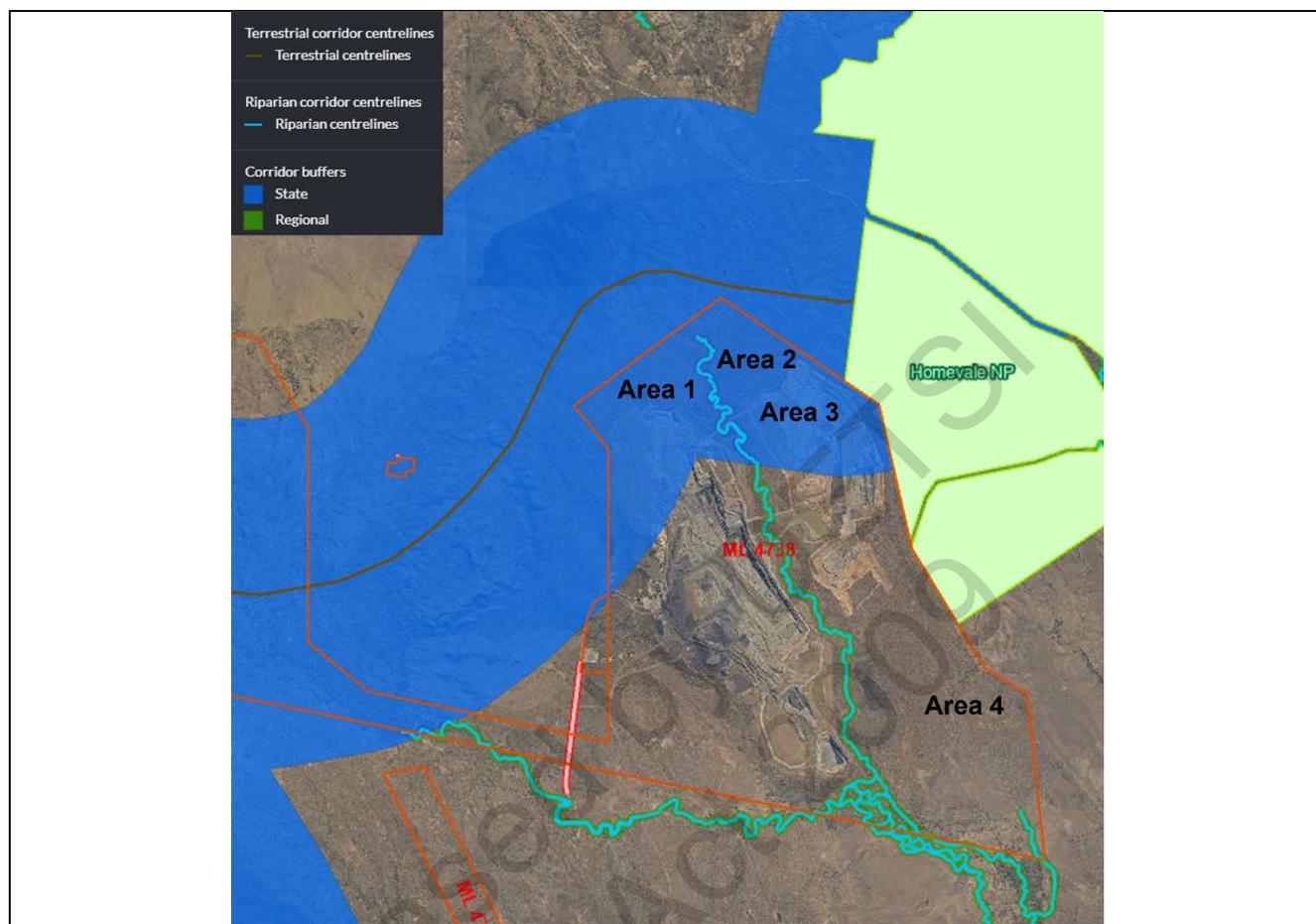


Figure 6: State Biodiversity Corridor

It is to note that the previous assessment (EcoSM, 2015) identified only RE 11.3.25 as ‘high quality’ koala habitat, with other areas considered ‘lower quality.’ RE 11.3.25 is an ecosystem that fringes water courses and is certainly of high value to koalas. However, other REs are important too (Table 1). The value of the koala habitat at each of the proposed pits can be inferred from:

1. The REs mapped at each proposed pit location.
2. The modelled suitability of those REs as koala habitat (Runge *et al.* 2021).

Table 1 – Koala Habitat Quality

Amendment Area	REs	Approximate Area ¹	Suitability ²
Area 2	11.9.9	139	Very High
Area 3	11.9.9	70	Very High
	11.4.2	70	Medium
Area 4	11.9.2	207	Medium
	11.9.7	207	Medium

¹ From pit areas stated in application (Figs 15-17) – these areas will differ from the total area (599.55 ha) calculated as significant residual impact due to the habitat criteria applied. Includes inlaying riparian ecosystems along waterways.

² Runge, C.A., Rhodes, J.R., Lopez-Cubillos, D.S. 2021. Mapping koala habitat for greater Queensland report. NESP Threatened Species Recovery Hub Project 4.4.12 report, Brisbane.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

In addition, the extension would result in loss of connectivity with remaining habitat along Hail Creek, black ironbox habitat offset areas, and glossy black-cockatoo habitat, reducing the value of habitat retained within the centre of the mining lease, and the capacity for fauna to recolonise rehabilitated areas upon mine closure.

SRI to these PEMs (Table 2) will require environmental offsets for State and Commonwealth approvals. Details of the offsets have not been supplied in the application supporting material and will be required during IR stage.

The SRIs were determined as remain or likely to remain impacts despite on-site avoidance and mitigation measures (Figure 12 Mitigation hierarchy in EAR). More details about mitigation measures will be required during IR stage.

Moreover, there are two legally secured offset areas located within ML4738, the Black Ironbox Offset Area and the 2015 Offset Area. Mining disturbance within these areas, including a buffer zone of 100m, is prohibited. However, 2.16 ha of the proposed haul road realignment is located within the 100m Buffer of 2017 Black Ironbox Offset Area. The applicant has stated that matter has been brought to the attention of DCCEEW who will provide advice on the appropriate approval pathway. More information will be required during information stage.

Table 2: Summary of Environmental Matters and Quantification of Significant Residual Impact

Environmental Matter	Type of matter for which significant residual impact will occur	Quantity (ha)
Regulated Vegetation (of concern VM Act status)	MSES	0.71ha of RE 11.3.2 15.01ha of RE 11.3.4 82.13ha of RE 11.4.2 3.99ha of RE 11.9.4 173.27ha of RE 11.9.7 Total of 275.11 ha
Vegetation Associated with a Watercourse	MSES	1.14ha of RE 11.3.25 4.02ha of RE 11.3.4 0.76ha of RE 11.4.2 8.12ha of RE 11.9.2 11.07ha of RE 11.9.7 23.94ha of RE 11.9.9 Total of 49.05 ha
Connectivity	MSES	603.54 ha
Squatter Pigeon (Southern)	MSES and MNES (Overlapping prescribed matter)	600.17 ha
Koala	MSES and MNES (Overlapping prescribed matter)	599.55 ha

4.5.2 Matters of national environmental significance (MNES)

High	Listed threatened species and ecological communities under the EPBC Act	NA.	A water resource in relation to CSG and large coal mining developments
NA.	Wetlands of international importance	NA.	Migratory species (international agreements)
NA.	World Heritage Properties	NA.	National Heritage places

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

NA. Commonwealth marine areas	NA. Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
NA. Nuclear actions	
<p>Notes:</p> <p>As shown in Table 1 above, MNES where a significant impact under the EPBC Act have been identified as likely to occur include Koala (599.55ha) and Squatter Pigeon (Southern) habitat (600.17ha).</p> <p>In addition, two Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) were ground truthed to be found in the study area. These are Brigalow (RE 11.9.5) and Semi-evergreen vine thickets (SEVTs) of the Brigalow Belt (RE 11.9.4). As per EPBC Act MNES significant impact guidelines, it is unlikely that the development of project will cause a significant impact to these TECs. In brief, the Project footprint has been designed to completely avoid areas of RE 11.9.5 and 11.9.4 where possible. Two small polygons of RE 11.9.4 (3.99ha) will be unavoidable. However, these two polygons are small in size and hence contain a high degree of edge effect and are isolated in the local region.</p>	

4.5.3 Other biodiversity matters

High	Endangered, vulnerable, and special least concern species (NC Act) ⁴	Low	Environmentally sensitive areas Category A, B and C, including National Parks, State forests etc.
High	Vegetation clearing	NA.	Terrestrial ecology
Low	³ Groundwater dependent ecosystems		
<p>Notes:</p> <p>High (species): In addition to Koala and Squatter Pigeon (Southern), as stated above in Table 1, following species (NC Act status) have also been observed at the project site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White-throated Needletail (Vulnerable) • Glossy-black Cockatoo (Vulnerable) • Southern and Central Greater Glider (Endangered) • Ornamental Snake (Vulnerable) • Short-beaked Echidna (Endangered) <p>As per details provided in section 4 of Appendix A (Environmental Matters Offset Report), the development of the project is unlikely to significantly impact the species.</p> <p>Low (ESA): Homevale National Park is located immediately east of the Project area. However, the impacts of proposed disturbance were not assessed and rather the assessment from 2015 was deemed sufficient which concluded no direct and minimal indirect residual impacts (unlikely to extend far ~30m).</p> <p>High (vegetation clearing): As stated in Table 1 above, the development of project will involve clearing of regulated vegetation with an 'Of concern' or 'Endangered' VM Act status; and essential habitat for protected wildlife (e.g., Squatter pigeon).</p>			

⁴ NC Act - Nature Conservation Act 1992

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Both the clearings constitute PEMs to which SRI and hence requirements for environmental offset under State and/or Commonwealth legislation have been identified. More information about environmental offsets will be required in the IR.

Low (GDE):

Based on national studies, the GDE Atlas indicates potential terrestrial GDEs occur in the vicinity of HCOG. There have been no field studies to confirm the presence of terrestrial GDEs in these areas, their level of dependence on groundwater and their resilience or potential sensitivity to changes in groundwater levels. It has been assumed that the depth to groundwater along the riparian zones will generally be much less than across the rest of the site, with creeks being the low points in the topography, and mature deeper-rooted vegetation along the relatively undisturbed riparian zones may access this groundwater for some of their water requirements in a facultative manner. More details regarding field verification of the presence of GDE's will be required in the IR.

4.5.4 Coastal

NA. Coastal hazard (erosion, storm tide inundation)	NA. Structures (jetties, pontoons, seawalls)
NA. Reclamation	NA. Port development
NA. Dredging and spoil disposal	NA. Quarry material extraction from tidal water
NA. Artificial waterways (canal estates, lakes)	NA. Impacts on marine systems
NA. Public access to coastal and marine resources	
Notes: HCOG mine is located in non-coastal bioregion.	

4.5.5 Resource allocation

Low Mining	NA. Gas / Petroleum
NA. Commercial opportunities on National Parks and marine parks	NA. Occupation of fish habitat area (resource allocation under the Fisheries Act)
NA. Allocation of public resources (physical and natural resources, environmental capacity)	NA. Quarry material allocation under the CPM Act (quarry material extraction from below tidal water)
NA. Water allocation	
Notes: Mining black (thermal) coal. The amendment application does not seek to increase the approved ROM coal production (20 Mtpa). More information about the additional tonnes of ROM will be required in the IR.	

4.5.6 Tenure

Low Protected areas	NA. Native title interests
NA. Offshore jurisdiction	NA. Commonwealth jurisdiction
NA. Interstate jurisdiction	Low Legally secured offset area
NA. Occupancy of unallocated state land under tidal waters	

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Notes:

Homevale National Park is located immediately east of the Project area. The proposed amendment will not change the distance between the mining activities and the park.

There are two legally secured offset areas located within ML4738, the Black Ironbox Offset Area and the 2015 Offset Area. Mining disturbance within these areas, including a buffer zone of 100m, is prohibited. However, 2.16ha of the proposed haul road realignment is located within the 100m Buffer of 2017 Black Ironbox Offset Area. The applicant has stated that the matter has been brought to the attention of DCCEEW who will provide advice on the appropriate approval pathway. More information will be required in the IR.

4.5.7 Land

Low Land disturbance	NA. Land use history and compatibility
NA. Contaminated land	NA. Areas of regional interest ⁵
NA. Acid sulfate soils	NA. Compliance with planning schemes
NA. Erosion/stability	Medium Rehabilitation and subsequent use
NA. Subsidence	Medium Rehabilitation issues (for existing activities)
NA. Landscape	High Final voids
NA. Sustainable use	Medium Progressive rehabilitation and closure plan
Low Effects on hydrology (surface and underground)	NA. Non-acid forming and potentially acid forming mater
NA. Native title rights	

Notes:

Low (Land disturbance):

The EA authorises disturbance on ML4738 and ML700026 with maximum extent of disturbance of 20,380ha and 140ha respectively. This makes the total maximum extent of disturbance authorised under EA EPML00661913 to be 20,520ha. This amendment application proposes an extension of 685ha by extending the five areas (Areas 1 – 5, see Application details section) and is NOT more than 10% of the existing area.

Medium and High (Rehabilitation and PRCP):

The supporting information document states that the proposed amendment will comply with Table H1 – Rehabilitation Requirements of EA and the PRCP submitted to the department on 31 October 2023. It is to note that since the size and location of new Homevale pit is not specified in pre-approved land outcome documents (EA and Rio Tinto 2017), the applicant is required to comply with sections 126C(1)(g)(h) and 126D(2)(3) of the EP Act 1994. Moreover, as per the PRCP Guidelines, any expansion to an existing site must also demonstrate how it has been designed for closure.

The application also lacks details about how the proposed amendment in LOM plan will affect the achievement of rehabilitation milestones proposed in PRCP application and as such this information will be required during IR. Finally, the final landform design (Figure 51 in EAR) is showing land use of *grazing* for undisturbed area. The undisturbed land must reflect pre-mining land use. This is especially important for the biodiversity corridor

⁵ <https://planning.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/planning-issues-and-interests/areas-of-regional-interest>

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

located in north of ML 4738 which has high elevation and native vegetation. Slopes >15% are not suitable for grazing and PMLU of native ecosystem is more appropriate and acceptable for undisturbed areas containing native vegetation. More information will be required during IR stage.

**It is to note that the final landform Figure provided along with application shows Kemmis pit area as PMLU (grazing), however, in the proposed PRCP it was a NUMA. It will be clarified during IR.*

Low (Hydrology):

For effects on Hydrology, please see section 4.5.8 (Water) below.

4.5.8 Water

Low Water quality	Low Discharges
Low Groundwater	Low Surface water
Low Hydrology	Unknown Diversions
Low Cumulative impacts (e.g. groundwater)	Low Impacts on stream flows (geomorphological)
NA. Impacts on bank stability	NA. Waterways management
NA. Impacts on freshwater systems	NA. Regulated structures (e.g. dams)
NA. Cumulative management areas under the <i>Water Act 2000</i>	NA. EPP (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) 2019 limits

Notes:

Surface water

HCOOC is located within a 460km² catchment of Bee Creek which flows into Funnel Creek before reaching Connors River and the Isaac River. Several ephemeral creeks flow through the ML area (Figure 7). These include Hail Creek, Schammer Creek, Absent Creek, Middle Creek, and Brumby Creek.

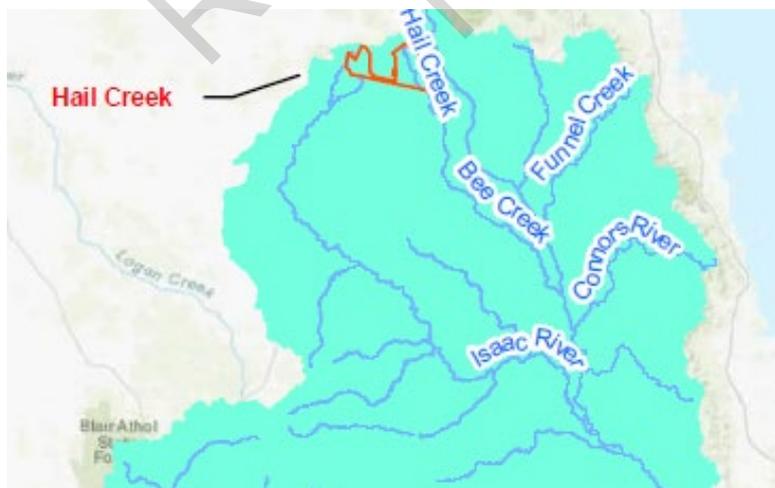


Figure 7: Regional catchment

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

- Hail Creek is a defined watercourse and traverses between existing open cut pits. The upper portion of Hail Creek is required to be diverted for the operation of the Homevale Pit (please see Figure 4 in summary section above). Diversions are likely to have an impact on aquatic ecosystems (EV) of the Hail Creek tributary. The changes in the catchment area of Hail Creek (5-10%) and hydrological regime of tributaries flowing through, or in the vicinity of, the Offset Area have the potential to influence streamflow frequency and duration, and to peak discharge rates and duration of inundation. However, the detailed assessment has shown that those impacts are not discernible and hence no impact on the Black Ironbark population in the offset area. More details about diversions and their impacts will be required in the IR.
Moreover, for watercourse diversion to be approved under EP Act 1994, the application must contain the functional design of the diversion (preferably certified by SQEP) and as per section 3 of Guideline. However, not all requirements of functional design have been met in the submitted application documents i.e., substrate criteria. Last but not least, the application does not clearly state whether the diversion will be temporary or permanent and hence no assessment of relevant outcomes. These details will be required in the IR.
- No run-off management from out-of-pit waste storage facilities is required since reject material will be deposited back in the existing out-of-pit storages i.e., spoil dumps. The existing out of pit spoils have been characterised as inert and unlikely to contain any significant quantities of contaminants of concern. However, with increase in spoil material being deposited, the probability of export of contaminants from these storage facilities will increase. The application states that after putting an Emergency Management Plan in place (to manage any spill), the residual risks are negligible. More information about the EMP will be required in the IR.
- The approval of proposed amendment will increase the total mine pit footprint extent by 22% (from 2,873ha to 3,511ha). The water balance model shows that negligible change in the predicted storage volumes within the pit is foreseen if the extended footprint scenario were to be approved. Excess water accumulating in the proposed Homevale pit will be transferred to the Eastern Release Dam. Surface dam levels will be maintained with sufficient freeboard to ensure limited potential for spilling or overtopping. When the dam levels rise above this, excess water, which cannot be discharged in accordance with the controlled releases requirements will be transferred to Ramp 3 & 5 for temporary storage. More information about the storage capacity of surface dams, pit voids and temporary water storage (Ramp 3 and 5) during operational phase and under significant weather events (i.e., 0.1% AEP) will be required in the IR.
- The flood modelling for the 0.1% AEP demonstrated that peak flood levels are generally within +/-200mm of the existing conditions. Local drainage paths have and will be adjusted to reduce the volume of stormwater and runoff entering mine affected areas and ensure the operations can continue safely even during flooding conditions. This includes the existing Brumby Creek diversion as well as construction of levees and drainage channels around the Kemmis, Exevale and Carrinyah pits. Any flood water level increases between the existing and operational scenarios are predominantly contained within the lease boundary. Generally downstream impacts are minor reduction in flood water levels.
- On an annual average basis, the site is predicted to discharge between 800 and 1,200ML to the receiving waterways. The current EA controlled release requirements only allow for discharge during periods when the receiving waterways are flowing. Given this release regime, flows directly downstream are likely to generally be lower than pre-mining conditions, but potentially slightly elevated following significant rainfall events. These flow impacts are not expected to differ from the impacts associated with the current approved footprint, however the impacts will continue for a longer

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

timeframe, reducing gradually as the site is progressively rehabilitated. The supporting information document states that there are no changes proposed to the authorised frequency or volume of mine affected water releases from HCOC because of the proposed project. However, more details about the impacts of longer flow duration on the downstream receiving environment on total volume of mine affected water that could be released will be required in the IR.

- Erosion and scouring potential exceeded the ACARP Guideline criteria for all 5 diversions (4 drainage features and 1 watercourse diversion). The application stated that TUFLOW modelling, to determine erosion and scouring potential, was based on the depth-averaged approach and are therefore appropriate for use as indicative information only. Location specific modelling to accurately analyse stability will be required in the IR.
- Residual void modelling over a period of 200 years following closure and with 100 different sequences of rainfall showed that:
 - Residual voids will have sufficient capacity below spill level; and
 - For the three voids containing larger volumes (Carrinyah, Exevale and Western Margin), the salinity levels are expected to remain below the ANZECC cattle drinking guidelines for at least 100 years following cessation of mining.

Groundwater

Hail Creek is defined as a watercourse under the Water Act criteria, and several tributaries of Hail Creek that traverse the Project Area are defined as drainage features. The predominant geological units within the study area are: Quaternary Alluvium, Tertiary Basalts, Triassic Rewan Group Sediments and Permian Coal Measures.

- Third party usage of groundwater in the vicinity of HCOC is considered negligible to non-existent (one bore ~ 8km east of the southern end of Carrinyah Pit and in a different catchment to HCOC).
- No potential for groundwater quality impacts outside of HCOC associated with spoil dumps, due to the final mine voids acting as groundwater sinks, capturing shallow groundwater from infrastructure areas and out of pit spoil deposits, and the spoil having minimal acid forming potential.
- Total groundwater inflow to the extension pits is predicted to be 6.5 times less than what is currently approved.
- The creeks within the vicinity are ephemeral and therefore the proposed extension will have no impact on groundwater-surface water interaction.
- Groundwater pH values across HCOC ranges from 7.0 and 7.4 with TDS (80th percentile) values of 1000 - <4000mg/L (suitable for stock watering).
- The cumulative predicted groundwater drawdown (1m drawdown contour) is localised with small impacts outside of the lease (up to 3km). A substantial majority of the predicted cumulative drawdown has been reported to not be related to the proposed extensions but results from existing and approved mining.
- In terms of sources of groundwater contamination, a geochemical assessment of mine waste material shows that the acid and salinity risk from mineral waste at HCOC has not increased in the 21 years of mining to date.
- The riparian corridors of Hail Creek, Bee Creek, Middle Creek, and some channel sections, have been designated high-moderate potential aquatic and terrestrial GDEs. However, given their ephemeral nature, and low likely potential of deeper-rooted vegetation to access groundwater due to the depth to groundwater along the riparian zones being ~2-10m, no impacts on surface and/or terrestrial GDE's have been determined. As stated above, there have been no field studies to confirm the presence of terrestrial GDEs in these areas, their level of dependence on groundwater and their resilience or potential sensitivity to changes in groundwater levels. More details in regards with field verification of the presence of GDE's will be required in the IR.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

- Also, Brumby Waterhole (BWH) is a surface water feature located 1.2km north-west of Exeveale pit on a tributary of Hail Creek (Figure 8). BWH has cultural and ecological significance (dry season refuge for *least concern* aquatic fauna). The proposed extension to Exeveale pit will bring open cut mining within 500m of BWH. Hydrogeological assessment (Appendix E) concludes that the groundwater contributions (water level, flow, quality, seepage) to or from these pools are absent or negligible. This is because the groundwater model predicts that interaction between the water holes and the regional groundwater system is negligible.

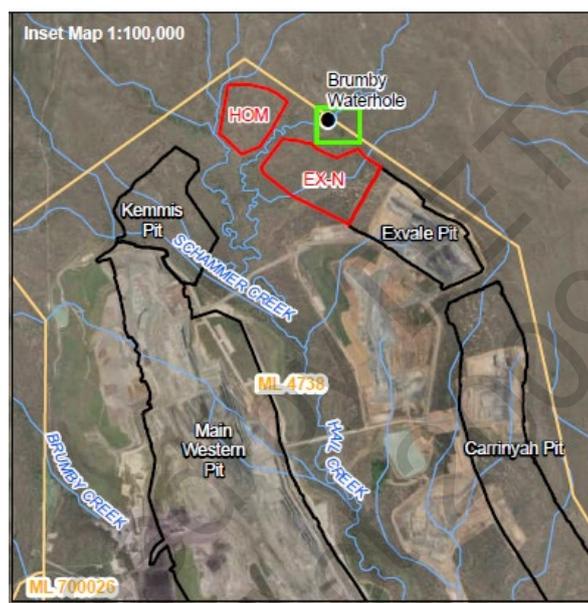


Figure 8: Brumby Water Hole Location

Overall, justification about efficacy of current groundwater monitoring network to capture the impacts from proposed disturbance will be required during IR stage.

4.5.9 Air

NA. Air shed management	NA. Pollution
Low Health	Low Nuisance
NA. Ecological impacts	NA. Odour
NA. EPP (Air) 2019 limits	

Notes:
 Monitoring data available from the *existing air monitoring network* has shown exceedances of PM₁₀ (health issues) and dust deposition (nuisance) criteria, however, still well within guideline levels (Schedule 1 of the EPP Air). The adequacy of existing air monitoring system for the proposed expansion will be investigated during IR stage.
 Moreover, assessment of potential air related impacts (dust generation) from the proposed amendment was undertaken qualitatively. The supporting information states that quantitative assessment (air dispersion modelling) was not carried out considering minor change in the disturbance area footprint and pit locations, significant separation distance to the identified nearest sensitive receptors (2 to 4km – Figure 5 above) and

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

prevailing wind directions (south-east). These justifications will further be assessed during the information stage.

4.5.10 Noise and vibration

Unknown Community noise	Low Airblast overpressure
Low Transportation noise	Low Low frequency
NA. Industrial noise	NA. Marine noise (underwater)
Low Ground vibration	NA. Ecological impacts
NA. EPP (Noise) 2019 limits	

Notes:

Operational Noise Levels (including transportation noise), sleep disturbance, cumulative noise levels (from South Walker Creek Mine), air blast overpressure and ground vibration have been predicted to be compliant with the existing EA limits.

Low frequency noise has been predicted to be not an issue and appropriate measures for impulsive noise from dozers has been stated to be in place. Impacts of low frequency noise and measures to mitigate impulsive noise will be further assessed during the information stage.

4.5.11 Waste

NA. Solid waste	NA. Best practice environmental management
NA. Liquid waste	Medium Wastewater
NA. Gaseous waste	Low Rock waste dumps
NA. Dredge spoil disposal	NA. Non-acid forming and potentially acid forming material
NA. Energy	

Notes:

Medium (Wastewater)

The approval of proposed amendment will increase the total mine pit footprint extent by 22% (from 2,873ha to 3,511ha). The water balance model shows that negligible change in the predicted storage volumes within the pit is foreseen if the extended footprint scenario were to be approved. Excess water accumulating in the proposed Homevale pit will be transferred to the Eastern Release Dam. Surface dam levels will be maintained with sufficient freeboard to ensure limited potential for spilling or overtopping. When the dam levels rise above this, excess water, which cannot be discharged in accordance with the controlled releases requirements will be transferred to Ramp 3 & 5 for temporary storage. More information about the storage capacity of surface dams, pit voids and temporary water storage (Ramp 3 and 5) during operational phase and under significant weather events (i.e., 0.1% AEP) will be required during IR stage.

Moreover, the mine manages sediment laden water from disturbed areas by channelling it through sediment dams and over grassland filters. No information has been provided about the expected amount of additional sediment laden wastewater from the proposed expansion and the capacity of existing sediment dams to accommodate the additional input. This information will be required in the IR.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Low (Waste rock dumps)

HCOC's EA permits waste disposal of more than 200,000 t in a year (Ancillary Activity, Schedule 2 – 60). The supporting information document states that: *"The amount of construction and demolition waste will vary depending on planned works within any given year; however, the amount will not exceed 200,000 t at any time."* More information will be required about the potential anticipated amount and type of additional waste generated due to the development of proposed amendment and how it will be managed. Clarification will also be sought to ensure that waste disposal does not exceed 200,000t per year.

Moreover, the application states that: *"No additional out-of-pit waste storage areas are expected to be required as the existing facilities will be used and thereafter reject material will be deposited back in the pits (spoils), thus the extension is expected to have no impact on the total footprint of waste storage areas."*

4.5.12 Cultural and heritage

Low	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural sites	NA.	Queensland heritage place (<i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>)
NA.	European cultural heritage significance (historic sites, buildings and locations)	NA.	Designated landscape area (<i>Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act 1987</i>)
NA.	Native title rights		

Notes:

HCOC undertakes active engagement with the Widi #1 People of the Nebo Estate, Widi #2 People, and the Barada Barna people. HCOC has an active Cultural Heritage Investigation Management Agreement (CHIMA) with the Widi #1 People (areas within the current approved mining footprint and the proposed Project area are within Widi #1 country only). Hail Creek JV has undertaken community consultation (including Widi #1) to provide information on the proposed EA amendment and states that: *"No feedback or comments were received from the stakeholders from this engagement."*

Amendment area 5 relates to Haul Road Realignment. HCOC is proposing this realignment in order to retain a 'Rockbar', a geological feature of Hail Creek that is of significance to the local indigenous community (please see Figure 3 in Summary section above).

Also, Brumby Waterhole (BWH) is a surface water feature located 1.2km north-west of Exevale pit on a tributary of Hail Creek (Figure 5). The waterhole has significant cultural value for the local Widi traditional owners. However, the impact assessment has concluded no impacts (i.e., water level) on BWH in response to the proposed expansion.

4.5.13 Impacts on surrounds and transport

NA.	Transportation (air, rail, road, port, shipping)	NA.	Adjacent landholders
NA.	Visual impacts	NA.	Community and landholder views
NA.	Amenity	NA.	Compatibility with surrounding land uses, activities and land users
NA.	Lighting		

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Notes: The amendment application will be subject to public notification. There is not expected to be major concerns from the Nebo community given the predominant land use of coal mining in the area.

4.5.14 Social issues

NA. Accommodation	NA. Transport of workers
NA. Fly in/fly out (<i>Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017</i>)	NA. Drive in/drive out (<i>Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities Act 2017</i>)
NA. Displacement of use	NA. Public safety
NA. Politics/policy	NA. Compatibility with surrounding land uses, activities, and land users

Notes: No information has been provided regarding social impacts of the proposed amendment. Further information will be sought in the IR.

Released by DECSI
RTI Act 2009

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

Part 4B – Trigger criteria

An EIS will be required if any of the following trigger criteria are met. If no criteria are triggered, this does not provide an exemption from having to prepare an EIS if the administering authority for the department considers that there may be a significant environmental impact, or there is a high level of uncertainty about the possible impacts, or there is a high level of public interest in the proposal.

For each question, indicate whether the answer is 'yes' or 'no':

Criteria	Yes	No	
For greenfield (new) mine proposals (sections 70 or 143 of the EP Act)			
1	Would the application involve the removal of two million tonnes per year or more of run-of-mine (ROM) ⁶ ore or coal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
2	Would the application involve extraction on or under a floodplain ⁷ or in a coastal hazard area ⁸ ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Would the application involve the introduction of a novel or unproven resource extraction process, technology, or activity ⁹ ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For proposals to amend/alter an existing mine (sections 143 and 228 of the EP Act)			
4	For the mines already removing 2 or more million tonnes per year ROM ore or coal, would the application increase the current annual removal rate by more than 100% or 5 million tonnes per year (whichever is the lesser)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	For mines already removing over 10 million tonnes per year ROM ore or coal, would the application increase the current annual removal rate by more than 50% or 10 million tonnes per year (whichever is the lesser)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	For mines already removing more than 20 million tonnes per year ROM ore or coal, would the application increase the current annual removal rate by more than 25%?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	Would the application involve an extension into and significantly impact on a Category A or B environmentally sensitive area, which is not already authorised by the State?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8	Would the application involve a substantial change in mining operations – such as from going underground to open cut, or (for underground mining) a change in operations from one causing little subsidence to one likely to cause substantial subsidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

⁶ ROM ore or coal means the material excavated but prior to washing or chemical concentration. It does not include overburden.

⁷ The *Water Act 2000* defines a floodplain as an area of reasonably flat land adjacent to a watercourse that— (a) is covered from time to time by floodwater overflowing from the watercourse; and (b) does not, other than in an upper valley reach, confine floodwater to generally follow the path of the watercourse; and (c) has finer sediment deposits that the sediment deposits any bench, bar or in-stream island in the watercourse. See also the Queensland Floodplain Assessment Overlay at the *Wetland Info* section of the department's website at <https://wetlandinfo.des.qld.gov.au/wetlands/>

⁸ A coastal hazard area is an area vulnerable to coastal hazards, referred to as coastal erosion or storm tide inundation (as per the departmental coastal hazard area mapping). Maps of these areas are accessible at <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/coasts-waterways/plans/hazards> and <http://qldspatial.information.qld.gov.au/catalogue/custom/index.page>.

⁹ For example: underground coal gasification; in-seam coal slurring; a new method of ore concentration; but this will be decided on a case-by-case basis and this trigger is not intended to discourage innovation.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

9	Would the application introduce a novel or unproven resource removal process, technology or activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For petroleum and gas activities (sections 70, 143 and 228 of the EP Act)			
10	Would the application involve a total disturbance area of greater than 2000 hectares at any one time during the life of the proposed project? This includes areas occupied by well pads (single or multi-directional). Access tracks and roads, water storages, and process plants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA
11	Would the application involve the construction of a high-pressure pipeline over a distance of 300 kilometres or greater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	Would the application involve the construction of a liquefied natural gas plant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
General considerations			
Point 5:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application will involve clearing of Category B ESA (as defined under s(2)(j) of EP Regulation 2019). • It includes one polygon of RE 11.9.5 that equates to Brigalow and two polygons of 11.9.4 that equates to semi evergreen vine thicket (SEVT) of the Brigalow Belt, in the amendment area 4. • RE 11.9.5 has been avoided by design and it is unlikely that a significant impact will occur to this RE. • Two polygons of RE 11.9.5 are small and hence contain a high degree of edge effect and are isolated in the local region. It is unlikely that impacts to these two polygons (3.99 ha) will cause a significant impact to SEVT of the Brigalow. 			

Part 4C – Standard criteria

The standard criteria must be considered in making the EIS decision. Provide comments on the standard criteria as defined under schedule 4 of the EP Act (where relevant):

Standard criteria, EP Act, schedule 4, definitions (current as at 23 October 2023)¹⁰:

Standard criteria	Comment
Standard criteria means—	
(a) the following principles of environmental policy as set out in the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the precautionary principle; (ii) intergenerational equity; (iii) conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and 	(i) The application of the precautionary principle is not required. Although a threat of serious and irreversible harm exists, there is no scientific uncertainty regarding the harm proposed. (ii) The health, diversity and productivity of the environment is unlikely to be maintained or enhanced, if the project proceeds and impacts the EVs as anticipated. Although environmental offsets will be required to 'counterbalance' the significant residual impacts, this is ultimately determined via the quality of the offset delivery – which cannot be concluded until years into the future.

¹⁰ Check standard criteria against latest version of the EP Act and amend if required
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1994-062>

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

	(iii) As above. The project will directly and indirectly impact several prescribed environmental matters and consequently reduce biological diversity and ecological integrity within the area, and also the surrounds. The Environmental Offsets framework has been established to counterbalance these impacts as best as possible.
(b) any Commonwealth or State government plans, standards, agreements or requirements about environmental protection or ecologically sustainable development; and	In considering this application, the assessing officer has considered the requirements of the EP Act, EP Regulation, EPP's for Air, Noise and Water and wetland biodiversity and the EO Act and its regulation. The HR Act is considered in Part 4D of this report.
(d) any relevant environmental impact study, assessment or report; and	The applicant's supporting information document and provided technical appendices which include an assessment of the potential impacts, and associated mitigation measures for each environmental value has been considered.
(e) the character, resilience and values of the receiving environment; and	The character, resilience and values for the receiving environment is detailed in the applicant's supporting information and has been considered in completion of this report.
(f) all submissions made by the applicant and submitters; and	The application has not reached the public notification stage yet.
(g) the best practice environmental management for activities under any relevant instrument, or proposed instrument, as follows— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) an environmental authority; (ii) a transitional environmental program; (iii) an environmental protection order; (iv) a disposal permit; (v) a development approval; and 	The best practice environmental management instrument for this project is considered to be the Environmental Authority. If the proposed activities are carried out the environmental authority will require additional conditioning to authorise and manage the activities. Parts ii-v are unlikely to be required for this amendment.
(h) the financial implications of the requirements under an instrument, or proposed instrument, mentioned in paragraph (g) as they would relate to the type of activity or industry carried out, or proposed to be carried out, under the instrument; and	Any financial implications for this amendment application are considered to have been anticipated by the applicant in making the application.
(i) the public interest; and	In making the ALD decision for this application to proceed as a major amendment, the decision has also been made to publicly notify the application. The application documents are available for public perusal on the DESI website.
(j) any relevant site management plan; and	There are no site management plans in place for the project.

Coordinated assessment committee (CAC) recommendation on the requirement for an environmental impact statement (EIS) decision

(k) any relevant integrated environmental management system or proposed integrated environmental management system; and	There is no site integrated environmental management system for the project and none is proposed.
(l) any other matter prescribed under a regulation.	There are no other matters prescribed under a regulation.
General considerations	
Where needed, make comments on the rating of the application against the standard criteria. INSERT comments.	

Part 4D – Human rights assessment

<p>Human Rights assessment under the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> Select ONE of the following and provide details where relevant.</p>
<p>The assessing officer considers that:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human rights are not limited because the action or decision does not affect an individual.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human rights are not limited and the action or decision is compatible with the HR Act because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no human rights are engaged by the action. <p><input type="checkbox"/> The following human rights are limited and the action or decision is not compatible with the HR Act. As a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <INSERT a list of the human rights that are limited> • <INSERT describe what further steps were taken after the action or decision was determined to be not compatible with the HR Act.
<p>INSERT comments</p> <p><i>Note: The delegate will also conduct a human rights assessment when making the decision.</i></p>

CAC RECOMMENDATIONS 2024

Application details	
Project name	Hail Creek Coal Mine
Applicant/proponent	Hail Creek Coal Holdings (Glencore)
Date	7 March 2024
Recommendation	<i>EIS is not recommended</i>
Reasons for recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not meet any guideline triggers • No change to approved mining rate (20Mtpa) • Increase in disturbance footprint ~685ha (=3.33%) (currently 21,205ha) • Extension of 3 existing pits and 1 new pit • Extension of mine life (CHPP operation 2035 out to 2040) • Insufficient GHG information in application – will be required in IR including a GHG abatement plan • Koala habitat impacts ~600ha – one RE identified as high-quality but DESI has identified a second • Koala habitat part of biodiversity corridor connecting to Homevale NP therefore fragmentation impact • Insufficient information about availability of offsets – will be required in IR • Impacts to existing offset area (buffer zone) will need to be addressed in IR • Insufficient information about diversion for Homevale Pit will need to be addressed in IR • Project not yet referred under EPBC; DESI will provide advice to applicant that should be referred.
CAC Members	Endorsed: Scott Sullivan, Kimberly Foster (A/ED), Filiz Tansley, Chris Loveday, Kate Bennink, Claire Andersen Dissent: nil