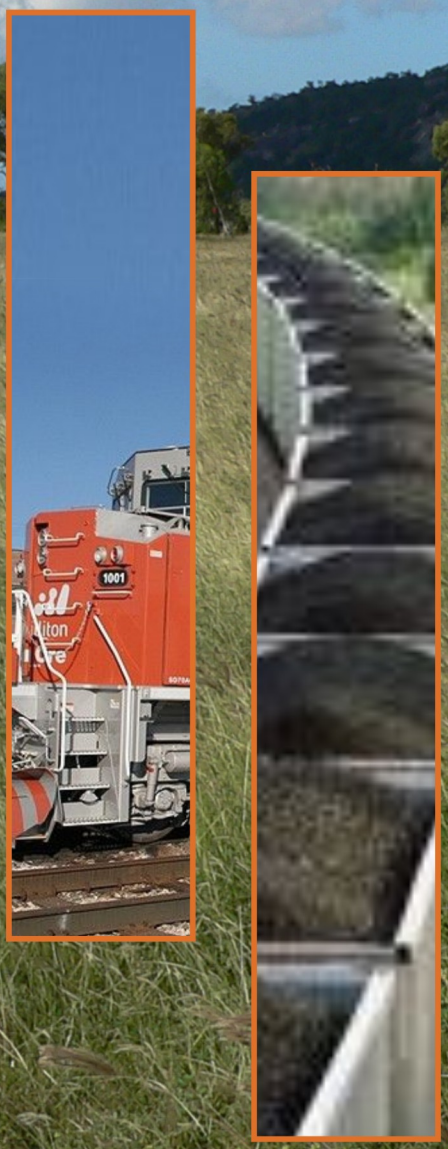
BHP Billiton Goonyella to Abbot Point Rail Project



Initial Advice Statement

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Acronyms

BHP Billiton	BHP Billiton Group
BMA	BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance
BMC	BHP Mitsui Coal
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
DEEDI	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
DERM	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
IAS	Initial Advice Statement
Mtpa	Million tonnes per annum
Proponent	BHP Billiton MetCoal Holdings Pty Ltd
REs	Regional Ecosystems
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Executive summary

Project overview

The BHP Billiton Goonyella to Abbot Point Rail Project (the Project) will involve the construction and operation of a dedicated greenfield rail line and associated infrastructure from the Goonyella Riverside Mine Complex within the Bowen Basin to the Port of Abbot Point. The Project is expected to enable the transport of approximately 60 million tonnes per annum of product coal to a dedicated BHP Billiton terminal at the Port of Abbot Point.

Project context

The Project Proponent is BHP Billiton MetCoal Holdings Pty Ltd, a member of the BHP Billiton Group (BHP Billiton).

BHP Billiton is the world's largest diversified natural resources company, and operations and investments are designed to ensure a stable long term future for the business, its shareholders, stakeholders and employees. BHP Billiton is the largest global exporter of hard coking coal. Through its BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) and BHP Mitsui Coal (BMC) operations, BHP Billiton is the largest employer in the Bowen Basin, with a workforce of over 11,000 employees and contractors at any time. BHP Billiton owns 50 per cent of BMA and 80 per cent of BMC.

International demand for quality Australian metallurgical coal resources continues to increase, creating an opportunity for significant growth of BMA and BMC assets. These assets hold around half of the metallurgical coal resources in the Bowen Basin, predominantly in the north. To ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet current and future demand for its products mined in the Bowen Basin, BHP Billiton is investigating the development of an integrated mine/rail/port supply chain through the port of Abbot Point. The Project will provide for coal exports from BHP Billiton's Queensland operations to exceed 100 million tonnes per annum.

BHP Billiton notes the proposals from potential Galilee Basin producers for rail lines from the Galilee Basin to the Port of Abbot Point. In order to limit impacts for landholders from multiple corridors, BHP Billiton supports assessing the potential role of a single corridor incorporating separate lines under different owners on an agreed alignment. Within any common corridor, BHP Billiton sees ownership of a dedicated line for its capacity and operational requirements as essential, with operation on an unfettered basis.

Project benefits

The Project will:

- Facilitate significant coal export growth by creating a dedicated transport solution for coal from BHP Billiton's existing and planned operations, unlocking major growth potential in the Bowen Basin.
- Create significant employment opportunities directly through the Project. The Project is expected to directly employ up to 2,000 people during the peak construction phase and up to 500 jobs during the operations phase.
- Facilitate major BHP Billiton mine development, with associated direct and flow-on employment opportunities.

- Provide substantial direct and indirect opportunities for local economic growth through increased demand for the supply, transport and delivery of goods and services.
- Associated benefits for State growth and royalties, and other State and Federal taxation revenue.

Purpose of the IAS

This Initial Advice Statement (IAS) has been prepared by BHP Billiton to provide the Coordinator-General with detailed information about the Project to enable declaration of the Project as a 'significant project' under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. Further, the IAS aims to sufficiently describe the Project to enable advisory agencies, the general community and other stakeholders to have effective input into establishing a Terms of Reference for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project.

Environmental Impact Statement

A number of corridor options have been considered through an alignment generation and optimisation process, based on desktop information. Preliminary investigation corridors were selected and refined for further investigation using a multi-criteria assessment. Key criteria included ecological and natural resource values, as well as proximity to sensitive human receptors, cultural and community resources, consideration of land issues and engineering design requirements.

These preliminary investigation corridors will be reviewed and revised as appropriate as part of the EIS for the Project through field surveys, further discussions with landholders and other relevant affected stakeholders. The EIS will present a nominal rail alignment, which will be developed on the basis of a range of social, cultural, environmental, engineering, cost and operational factors.

The development, operation and decommissioning of the Project may result in environmental and social impacts. Detailed studies will be undertaken during development of the EIS to define the existing environmental values of the preliminary investigation corridors, including any potential variations to those corridors, identify and evaluate potential impacts, and recommend appropriate mitigation measures. Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) will be developed as part of the EIS for the management and mitigation of environmental impacts during the construction and operation phases of the Project.

Stakeholder engagement

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed for the Project and will be refined during development of the EIS. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan identifies a number of activities which will occur throughout development of the EIS, which include:

- A Project 1800 number, website, email address, project factsheets and media activities (commenced).
- Consultation and communications to meet statutory requirements for the EIS process, including publication of this IAS and referral under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, individual meetings, presentations to groups, and distribution of project factsheets and information.
- Consultation to support a Social Impact Assessment for the EIS, including individual meetings, presentations to groups, distribution of project factsheets and information.

- Landholder communications, for example initial and ongoing discussions regarding project information and access to land for environmental and engineering investigations (commenced).

Stakeholders for the Project include Federal, State and Local Government representatives, affected landholders, indigenous parties with Native Title rights and/or cultural heritage interests, local business and residents, environmental and cultural heritage groups and surrounding communities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project context

BHP Billiton, through BHP Billiton MetCoal Holdings Pty Ltd, is investigating the opportunity to secure a strategic logistics supply line for the transport of predominantly metallurgical coal from mine to port. The BHP Billiton Goonyella to Abbot Point Rail Project (the Project) will involve the construction and operation of a dedicated greenfield rail line and associated infrastructure from the Goonyella Riverside Mine Complex within the Bowen Basin to the Port of Abbot Point, servicing a number of potential new mines and expansion projects. The Project is expected to ultimately enable the transport of approximately 60 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of product coal from existing and planned BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) and BHP Mitsui Coal (BMC) mines within the Bowen Basin for export from the Port of Abbot Point. Servicing BMA and BMC's operations in the Bowen Basin, the Project will have a nominal project life of 100 years, inclusive of construction, operation and decommissioning. Export coal from the Project will largely service the metallurgical coal market. BHP Billiton assets hold around half of the metallurgical coal resources in the Bowen Basin, predominantly in the north, and provide the basis for the Project, which will enable exports from these assets to exceed 100 million tonnes per annum.

The additional coal transport capacity provided by the Project is associated with proposed expansion of export facilities at the Port of Abbot Point, where negotiations on a framework agreement with North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation Limited are nearing completion. Separate investigations and environmental assessments are being undertaken for the expansion of these export facilities by BHP Billiton and North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation Limited.

1.2 Purpose of the Initial Advice Statement

The purpose of this Initial Advice Statement (IAS) is to:

- Provide the Coordinator-General with adequate information to enable declaration of the Project as a significant project under Section 26 (1) (a) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.
- Provide stakeholders with an overview of the Project, and provide an initial overview of the legislative, environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations associated with any future study investigation, and operation of the Project.
- Provide information for development of a draft Terms of Reference for the EIS for consideration by relevant government agencies other stakeholders and the community, should the significant project declaration include a requirement for an EIS to be prepared.

1.3 The Proponent

The Proponent, BHP Billiton MetCoal Holdings Pty Ltd is a member of the BHP Billiton Group (BHP Billiton) which is headquartered in Melbourne, Australia.

BHP Billiton is a global leader in the resources industry. BHP Billiton is among the world's top producers of a range of major commodities, including metallurgical coal, energy coal, iron ore, aluminium, copper, manganese, uranium, nickel, silver and titanium minerals, and has substantial interests in oil and gas. BHP Billiton realised revenue of over US$52.7 billion in the 2010 financial year, with a market capitalisation of US$165.6 billion. BHP Billiton has financial strength through strong cash flow along with

access to global capital markets and outstanding resource positions which provide a significant growth platform.

BHP Billiton's metallurgical coal group is the largest global exporter of high quality hard coking coal for the international steel industry. In addition, BHP Billiton supplies a wide range of other coal qualities to satisfy specific customer requirements. Long-life reserves with a strong portfolio of undeveloped resources and ownership of key infrastructure have provided flexibility to enable BHP Billiton to continually expand production capacity in line with customer needs. BHP Billiton's metallurgical coal operations include BMA and BMC (Queensland), Illawarra Coal (New South Wales) and the IndoMet Coal Project (Central Kalimantan, Indonesia).

BMA and BMC operate several mines and have a number of undeveloped resources in Queensland's Bowen Basin, as depicted in Figure 1. With the development of this critical transport infrastructure project, significant investment in major mine construction and operation will follow, allowing for BHP Billiton to increase exports from its Queensland coal businesses to more than 100 Mtpa.

BHP Billiton has an overriding commitment to health, safety, environmental responsibility and sustainable development as indicated in the BHP Billiton Charter. Business strategies, processes and procedures developed by the Metallurgical Coal group are designed to align with this Charter. Further details on environmental management for the Project are included in Section 4.

1.4 Project location

The Project will commence adjacent to BMA's existing Goonyella Riverside Mine Complex approximately 24 kilometres north-north-west of Moranbah in Central Queensland.

Preliminary investigation corridors have been identified during initial Project studies (Figure 2). The preliminary investigation corridors extend northward, bypassing the town of Collinsville, and continue to the Port of Abbot Point near Bowen, Queensland.

These preliminary investigation corridors will be reviewed and revised as appropriate as part of the EIS for the Project. The EIS will present a nominal rail alignment, which will be developed on the basis of a range of social, cultural, environmental, engineering, cost and operational factors.

1.5 Justification for the Project

1.5.1 The Queensland economy and coal export demand

The coal industry is one of the largest contributors to Queensland's economy, with production in FY2010 totalling 205 Mtpa of saleable coal of which BHP Billiton produced 58 Mtpa. From this industry, royalties of A$2.2 billion were generated for Queensland's state Budget. With its large resource base and the strong global outlook for metallurgical coal, BHP Billiton is in a strong position to significantly increase its coal exports, while at the same time delivering substantial investment for the State's economy and associated increased royalties to the Queensland Budget.

In addition to these economic benefits, the coal industry generates considerable employment and training opportunities and provides extensive support for community development, education, health, social and recreational programs.

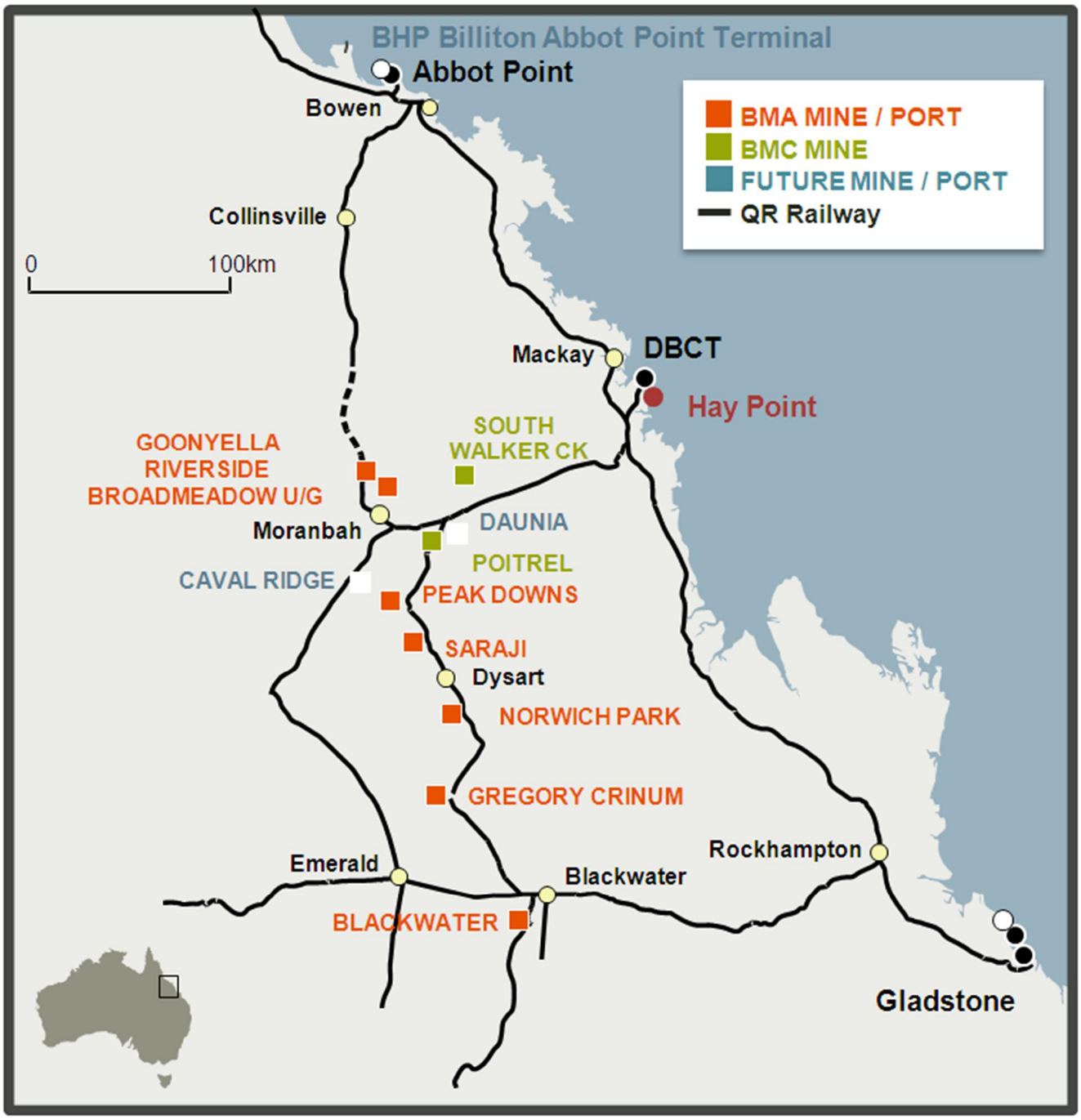
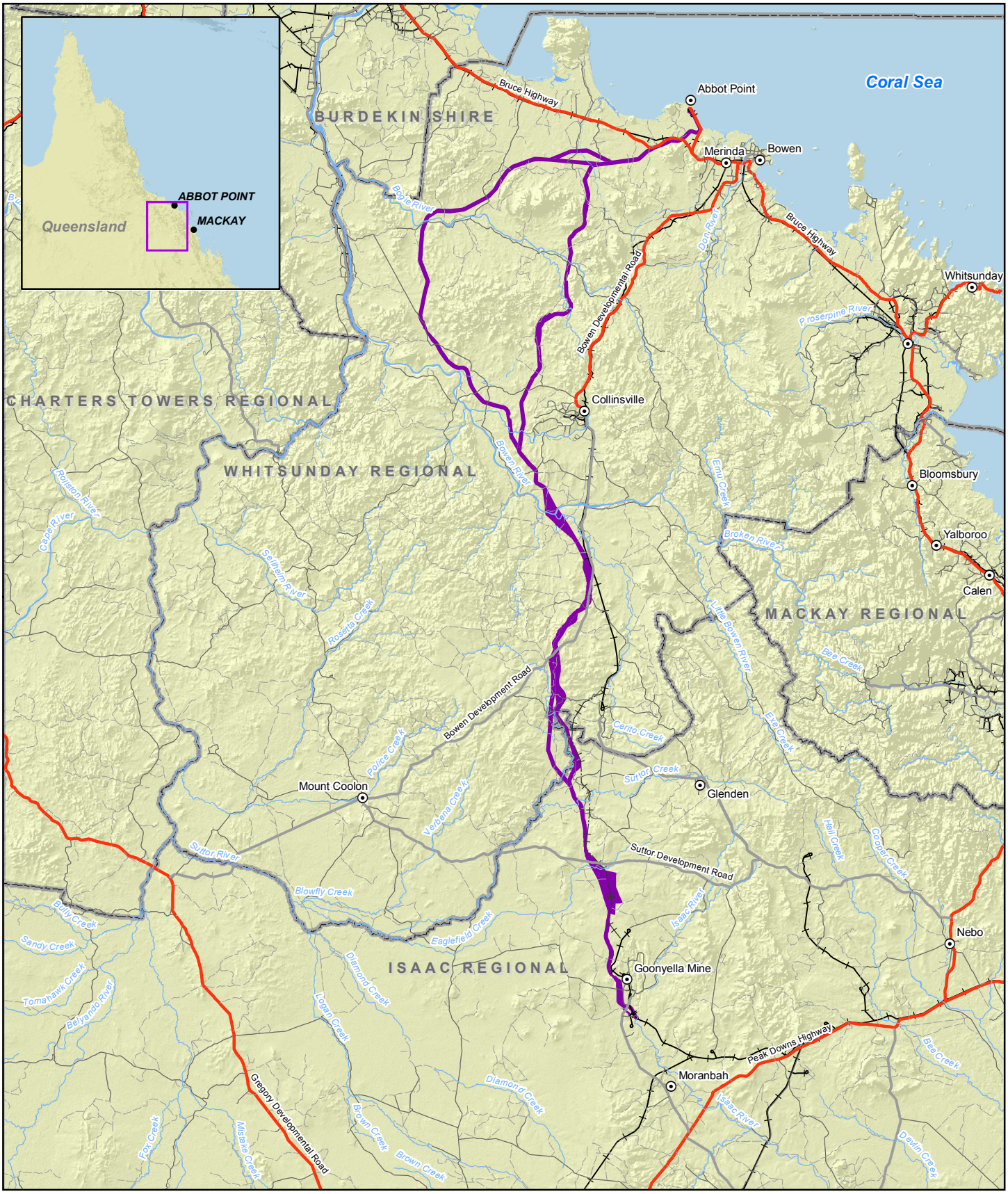


Figure 1 Regional map of BMA and BMC operations (source: BHP Billiton)



LEGEND

- Locality
- Railway
- Northern Missing Link
- Water course
- Principal Road
- Secondary Road
- Minor Road
- Track
- Watercourse area
- Investigation Corridors
- Local Government Area Boundary

1: 1,250,000 at A4

0 6.25 12.5 25 37.5 50

Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

N

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BHP Billiton MetCoal Holdings Pty Ltd
BHP Billiton Goonyella to Abbot Point Rail Project

Project Location and Preliminary Investigation Corridors

Job Number	41-23702
Revision	1
Date	20 Jul 2011

Figure 2

Data source: GA: Placename, Railway, Watercourse, Road/2007; BHP Billiton: Investigation Corridor/2011; ESRI: SRTM Hill Shade Relief/2009; ASGC: Local Government Area Boundary; State Boundary/2006, GHD: NML Created by: MW

1.5.2 Project rationale

BHP Billiton is the world's largest diversified natural resources company and operations and investments are designed to ensure a stable long term future for the business, its shareholders, stakeholders and employees. International demand for quality Australian metallurgical coal resources continues to increase strongly and the development of a dedicated rail line would assist BHP Billiton to meet demand through the expansion of its coal operations in the Bowen Basin.

The Bowen Basin is experiencing unprecedented coal resource development and contains one of the largest coal reserves in Queensland. BHP Billiton's interests in the Bowen Basin include BMA and BMC coal operations, both of which have major growth potential. The Project would support new opportunities for the development of the Bowen Basin to benefit the region, the State and the nation.

BHP Billiton has been granted Preferred Developer Status for its own dedicated terminal at the Port of Abbot Point and is in the process of concluding a framework agreement with the North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation Limited. Should the Project and the port development proceed, the bulk of BHP Billiton's additional coal tonnage produced by growth of BMA and BMC operations would be exported through the Abbot Point Coal Terminal. This growth, coupled with increasing export demand through nearby Queensland ports, requires a corresponding and significant increase in rail transport infrastructure capacity.

Development of a dedicated rail line from Goonyella to Abbot Point has been identified as a key infrastructure requirement to help BHP Billiton meet transport and growth objectives for its Bowen Basin coal mine assets in the next 20 years. By developing a dedicated greenfield rail line, associated infrastructure and facilities, the Project will provide increased business certainty and logistically support existing and planned BMA and BMC operations within the Bowen Basin. The Project will increase the Bowen Basin's rail transport capacity by approximately 60 Mtpa. BHP Billiton has the ability, and proposes, to entirely fill that additional capacity itself. The new system will help ease capacity constraints on the existing QR system.

BHP Billiton notes also the proposals from potential Galilee Basin producers for rail lines from the Galilee Basin to the Port of Abbot Point. In order to limit impacts for landholders from multiple corridors, BHP Billiton supports assessing the potential role of a single corridor incorporating separate lines under different owners on an agreed alignment. Within any common corridor, BHP Billiton sees ownership of a dedicated line for its capacity and operational requirements as essential, with operation on an unfettered basis.

1.5.3 Benefits of the Project

The Project is critical to enabling the next phase of growth in BMA and BMC operations in the Bowen Basin by ensuring that a dedicated, integrated transport solution is in place for coal from BMA and BMC's existing and planned operations. This growth will deliver significant economic and employment benefits for Queensland and Australia as follows:

- Facilitate significant coal export growth by creating a dedicated transport solution is in place for coal supply to the Port of Abbot Point.
- Create significant employment opportunities directly through the Project. The Project is expected to directly employ up to approximately 2,000 people during the peak construction phase and up to approximately 500 jobs during the operations phase.

- Facilitate major BHP Billiton mine development, with associated direct and flow-on employment opportunities.
- Provide substantial direct and indirect opportunities for local economic growth through increased demand for the supply, transport and delivery of goods and services.
- Associated benefits for State growth and royalties, and other State and Federal taxation revenue.

1.5.4 Project timing

Construction is scheduled to commence by no later than 2015. First coal transport is expected in 2016, ramping-up to approximately 60 Mtpa in 2020 to 2025. Progression of operational capacity will occur in line with BHP Billiton's planned growth profile for current and future BMA and BMC mine operations within the Bowen Basin.

1.6 Alternatives considered

1.6.1 Alignment considerations

To develop preliminary rail investigation corridors, an alignment generation and optimisation process was undertaken using baseline information on topographical characteristics and existing infrastructure as well as environmental and social sensitivities. A number of potential alignments were generated and initial multi-criteria analysis and risk assessment workshops undertaken. A primary consideration during initial alignment generation and optimisation was to minimise further infrastructure-related impediments on agricultural landholdings and mining tenements. Lower risk alternatives were proposed wherever significant constraints were identified. Cost, revenue, social, environmental, cultural, engineering and operational factors were also considered.

The preliminary investigation corridors presented in Figure 2 will be reviewed and revised as appropriate as part of the EIS, with the view to presenting a refined alignment. A number of objectives will be considered as part of this process, including:

- Minimising environmental and social impacts, including impacts on:
  - ecologically sensitive areas, including terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems;
  - existing surface water and groundwater resources, particularly in relation to drainage, flooding and water supply;
  - mining leases and known development projects;
  - agricultural productivity;
  - community and other stakeholders;
  - residential and community amenity, particularly noise and dust impacts;
  - greenhouse gas emissions;
  - roads and traffic, including traffic safety; and
  - existing railway and other linear infrastructure.
- Minimising landholder impacts, including farm operations and minimising any sterilisation of land parcels where possible.
- Maximising economically feasible construction.
- Optimising operational efficiency.

Having regard to the above there is potential for the final rail alignment to change from the preliminary investigation corridors presented in the IAS. The final rail alignment selected during the EIS is expected to cover a distance of approximately 250 to 290 kilometres.

1.6.2 Project alternatives

The Project EIS will assess a number of alternatives to the Project, including alternative greenfield rail routes and the 'do nothing' option. The EIS will also consider government priorities and objectives as outlined in relevant government policies and strategies.

2. Project description

2.1 Introduction

The Project will involve the construction and operation of a dedicated greenfield rail line and associated infrastructure and facilities from BMA's Goonyella Riverside Mine Complex within the Bowen Basin to the Port of Abbot Point near Bowen, Queensland. The Project will service BMA and BMC mines within the Bowen Basin.

The Project comprises the following components:

- Identification of a greenfield rail corridor.
- Construction and operation of a railway line for the transport of coal to export facilities at the Port of Abbot Point.
- Construction and operation of balloon loops at Goonyella Mine and the Port of Abbot Point.
- Construction and operation of associated infrastructure, which may include:
  - additional balloon loops;
  - passing loops;
  - bridges and culverts;
  - stock crossings;
  - crewing and maintenance depots;
  - marshalling and holding roads;
  - private fenced access tracks; and
  - utility service lines (i.e. fibre-optics) for telemetry and signalling.
- Additional construction facilities, which may include accommodation camps, borrow pits and/or quarries and equipment laydown areas.

Specific elements of the Project are outlined below.

2.2 Rail corridor construction

Construction of the Project is expected to involve the following steps:

- The alignment will be surveyed and marked out.
- Construction accommodation camp/s will be established.
- Vegetation will be cleared and topsoil set aside for use in rehabilitation.
- An access road will be constructed near the alignment to let the construction equipment and vehicles pass.
- The alignment will be graded and earthworks carried out to flatten steep and uneven areas.
- Rail structures including bridges and culverts will be constructed at watercourses, as required.
- The components for the track and ballast will be stored at depot/maintenance yard locations.
- The alignment will be prepared for placement of the ballast, sleepers and track. This can involve compacting soils and removing boulders.

- Sleepers and track will be laid and ballast placed.
- Testing will be carried out to make sure that quality requirements have been met.
- Disturbed areas will be stabilised and rehabilitated by planting with grass or suitable vegetation.
- The construction camp and other construction facilities will be removed and areas rehabilitated.

A construction timetable with workforce numbers will be developed as part of Project feasibility investigations and based on the selected rail corridor. The Project is expected to employ up to approximately 2,000 people during construction. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and associated procedures will facilitate management of environmental and social issues associated with construction.

2.3 Project characteristics

Initial Project investigations have identified the following Project characteristics:

- It is expected that approximately 60 Mtpa of coal will ultimately be transferred via rail from BMA and BMC mines to the Port of Abbot Point.
- The expected train size is likely to be a 10,000 tonne train. It is anticipated that approximately 20 train sets will be required to transport 60 Mtpa.
- The final Project will comprise a single fenced rail corridor, approximately 60 m wide.
- Several passing loops will be required for the selected rail route. The number, location and length of passing loops will be determined during the Rail Optimisation Study conducted in parallel to and informing the EIS.
- Operations will be seven days a week, 24 hours a day for up to 52 weeks per year. Trains will operate at a maximum speed of 80 kilometres per hour when fully loaded.
- The gauge of the rail system could be narrow gauge, standard gauge or dual gauge, depending on the most viable business case option. The final selection will be made during the Rail Optimisation Study and will inform the EIS.
- The rail line and associated operational facilities will be built above the 1-in-100 year flood level.
- Drainage will be designed to avoid ponding of overland water flows and minimise changes to drainage downstream of the proposed rail corridor.
- Road crossings will be grade-separated, except for minor roads where safety requirements can be met with level crossings.
- Grade-separated stock crossings will be provided as necessary to maintain safe and efficient operation of grazing properties.
- Dust and noise control measures will be incorporated into design to minimise impacts on communities and ecosystems alongside the rail corridor.
- The operational rail system will employ a permanent workforce of approximately 500 to operate and maintain the rail and rolling stock. BHP Billiton will continue to assess workforce and operational requirements during the EIS and throughout the life of the Project.
- Maintenance and crewing facilities will be required along the alignment, with the optimal configuration to be determined during detailed engineering investigations. Consideration will be given to avoiding environmental and social sensitivities in locating maintenance and crewing facilities.

3. Existing environment and potential impacts

3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the existing environment in the project area and the extent of potential environmental and socio-economic impacts that may be associated with construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project. Publically available information has been used to define the existing environmental values of the project area as described in this section. During development of the EIS, more detailed studies and assessment of environmental values will be conducted, potential impacts will be identified and evaluated, and appropriate mitigation measures will be developed.

3.2 Topography, geology and soils

The topography traversed by the preliminary investigation corridors varies due to the linear nature of the Project. At the southern extent of the investigation corridors topography consists of gentle undulating slopes with slight rises and shallow depressions. North of Collinsville to the approach to the Bruce Highway, topography becomes much steeper, particularly on the eastern side of the project area while at the northern extent at the Port of Abbot Point, terrain is dominated by flat to undulating coastal plains and wetland areas. The preliminary investigation corridors will intersect a number of waterways including the Bowen River, Suttor River and Bogie River and numerous smaller ephemeral streams, as illustrated in Figure 2.

The preliminary investigation corridors cross a large number of geological formations. Geological and geomorphological assessments will be conducted during the EIS to facilitate rail design and construction in accordance with geological conditions. The soil types across the project area vary considerably and are expected to include cracking clays, dark brown and grey-brown, texture contrast, duplex, uniform course textured and shallow rock soils.

Acid sulphate soils are likely to be present in the Abbot Point area in locations below about five metres above sea level. Field investigations of acid sulphate soils are not proposed as part of the EIS as adequate information is expected to be available from EIS studies undertaken in the Abbot Point area for other projects. Recommendations will be made for further investigations as required prior to or during construction to address Queensland acid sulphate soil management guidelines.

Rail construction activities, particularly clearing and earthworks, have the potential to cause erosion and dispersion of exposed subsurface soils. Geotechnical investigations will be undertaken separately as part of engineering studies to adequately assess the suitability of ground conditions for construction and operation of a railway and will be used to inform the EIS. Soil surveys will also be carried out for the EIS to identify reactive cracking clay, dispersive, erosion prone and saline soils that will require management during construction. A preliminary Drainage and Erosion Sediment Control Plan will be developed to mitigate and control sediment movement onsite, and minimise the potential for sediment laden runoff during construction.

A search of the Environmental Management Register and Contaminated Land Register will be carried out to identify areas where soils may potentially be contaminated. Field testing in relation to soil contamination is not proposed as part of the EIS, however recommendations will be made for further investigations as required prior to or during construction.

Rehabilitation strategies for the rail corridor will be developed during the EIS process and will include revegetation of cleared areas with pasture or native species. During operation the potential for erosion

and sedimentation resulting from the rail will be minimised through the ongoing maintenance of revegetated areas, stabilisation of access tracks and development of suitable management procedures for maintenance activities.

3.3 Water resources

3.3.1 Surface water resources

The preliminary investigation corridors traverse several sub-catchments within the Burdekin Catchment, which is regulated via the *Water Resource (Burdekin Basin) Plan 2007*. Numerous ephemeral creeks and the Bowen, Suttor and Bogie Rivers are expected to be crossed. The majority of small creeks and waterways crossed by the preliminary investigation corridors are ephemeral, deliver unreliable flows and may run dry for extended periods during the dry season.

The EIS will consider impacts on water resources downstream of stream crossings. Earthworks, construction within waterways and flow diversion or restriction can result in localised changes in drainage patterns. These activities may result in degradation of surface water quality and alteration to in-stream and floodplain hydrology, potentially impacting upon downstream catchments and local aquatic habitats.

Surface water hydrology studies will review potential impacts of flooding on the preliminary investigation corridors and the upstream environment. Appropriate types of waterway crossings and possible stream diversions will also be identified during these studies. Drainage requirements will also be identified and addressed through design.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be developed to detail procedures and measures to mitigate and manage potential surface water quality impacts.

3.3.2 Groundwater resources

Groundwater resources relevant to the Project include inland and coastal aquifers, and any bores used to access those groundwater sources. The Project lies outside of, and is not expected to impact upon, the Great Artesian Basin. Groundwater is primarily used within the preliminary investigation corridors for rural agricultural purposes. Groundwater may be used during construction of the Project for dust suppression and other construction purposes, and may be used for operational purposes at maintenance and crewing facilities.

A review of groundwater resources and usage will be undertaken as part of the EIS process in order to discuss existing water resources and potential impacts that the Project could have on these resources. Procedures for mitigation and management of these impacts will also be discussed as part of the EIS.

3.4 Land use

3.4.1 Land use and tenure

The primary land use throughout the project area is agriculture, mainly beef cattle farming, with some small areas used for coal mining. The predominant tenure types potentially affected by the Project are leasehold and freehold agricultural land with smaller amounts of State and Local Government lands. The preliminary investigation corridors traverse good quality agricultural land, while near Splitters Creek and the entry to the Abbot Point State Development Area the investigation corridors cross areas of strategic cropping land mapped by government which will require assessment during development of the EIS.

Field work is proposed in these areas to validate available mapping and provide adequate information to address existing and draft State Government planning policies.

The Project involves the construction and operation of a new dedicated fenced 250 to290 kilometre long railway line and associated facilities. Impacts on and use, tenure and stock routes and access issues between and within large farming properties will need to be assessed. Care will be taken while designing the final rail corridor to minimise impacts on existing stock routes, and other infrastructure through consultation with stakeholders conducted during the EIS process. This consultation will also initiate discussion on mitigation measures to maintain effective and efficient access for agricultural and other activities.

3.4.2 Native Title

The Native Title Act 1993 recognises the rights and interests of indigenous people under their traditional laws and customs. Searches with the National Native Title Tribunal indicate that four Native Title Claims are registered over the preliminary investigation corridors to the Barada Barna, Jangga, Birri, and Juru Peoples. BHP Billiton will enter into discussions with Native Title claimants and seek to enter into Indigenous Land Use Agreements in parallel with the EIS.

3.4.3 Visual amenity

Given the predominantly rural nature of the landscape in the project area, with scattered to dense native vegetation, a low density of rural homesteads and some land used for coal mining, visual impacts associated with the Project are expected to be relatively low. A visual impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the EIS process for the final rail corridor. Community consultation conducted as part of the Project will also assist in identifying sensitive landscapes and viewing locations, and inform optimisation of the final rail corridor to minimise impacts on visual amenity.

3.5 Ecology and biodiversity

3.5.1 Overview

Native vegetation and habitat in the area traversed by the investigation corridors has generally been modified by grazing, mining and infrastructure activities, with the biodiversity values varying from heavily modified in areas where broad scale clearing has taken place to relatively unmodified in other areas.

Desktop searches were undertaken for areas of potential ecological significance within and adjacent to the preliminary investigation corridors to gain an understanding of the potential occurrence of important flora, fauna and ecological communities, along with other areas of significance for conservation of nature and biodiversity. This information was used to inform selection of areas for further investigation and develop methodologies for ecology baseline studies.

3.5.2 Bioregions

Queensland is divided into 13 bioregions based on broad landscape patterns that reflect the major underlying geology, climate patterns and broad groupings of plants and animals[1]. The Project traverses two of these bioregions, namely the Brigalow Belt and Central Queensland Coast bioregions. The

[1] DERM website http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/vegetation/bioregions.html, accessed 07/06/11.

Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has published regional vegetation management codes for the Brigalow Belt and New England Tablelands bioregion and the Coastal bioregion. These regional vegetation management codes identify assessment requirements for vegetation management in accordance with the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* including requirements for assessing development in areas containing threatened ecological communities, regional ecosystems and high value regrowth vegetation. The EIS will consider potential impacts of the Project in the context of these bioregions, evaluate adherence to the regional vegetation management codes and identify applicable approval requirements and associated mitigation measures.

3.5.3 Protected areas

The preliminary investigation corridors traverse catchment areas that also contain areas protected under State and Federal legislation, including National Parks, State Forests, Nature Refuges, wetlands, and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Marine Park, but avoid direct impacts on these areas. No Wetlands of International Significance (e.g. Ramsar wetlands) are expected to be present in or immediately adjacent to or downstream of the preliminary investigation corridors. The investigation corridor runs immediately adjacent to the Caley Valley Wetland near the Port of Abbot Point which is listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands of Australia.

The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Marine Park are located adjacent to the Port of Abbot Point and are unlikely to be directly affected by the Project. However, indirect impacts may result from disturbance within the catchment of these areas during construction. The preliminary investigation corridors include wetlands identified as being of importance to the Great Barrier Reef due to locations with catchments draining to the World Heritage Area/Marine Park. In this regard, all creek crossings and other freshwater wetlands will be considered areas of high ecological sensitivity and subject to management requirements that will be specified in a Construction EMP. Studies undertaken during the EIS process will consider the Project's proximity to and potential impact on any protected areas. There is not expected to be significant direct impact to these areas, and it is recognised that any indirect impacts must also be carefully considered, and where appropriate suitable mitigation measures, management and/or monitoring implemented.

3.5.4 Regional Ecosystems and Threatened Ecological Communities

Database searches identified Regional Ecosystems (REs) mapped within and adjacent to the preliminary investigation corridors, as listed under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* (Figure 3, DERM, Version 6.0, 2011). These include three RE constituent communities also listed under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs):

- Brigalow TEC,
- Natural grasslands of the Queensland Central Highlands and the northern Fitzroy Basin TEC and
- Semi-evergreen vine thickets of the Brigalow Belt (North and South) and Nandewar Bioregion TEC.

The preliminary investigation corridors also cross a range of REs including Least Concern, Of Concern and Endangered REs, as well as areas of non-remnant vegetation. Further investigations will be undertaken during the EIS to assess the impact on the vegetation communities and mapped REs. Appropriate mitigation measures will be developed as part of the EIS process following ecological studies and evaluation of impacts.

Impacts on REs and TECs may arise during the construction and operational phases of the Project. Construction phase impacts may include the loss of vegetation (i.e. reduction in extent of REs and TECs) and edge effects and degradation (i.e. weed infestation, dust etc.) of REs and TECs near construction areas. Operational phase impacts on REs and TECs may include edge effects and degradation near the operational Project infrastructure.

3.5.5 Threatened species

The removal of vegetation may reduce habitat value of the area for threatened species. In particular this could include direct loss of important habitat for threatened species as well as restrictions of fauna movement. Restriction of seed dispersal and propagation may also occur in heavily vegetated areas. Indirect impacts can also be associated with edge effects where vegetation clearing along a linear corridor exposes adjacent vegetation and habitat to some modifications.

Native vegetation along the preliminary investigation corridors are likely to constitute foraging and breeding habitats for threatened fauna species. Species listed under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (including marine and migratory species), Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and other locally conservation significant flora and fauna may potentially be impacted by the Project. Development of the EIS will include ecological studies targeted at identifying habitat for species of conservation significance and evaluation of potential impacts on individual species and on species biodiversity. This will consider the Project's proximity to and potential impact on any threatened species or their habitat.

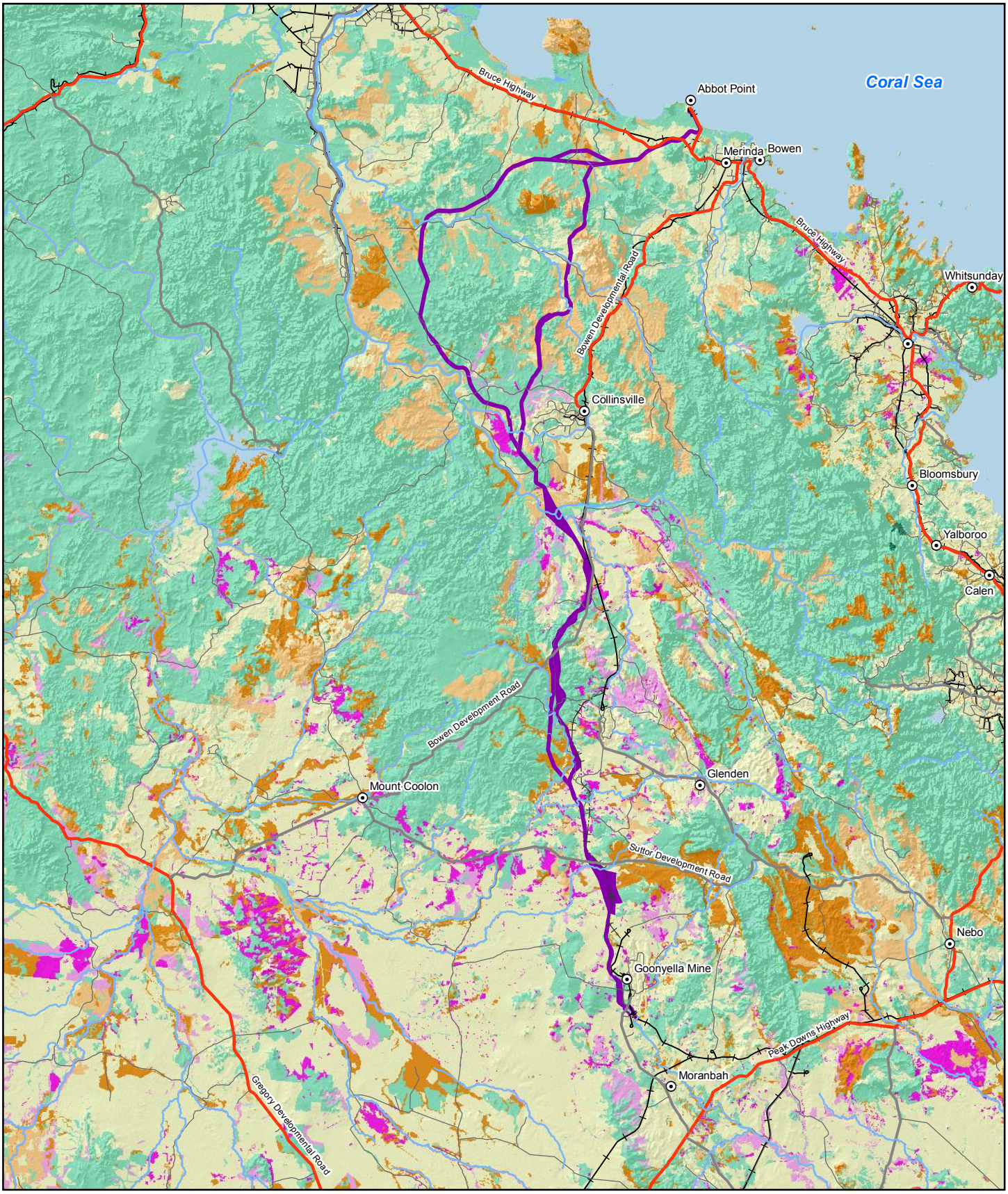
Appropriate mitigation measures will be developed as part of the EIS to minimise direct impacts to flora and fauna as well as indirect impacts to adjacent habitats. Further investigations will be required during the EIS phase to assess the impacts on these species. The Project is also expected to be required to offset under (draft) Federal and State Government offset policies.

3.6 Climate and natural hazard

The project area experiences a semi-arid to arid tropical climate, with hot summers and dry, warm winters. Temperatures range from 20^{o}C to 40^{o}C. The region is subject to cyclones and other adverse weather conditions, including storms and flash-flooding in the wet season, nominally November through to April. Mean annual rainfall across the project area ranges from around 600 millimetres at Moranbah to around 900 millimetres at Bowen[2] however totals can vary significantly from year to year.

Climate conditions may be an important factor in determining the likelihood of natural hazards and can also affect the severity of impacts, particularly impacts relating to erosion, drainage and flooding. EMPs will be developed for the construction and operation phases of the Project to appropriately manage and mitigate climate and natural hazard impacts.

[2] Commonwealth of Australia, Bureau of Meteorology, 2011.



LEGEND

- Locality
- Railway
- Northern Missing Link
- Principal Road
- Secondary Road
- Minor Road
- Investigation Corridor

Regional Ecosystems (VMA Status, 2010)

- Endangered - Sub-dominant
- Endangered - Dominant
- Of Concern - Sub-dominant
- Of Concern - Dominant
- Least Concern
- Plantation forest
- Water

1: 1,250,000 at A4

0 6.25 12.5 25 37.5 50

Kilometres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

N

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BHP Billiton MetCoal Holdings Pty Ltd
BHP Billiton Goonyella to Abbot Point Rail Project

Job Number 41-23702
Revision 1
Date 20 Jul 2011

Regional Ecosystems

Figure 3

Data source: GA: Placename, Railway, Road/2007; BHP Billiton: Investigation Corridor/2011; ESRI: Relief/2009; ASGC: State Boundary/2006; DERM: Regional Ecosystems/2010, Created by: MW

3.7 Air quality

The predominantly rural character of the project area indicates that air emissions in the region are likely to be associated with particulate matter generated through land clearing activities, bushfires and grassfires with minor localised contributions from exhaust emissions from rural machinery. The preliminary investigation corridors also traverse land adjacent to that used for coal mining, particularly near the BMA Goonyella Riverside Mine and non-BHP Billiton mines around Collinsville, as well as the Collinsville Power Station, a 180MW coal fired power station four kilometres west of Collinsville. Air emissions associated with these land uses include dust (particulate matter) and exhaust gases from site equipment and processing facilities.

Dust generated from earthworks and movement of vehicles over exposed surfaces is expected to be the primary impact on air quality during construction, however the expected distance to sensitive receptors indicates that impacts will be relatively minor. Vehicle exhaust emissions are anticipated to be the primary impact during operation of the rail line, however these are expected to be very localised and dissipate rapidly with negligible impact on the local environment. Minor impacts associated with coal dust from wagons may also occur during operations and will be addressed in design and throughout operations through implementation of the Project EMP. Potential impacts on air quality in relation to sensitive receptors including humans and areas of ecological sensitivity will be investigated further during development of the EIS.

3.8 Greenhouse gas emissions

Construction and operation of the Project will result in the emission of some greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Greenhouse gas emissions will be estimated and appropriate mitigation and management measures identified to minimise generation of greenhouse gases.

Minimising greenhouse gas emissions has been recognised by BHP Billiton through its Climate Change Policy, the BHP Billiton Charter and global Health, Safety, Environment and Community Management Standards which will apply to this Project. Management plans will be developed for the construction (CEMP) and operation (EMP) phases of the Project to manage greenhouse gas emissions. These management plans will address the requirements of both BHP Billiton and regulatory agencies.

3.9 Noise and vibration

The preliminary investigation corridors traverse predominantly rural areas. Current noise levels in these areas are expected to be typical of rural areas, with the main noise sources arising from operation of agricultural equipment, road and rail traffic. Existing operational mines would also contribute to noise levels in proximity to these operations.

A noise and vibration assessment will be undertaken as part of the EIS process. The potential increase in noise levels during construction and operation will be identified through modelling and, where necessary, mitigated through a combination of alignment modification, design criteria and noise attenuation strategies, which will be detailed in the EIS.

3.10 Waste management

Waste generation and management will be considered during development of the EIS. The most significant waste stream is expected to be spoil material and vegetation waste generated during construction, and minimisation of these wastes will be a factor in designing the final alignment. Small

quantities of waste oils and oily wastes will be generated from equipment operation and maintenance during both the construction and operation phases, and existing waste management services are available to manage this type of waste. Otherwise, the Project is not expected to produce any particularly hazardous or unusual wastes.

Waste management facilities are available within the project area, including waste contractors and licensed landfills suitable for the types and quantities of wastes likely to be generated. Project EMPs will be developed during the EIS for the construction and operation phases of the Project and will incorporate waste management measures and procedures including the waste minimisation philosophy of 'reduce – reuse – recycle'.

3.11 Traffic, transport and infrastructure

The preliminary investigation corridors intersect three major roads: the Suttor Developmental Road, Bowen Developmental Road and Bruce Highway. A number of minor roads will also be intersected, several of which connect with the three major intersected roads.

Access to the Project, at a regional level, will be via Suttor Developmental Road in the south, Bowen Developmental Road in the central area and the Bruce Highway toward the northern extent of the Project. Some new access tracks will be required to facilitate access to the alignment, along with augmentation to existing roads and tracks and some intersections. Road traffic and transport impacts are expected to occur primarily during construction, and are likely to include increases in vehicular traffic volumes and loads on the local and regional road network.

During operation, the main impact will be associated with locations where the proposed rail line crosses existing roads. A detailed traffic study will be undertaken during the EIS to identify locations where grade separated crossings are required to meet safety and operational requirements. Level crossings may be implemented on minor roads where safety permits.

Existing rail infrastructure in the area includes the main North Coast railway, which transports passenger and freight trains along the Queensland coast between Brisbane and Cairns, and the Newlands-Abbot Point rail line which is dedicated to coal transportation and is operated by QR National. An extension of the Newlands railway line is being constructed to connect this section to the Goonyella rail network to the south. The Project will be required to cross the North Coast rail line and may also cross the Goonyella-Abbot Point rail line. It has not yet been determined whether the proposed Project will connect to existing rail infrastructure. The exact nature and location of crossings will be investigated further during the EIS, and stakeholders will be consulted.

Airports servicing the project area are located at Mackay, Proserpine (Whitsunday), Moranbah and Townsville. Some increase in air traffic is expected to occur during construction and, to a lesser extent, during operation, associated with the transport of non-resident workforce to and from the project area.

The Project is intended to connect to the existing sea port and coal export terminal at Abbot Point. A separate environmental assessment and approvals process is being undertaken in relation to expansion of coal export facilities at Abbot Point. The port of Abbot Point may also be used to unload rolling stock and railway lines if these are transported to the Project site by sea.

Other infrastructure present in the project area includes gas pipelines, water pipelines and high and low voltage transmission lines. Potential impacts on this infrastructure will be identified in the EIS and strategies will be developed to avoid disruption to these services during construction and operation.

3.12 Cultural heritage

An Indigenous cultural heritage study will be undertaken and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan developed in accordance with the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*.

Investigations will also be undertaken to identify places within the preliminary investigation corridors currently registered on the Inventory of Heritage Places maintained by DERM or on the National Heritage Register. Potential impacts on non-Indigenous historic heritage will be considered during development of the EIS and appropriate mitigation strategies identified.

3.13 Social and economic aspects

The Project is situated in a region where agriculture (primarily beef cattle farming) and mining are the main economic activities. Directly affected landholders have been identified and contacted during initial investigations. The preliminary investigation corridors pass within 20 kilometres of the main regional population centres of Bowen, Collinsville and Moranbah. Consultation with directly affected landowners and other stakeholders will also be undertaken during the EIS process, specifically the Social Impact Assessment.

Construction of the rail project is expected to employ approximately 2,000 people and a permanent work force of approximately 500 will be required to operate and maintain the rail and rolling stock. It is projected that a significant number of additional jobs will be created for local and state suppliers and contractors. Local communities in the region will enjoy increased employment and economic growth opportunities along with other improvements and benefits associated with population increases.

A Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will be developed in parallel with the EIS and will incorporate mitigation measures and management processes identified during the Social Impact Assessment in order to minimise any socio-economic impacts of the Project.

3.14 Hazard, risk and health and safety

Hazards and associated risks to the community and the environment are presented by the construction and operation of the Project. Hazards need to be identified and the associated risks managed in order to reduce or eliminate the potential for harm to occur to people, property and the environment. A formal risk assessment process will be developed and detailed in the EIS to assist in the management of risks through construction and operation of the Project.

4. Environmental management

4.1 Management plans

As a global leader in the resources sector, BHP Billiton has an overriding commitment to health, safety, environmental responsibility and sustainable development that is recognised in the BHP Billiton Charter and global supporting management plans which will apply to the Project. To minimise environmental impacts from the Project, BHP Billiton is committed to developing and implementing thorough and comprehensive processes which are aimed at identifying environmental issues during the Project planning phase and managing and mitigating any environmental impacts as part of the EIS and supporting management plans.

In preparing the EIS, the measures that will be undertaken to prevent or mitigate any potential adverse impacts on the environment will be described, including impacts on water resources (surface water and groundwater), land resources, air quality, climate, noise and vibration, socio-economic values, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage, and ecological resources.

To support the EIS a range of EMPs will be prepared. These management plans will detail key commitments, performance criteria and control measures developed to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental and social impacts throughout the Project. The EMPs will address legislative and other applicable requirements and establish a framework to ensure the plans are effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed to reflect lessons learned and changing requirements during the course of the Project. A summary of the key objectives of each of these plans is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of management

Document	Matters Covered
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	• Prepared for construction phase of the Project. • Identify the environmental issues and potential environmental impacts associated with construction. • Outline management plans, procedures and controls for each of the environmental issues associated with construction. • Specify the environmental responsibilities of the Project management team, contractors and on-site workers. • Facilitate the undertaking of construction in compliance with relevant environmental legislation and standards. • Facilitate rehabilitation of disturbance following construction to minimise environmental impacts. • Define monitoring, reporting and auditing requirements for the construction phase. • Capture commitments made in the EIS as specific and measurable actions.
Project Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	• Prepared for operational phase of the Project. • Define the management structure of the Project and the

	environmental roles and responsibilities of BHP Billiton and contractors on the Project. • Identify environmental legal requirements relevant to the Project. • Identify the environmental impacts and risks associated with the major activities that will be undertaken during the Project. • Document management controls, procedures and rules to manage the identified environmental risks and satisfy environmental requirements. • Establish objectives and targets for environmental performance. • Document monitoring, auditing and reporting requirements. • Capture commitments made in the EIS as specific and measurable actions.
Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP)	• Developed for the Project in parallel to the EIS and extends through into the operation phase. • Present a clear summary of the potential positive and negative social impacts of the Project, as well as proposed monitoring, mitigation and management strategies and implementation actions. • Reflect the key findings and recommendations of the EIS Social Impact Assessment, including the results of community engagement with communities and stakeholders. • Promote an active and ongoing role for communities, local authorities and government throughout the Project.
Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)	• Developed for the Project in parallel to the EIS and through negotiation with the relevant traditional owners. • Assess the extent of impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage values. • Include agreed management and monitoring recommendations to protect and maintain Aboriginal cultural heritage values, as appropriate.

4.2 Closure and decommissioning

The Project is not expected to cease operations or require decommissioning within the next 100 years. Decommissioning and rehabilitation issues and requirements will be broadly identified in the EIS in order to provide a high level planning framework for decommissioning and to demonstrate that impacts associated with decommissioning can be appropriately managed within the context of current legislative requirements and standards. This planning framework will then enable a decommissioning plan, in conjunction with legislation and standards as relevant at that time, to be developed well in advance of any planned decommissioning.

5. Relevant environmental legislation

This section describes the approval framework and relevant legislative requirements for the Project. Given the nature, scale and location of the preliminary investigation corridors and the potential impact on surrounding areas, there will be a need for various approvals from Commonwealth, State and Local Government departments in accordance with relevant environmental legislation, including but not limited to those outlined in Table 2. The Project will also be subject to the requirements of other Commonwealth, State and Local Government legislation, policies, and regulations.

Table 2 Relevant environmental legislation

Legislation	Administering Authority	Approval trigger	Relevance to the Project
Commonwealth			
*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1*999	Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities (SEWPAC)	Impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance.	The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) identifies eight Matters of National Environmental Significance, of which "nationally threatened species and communities", "listed migratory species" and "The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park" are likely to have relevance to the Project. BHP Billiton will be referring the Project to the Commonwealth in relation to potential impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance and expects that, due to the scale of the Project, that it will require further assessment under the EPBC Act,
Native Title Act 1993	National Native Title Tribunal	Impacts on land subject to Native Title.	Searches with the National Native Title Tribunal indicate that four Native Title Claims are registered over the preliminary investigation corridors to the Barada Barna, Jangga, Birri, and Juru Peoples. BHP Billiton will enter into discussions with Native Title claimants and seek to enter into Indigenous Land Use Agreements in parallel with the EIS.
Queensland			
State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI)	Declaration as a Significant Project (for which an EIS is required).	BHP Billiton is seeking declaration of the Project as a Significant Project and has prepared this Initial Advice Statement in support of this application.
Sustainable Planning Act 2009	Department of Local Government and Planning / Isaac Regional Council / Whitsunday Regional	Infrastructure related to the Project.	The Project may require additional approvals for accommodation facilities and associated infrastructure outside the area to be covered in the EIS.

Legislation	Administering Authority	Approval trigger	Relevance to the Project
	Council		The Project will also need to be assessed against State Planning Policies established under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* and may seek designation as community infrastructure.
Environmental Protection Act 1994 and *Environmental Protection Regulation 2008*	DERM	Duty of care to avoid environmental harm.	The EIS will assess environmental values and potential impacts against environmental protection policies established under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. The Project will also require approvals for activities that may cause environmental harm, including Environmentally Relevant Activities and activities that may cause land contamination.
Vegetation Management Act 1999	DERM	Clearing of native vegetation, excluding grasses and mangroves	The EIS will assess the occurrence and extent of potential impacts on native vegetation and vegetation on State land. Assessment against policies and codes established under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* will be required.
Nature Conservation Act 1992 and the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006*	DERM	Taking or destruction of certain listed flora and fauna species or any vegetation on State land.	The EIS will assess the extent of the potential impact on relevant areas and species of conservation significance under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006*.
Water Act 2000	DERM	Take water (including groundwater) and/or interfere with flow within a watercourse. Disturb bed and banks of a watercourse.	The EIS will assess impacts on watercourses and water resources. BHP Billiton will consult with DERM in relation to groundwater and surface water matters.
Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003	DERM	Duty of care to avoid harm to cultural heritage.	A separate, parallel assessment of the occurrence of and extent of the Aboriginal cultural heritage items and places will be undertaken and a CHMP prepared. The overall assessment process and management requirements will be

Legislation	Administering Authority	Approval trigger	Relevance to the Project
			documented in the EIS. .
Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 (Coastal Act)	DERM	Any works that take place within a coastal management district or involving tidal works.	Where works are required to take place in the tidal zone or coastal management districts around Abbot Point, assessment will be undertaken against the Queensland Coastal Plan.
Fisheries Act 1994	DEEDI	Interfering with fish habitat or marine plants or undertaking waterway barrier works.	Marine plants are not likely to be encountered outside the Abbot Point State Development Area/port area. Waterway barrier works may be required in some stream crossings and BHP Billiton will consult with DEEDI in relation to fish passage and potential impacts on fish habitat. An assessment of potential impacts on fisheries and fish habitat will be included in the EIS.
Transport Infrastructure Act 1994	Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)	Interfering with State Controlled roads	The traffic impact assessment will be based on DTMR Guidelines for Assessment of Road Impacts of Development. Discussions will be held with DTMR to review assessment outcomes and appropriate mitigation measures.

6. Community and stakeholder consultation

6.1 Introduction

The overall purpose of the community and stakeholder consultation process is to provide opportunities for the community and other stakeholders to identify issues, impacts (potential or perceived) and mitigation measures of the Project and for these to be documented for consideration as part of the EIS process.

6.2 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been prepared for the Project and will be refined during the EIS to guide the consultation activities during the environmental assessment process and inform the development of the Project.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan contains a number of objectives for engagement and consultation, which are to:

- Position the Project as a leading example in the areas of project management, health, safety and environmental management and community participation.
- Support sustainable communities and local enterprises through enhanced community participation.
- Develop and maintain a relationship with the community that is based on trust and mutual respect.
- Ensure all parties affected by the Project are identified and informed about its scope, timing and potential impacts and benefits, and to:
  - inform them of the environmental assessment objectives and consultation activities;
  - identify opportunities through which the local communities and other stakeholders can provide their input; and
  - document and consider this input in the environmental impact assessment process.
- Create community awareness and acceptance and positively promote and position the Project.
- Ensure early identification of potential stakeholder issues and implement appropriate mitigation strategies.
- Engage stakeholders and the community to capture their views and issues and ensure they are understood by the Project team and considered in decision making.
- Proactively respond to and work with stakeholders to develop appropriate solutions to minimise negative impacts associated with the Project.
- Provide feedback to stakeholders about their issues and how their feedback has been used.

- Provide Project information and assistance that minimises inconvenience to community members and other stakeholders through construction.

6.3 Consultation and communication activities

A number of consultation activities have been identified and are being implemented during the course of the Project, and include:

- A Project 1800 number (1800 108 807), website, email address (enquiries2@bhpbilliton.com), project factsheets and media activities (commenced).
- Consultation to support public involvement in the EIS process, for example publication of an IAS (this document) and EPBC Referral, review of the draft Terms of Reference, individual meetings, presentations to groups, distribution of Project factsheets and information.
- Consultation to support a Social Impact Assessment for the EIS, including individual meetings, presentations to groups, distribution of Project factsheets and information.
- Landholder communications, for example initial and ongoing discussions regarding Project information and access to land for environmental and engineering investigations (commenced).

6.4 Key stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as any individual, group of individuals, organisation or political entity with an interest in the outcome of a decision. This interest may arise from actual or perceived effects of the Project, both direct and indirect[3]. Stakeholders for the Project include Federal, State and Local Government representatives, affected landholders, indigenous parties with Native Title rights and/or cultural heritage interests, local business and residents, environmental and cultural heritage groups and surrounding communities.

[3] International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), 2006.

7. Contact details

For further information concerning the Project, please:

- Call the Project free call telephone number 1800 108 807 between the hours of 8.30 am and 8 pm.
- Email enquires2@bhpbilliton.com
- Visit the Project website www.bhpbilliton.com/regulatoryinformation