

# 01 | Introduction



## Section 01 Introduction

---

### 1.1 Introduction

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been prepared to inform decision makers, affected parties, interest groups, and the public about potential environmental issues relating to the development and operation of the Alpha Coal Project, and how these issues will be managed. The content of the EIS addresses the issues identified in the Terms of Reference (TOR) (Volume 4, Appendix A) issued by Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP).

This EIS has been made publicly available for comment, and submissions are sought from individuals and organisations. After consideration of this EIS and submissions received, DIP will review the Project to identify any uncertainties or omissions. A supplementary report may be necessary to cover any additional matters of concern and address submissions. A final decision on the overall acceptability of the Project will then be made on the basis of the information provided.

The EIS process allows for community consultation and ensures environmental protection by comprehensive consideration of potential impacts and management strategies. The DIP is responsible for coordinating the impact assessment process for this Project.

The objective of the EIS process is to ensure that all potential impacts, direct and indirect, particularly environmental, social and economic impacts are fully examined and addressed.

### 1.2 Project Proponent

Hancock Prospecting Pty Ltd (HPPL) is a diversified Australian energy and resources company, with a strong record of pioneering the economic development of regional Australia. Since HPPL was established in the mid 1950s, HPPL has demonstrated a strong commitment to the growth of Australia's mineral wealth, and has continued to seek and develop additional resource deposits across the country.

In the 1970s, coal exploration commenced in the Galilee Basin, Queensland which was at the time considered to be uneconomic due to the lack of associated infrastructure. Now, with more developed rail and port infrastructure coupled with the global demand for coal, there is a development opportunity for this area of regional Queensland. Due to this development opportunity HPPL as the Proponent, through its wholly owned subsidiary company, Hancock Coal Pty Ltd (HCPL) is proposing to develop the Alpha Coal Project (the Project).

HPPL has established the Hancock Integrated Management System (HIMS) that addresses the health, safety, environment, community, and heritage impacts associated with their exploration Projects. HIMS was developed using ISO14001 Environmental Management Systems, ISO9001 Quality Management Systems, and AS4801 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems standards.

## **1.3 Project Description**

In September 2008, the Proponent publically advertised the Alpha Coal Project initial advice statement (IAS). Included in the IAS were three suggested project components namely;

- An open cut coal mine;
- A railway corridor; and
- Export port facilities.

Since the release of the IAS the Port of Abbot Point was selected as the preferred export port facility and the port owner and operator North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation (NQBPP) has undertaken their own approvals process for the necessary expansion of this facility. As a result of this development the assessment port component described in the IAS has not been undertaken in this environmental impact statement (EIS).

The Abbot Point port facility has a current coal storage and handling capacity of 21 Mtpa. In 2007 approvals were granted to expand capacity to 50 Mtpa. The NQBPP has recently completed a Voluntary Environmental Assessment (VEA) for a proposed further expansion to the port for a handling capacity of 110 Mtpa (the Abbot Point X110 Infrastructure Development Project).

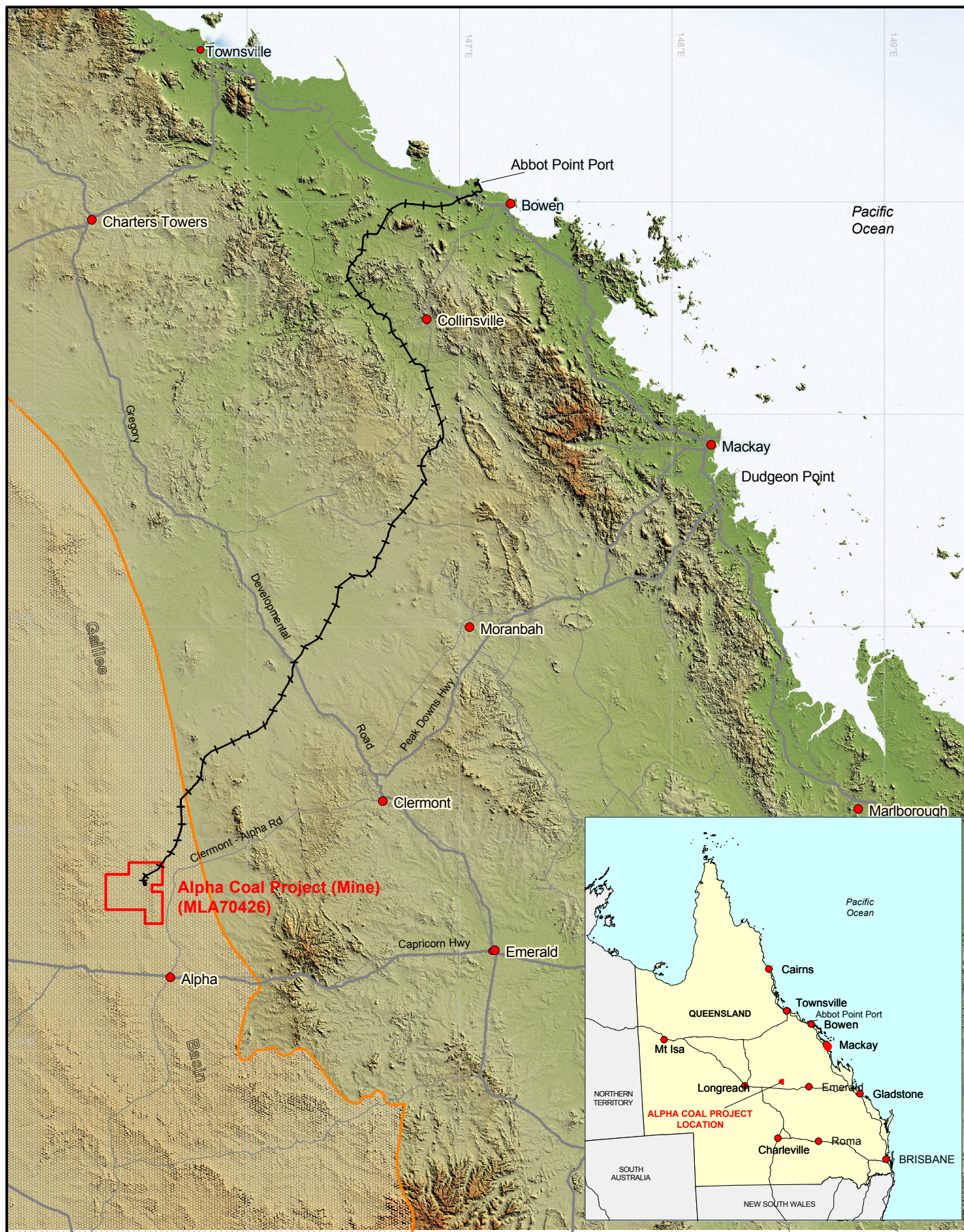
Throughout this EIS the mine and rail components of the Project are presented separately and the relevant EIS sections are documented in Volumes 2 and 3, respectively.

### **1.3.1 Alpha Coal Project (Mine)**

The Alpha Coal Project (Mine) is located 130 Kilometres (km) south-west of Clermont and approximately 360 km south-west of Mackay. The nearest residential area to the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) is the township of Alpha, located approximately 50 km south of the Project site. Refer to Figure 1-1.

The Project will comprise an open cut coal mine, located within Mining Lease Application (MLA) 70426. MLA 70426 is over Exploration Permit Coal (EPC) 1210 and Mineral Development Licenses (MDL) 333 and MDL 258. The open cut coal mine is planned to produce 30 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) of thermal coal for the export market for the scheduled life of mine (LOM) of 30 years, however with sufficient Joint Ore Reserves Committee (JORC) compliant resources there is the potential to extend the project life beyond 30 years.





 Mining Lease Application (MLA70426) Boundary  
 Proposed Railway Corridor

Source: See Copyright Details below and for full disclosure Please Refer to the EIS Volume 4 - References

0 25 50km  
 Scale 1:2 000 000 (A4)



Datum: GDA94, MGA Zone55

**HANCOCK PROSPECTING PTY LTD**

Alpha Coal Project  
Environmental Impact Statement

**PROJECT LOCATION  
- MINE AND RAILWAY**

Job Number 4262 6580  
 Revision A  
 Date 24-09-2010

**Figure: 1-1**

File No: 42626580-g-1001.wor

Copyright: This document is and shall remain the property of Hancock Prospecting Pty Ltd. The document may only be used for the purpose for which it was produced. Unauthorised use of this document in any way is prohibited.  
 Bing Maps © 2009 Microsoft Corporation and its data suppliers, © MapInfo Australia Pty Ltd and PSMA Australia Ltd., © Copyright Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2006, © Copyright The State of Queensland (Department of Natural Resources and Water) 2006, © The State of Queensland (Department of Mines and Energy) 2006-2008  
 This map is based on or contains data provided by GHD and URS 2010, which makes no representation or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and cannot accept liability and responsibility of any kind (whether in contract, tort or otherwise) for any expenses, losses, damages and/or costs (including indirect or consequential damage) which are or may be incurred by any party as a result of dataset being inaccurate, incomplete or unsuitable in any way for any reason.



The current Alpha Coal Project (Mine) plan comprises four separate open cut pits, with a total strike length of 24 km, in a north to south direction along the centre of MLA 70426. The mining overburden will be removed by truck and shovel, excavators and dragline operations. The overburden will initially be stockpiled in out-of-pit spoil emplacement areas and then used as backfill within the open cut pits. The coal will be mined by excavators and transported by truck to two Run of Mine (ROM) facilities. Raw coal will pass through one of two ROM facilities where it will be reduced in size for further processing at the Coal Handling and Preparation Plant (CHPP).

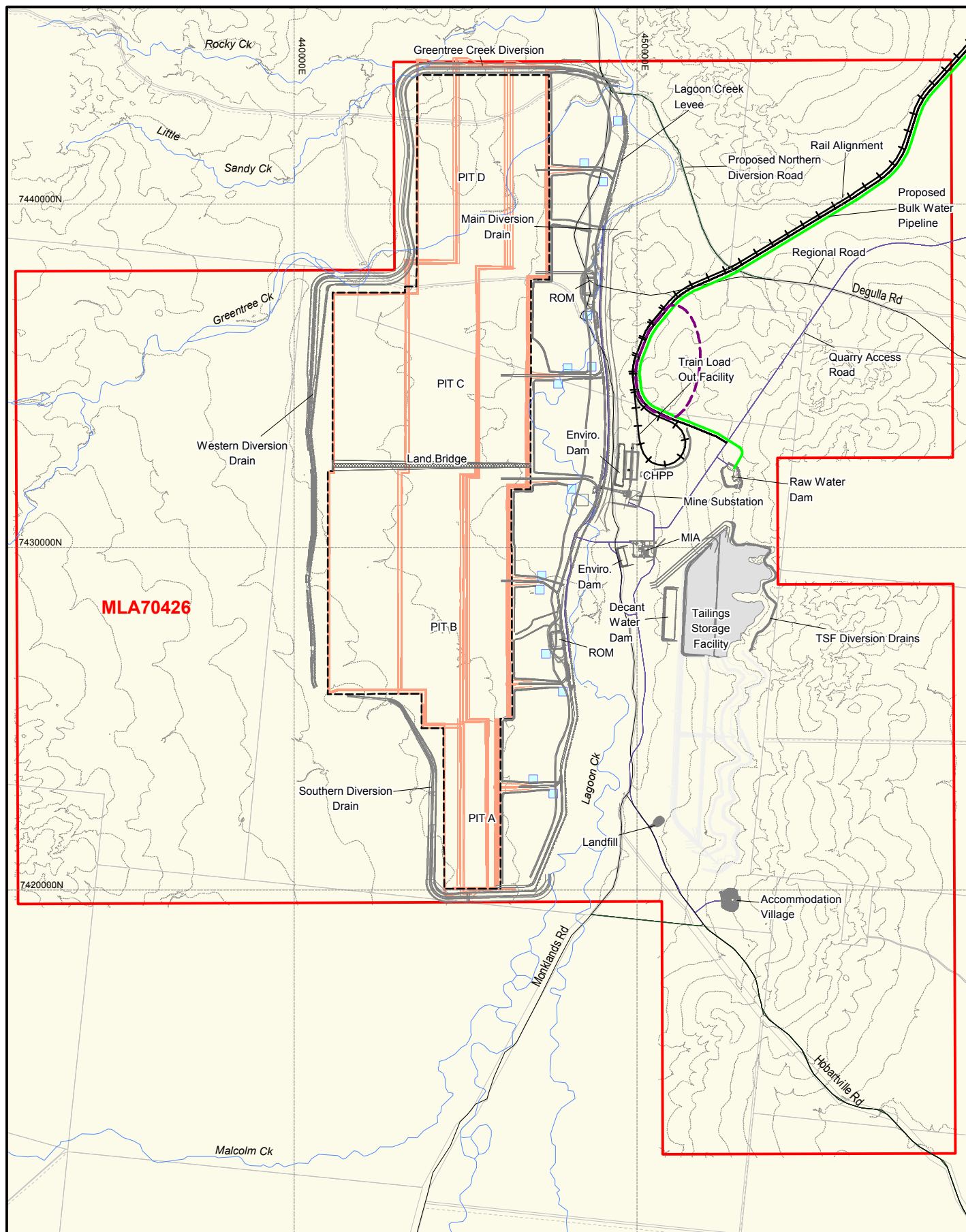
Sized raw coal will be transferred from the ROM facilities via conveyors to the multi-module CHPP, where it will be washed. All of the coal mined and placed through the ROM facilities will be processed to produce a 9.5% ash export thermal product. A tailings storage facility is required for the fine rejects (also known as tailings) for up to the first five years of operation. The coarse rejects from the CHPP will be placed in designated locations within the open cut pit spoil emplacement areas.

The mine infrastructure will include:

- Main workshop; warehouse; administration buildings; training and emergency services building; tyre bay; light vehicle workshop; and bucket repair shop;
- Train load-out facility and rail loop;
- Raw water dams and environment dams;
- Temporary and permanent accommodation village;
- Mine access road;
- General waste landfill;
- Borrow pits;
- Fuel, oil, and explosives storage facilities;
- Creek diversions, drainage channels and levee bunds;
- Water and wastewater systems;
- Water treatment plant and sewerage treatment plant;
- Electrical systems; and
- Communications systems.

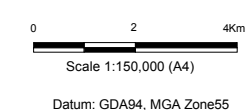
The project elements for the coal mine are illustrated in Figure 1-2.

A detailed description of the mine and associated infrastructure is provided in Volume 2, Section 2.



- Mining Lease Application (MLA70426) Boundary
- Contour (10m interval)
- Water Pipeline
- Water Dam
- Borrow Pit

Source: See Copyright Details below and for full disclosure Please Refer to the EIS Volume 4 - References



**HANCOCK PROSPECTING PTY LTD**

Alpha Coal Project  
Environmental Impact Statement

## MINE COMPONENTS

Job Number 4262 6580  
Revision A  
Date 24-09-2010

Figure: 1-2

File No: 42626580-g-1002.wor

Copyright: This document is and shall remain the property of Hancock Prospecting Pty Ltd. The document may only be used for the purpose for which it was produced. Unauthorised use of this document in any way is prohibited.  
Bing Maps © 2009 Microsoft Corporation and its data suppliers, © MapInfo Australia Pty Ltd and PSMA Australia Ltd., © Copyright Commonwealth of Australia (Geoscience Australia) 2006, © Copyright The State of Queensland (Department of Natural Resources and Water) 2006, © The State of Queensland (Department of Mines and Energy) 2006-2008  
This map is based on or contains data provided by GHD and URS 2010, which makes no representation or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and cannot accept liability and responsibility of any kind (whether in contract, tort or otherwise) for any expenses, losses, damages and/or costs (including indirect or consequential damage) which are or may be incurred by any party as a result of dataset being inaccurate, incomplete or unsuitable in any way for any reason.



### 1.3.2 Alpha Coal Project (Rail)

The Proponent is proposing to construct a standard gauge, single track, non-electrified, 495 km long railway line for the purposes of transporting processed coal from the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) to the Port of Abbot Point near Bowen. The location of the railway line is illustrated on Figure 1-1.

The proposed railway line connects the Galilee Basin in Central Queensland to the coastal Port of Abbot Point. The Galilee Basin spans an area of over 247,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is estimated to include over 14 billion tonnes of coal. As such, the proposed rail corridor will be an essential part of accessing the Galilee Basin and facilitating the export of thermal coal and other products. As a result, the proposed railway line will benefit the Central Queensland region, State of Queensland, and the nation.

The proposed railway line will enable export of 30 Mtpa of quality thermal coal from the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) for the Life of Mine (LOM), approximately 30 years. The railway design is proposed to include additional passing loops to the single line track and selective partial duplication, so that options to increase the railway tonnage and open the service to other potential mines from the Galilee Basin, is possible. The Proponent has undertaken to make the track available to third party users under a Voluntary Undertaking pursuant to the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (TP Act).

In addition to the main line from the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) to the Port of Abbot Point, the Project will also involve the construction of the following infrastructure:

- Two balloon loops, one at the Alpha coal mine and one at the Port of Abbot Point for loading and unloading;
- Eight passing loops each approximately 5 km long;
- Maintenance sidings along the railway line;
- Marshalling yard at the entry to the Port of Abbot Point; and
- Five accommodation camps with capacity for 700 to 800 personnel per camp including two permanent camps (one of which will be the accommodation village at the mine site) and three temporary camps.

A detailed description of the railway corridor and associated infrastructure is provided in Volume 3, Section 2.

## 1.4 Project Rationale

As an important fuel for electricity generation and an integral component in the steel industry, coal will have a major role to play in both social and economic development worldwide. The proposed Alpha Coal Project is aimed at assisting in filling the widening gap between existing global coal production and worldwide demand by becoming a provider within the world thermal coal market, especially to the growth markets in Asia.

To achieve the Project aims, the scope and objectives of the Project are to:

- Obtain optimal production and sales from the available resources;
- Design, construct, and operate a mine and railway line, comprising health, safety, environment and community (HSEC) standards and indicators, and comply with legislation and industry best practice; and

- Use existing proven strategies and industry best practice to minimise impacts on the environment and the communities associated with the Project.

The Galilee Basin and its coal resources are currently undeveloped, and the demand for good quality thermal coal from Australia presents an opportunity to develop this area. The Project will be one of the biggest coal mine of its type in Australia.

The Project meets Queensland Government objectives in realising the timely development of the Galilee Basin whilst ensuring the community benefits and environment objectives are supported. Overarching Project wide benefits include:

- Employment for construction, operation, and other in-direct employment benefits;
- Significant export income;
- Local and state economic benefits;
- Improved infrastructure into the region including upgrades to roads and airport, and introduction of additional power and water supplies to the region; and
- Significant State and Government taxes and royalties.

The construction phase for the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) and associated Alpha Coal Project (Rail) is scheduled to take approximately 48 months, commencing in 2011. The operational phase for the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) is 30 years, commencing in 2013, while the Alpha Coal Project (Rail) is expected to be operational in 2014.

The establishment costs associated with the mine and rail corridor are detailed in Volume 2, Section 22 and Volume 3, Section 22, respectively.

The Proponent's Environmental Policy is provided in Volume 4 Appendix E.

## **1.5 Relationship to Other Projects**

The Alpha Coal Project (Mine) site aims to produce 30 Mtpa open cut thermal product coal (from 41 Mtpa ROM coal) from the Upper Permian Bandanna Formation and Colinlea Sandstone coal measures of the Galilee Basin in Queensland. At the Project mine site the coal will be mined, washed and conveyed to a train load-out facility, where it will be transported 495 km to the east coast of Australia to the port facility at Abbot Point for export.

The Project proposes to use the Abbot Point Port Coal Terminal for the export of product coal. The NQBP is the owner and port authority for the Abbot Point Port. The port element of the project at Abbot Point does not form part of this EIS, because NQBP is the owner and operator of the port facilities and is responsible for those environmental approvals. The port facility's current capacity of 21 Mtpa is to be expanded to 110 Mtpa, under the Abbot Point X110 Infrastructure Development Project. The key infrastructure, according to NQBP, for the X110 Infrastructure Development Project includes:

- Installation of new stockyard capacity involving up to 10 stockpile rows;
- Installation of up to 15 new stockyard machines;
- Installation of a second off-shore jetty structure with two out-loading conveyors;
- Two new offshore wharf/berth structures with two new ship-loaders; and
- Rail receipt pits and associated in-loading conveyors.



The Project also has broader links with a range of projects either existing or proposed that are at various stages of the EIS process and/or development. Existing mining projects in the region include:

- Curragh and Curragh North, Wesfarmers Ltd, an open cut coal mine at Blackwater;
- Ensham, Ensham Resources Ltd, an open cut coal mine at Emerald;
- Gregory, BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance, an open cut coal mine at Tieri;
- Jellinbah East, Jellinbah Resources Ltd, an open cut coal mine at Blackwater;
- Kestrel, Rio Tinto Coal Australia Ltd, an under ground coal mine at Tieri; and
- Yarrabee, Yancoal Australia Ltd, an open cut coal mine at Blackwater.

Proposed projects in the region include:

- Galilee Basin Power Station, Galilee Power Pty Ltd (fully owned subsidiary of Waratah Coal Pty Ltd), coal fired power station;
- Waratah Galilee Coal Mine, Waratah Coal Inc., open cut coal mine;
- The South Galilee Coal Project, joint venture of AMCI (Alpha) Pty Ltd and Alpha Coal Pty Ltd., open cut and underground mine; and
- Ensham Underground 1 and 2, Ensham Resources, underground mine.

Proposed projects that link directly with the Alpha Coal Project are listed below:

- Kevin's Corner, Hancock Galilee Pty Ltd (HGPL). The proposed Kevin's Corner mine is directly north of the proposed project with adjoining MLAs and being developed by the same Proponent. Both projects proposed to use the Alpha Coal Project (Rail) railway line on MLA 70426 to Abbot Point Port;
- Powerlink power transmission line to be used to provide energy directly to the Project; and
- SunWater raw water line to be used to provide raw water directly to the Project.

The Proponent is investigating the potential for any co-location opportunities and future inter-relationships between the proposed project and others in the local area. The opportunities for other Galilee Basin projects to benefit from the Project arise through two key mechanisms. The first is through third party access to the Project railway. The second is through the Project's rail engineering solution that allows for future expansion to service the needs of other users. The Alpha Coal Project (Rail) has been in the public domain since February 2010, when it was publicly advertised as part of the Infrastructure Facility of Significance process under section 125 (1) (f) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. The criteria for declaration requires the facility to be significant, particularly economically or socially, to Australia, Queensland or the region in which the facility is to be constructed. In addition, the proponent is preparing a Voluntary Access Undertaking pursuant to the Trade Practices Act 1974. The outcomes of that process will facilitate third party access to the railway facilities, and no parties have or will be excluded from that process.

## **1.6 Socio-economic Cost and Benefits of the Project**

The Alpha Coal Project will result in significant socio-economic impacts throughout the region, Queensland and Australia. The overall level of economic activity resulting from Project construction

and operation phases will result in positive effects throughout the Queensland economy. The major social-economic impacts of the Project include:

- The short term creation of approximately 1,060 (mine) and 2,680 (rail) construction jobs;
- The long term creation of approximately 2,300 (mine) and 225 (rail) operational job opportunities (including contractors);
- Flow-on (indirect) peak employment effects throughout the Queensland economy of approximately 7,230 full time equivalent (FTE) positions (including 2,850 indirect FTE positions) during construction and 8,338 FTE positions (including 2,859 indirect FTE positions) in operation;
- Peak value added effects of approximately \$750 million (including \$262 million in indirect value added effects) resulting from construction and capital expenditure, and \$1.77 billion in value added effects (including \$655 million in indirect value added effects) resulting from ongoing and operational expenditure;
- Export of approximately 856 Mt of coal from Queensland throughout the life of the mine, with an export value of approximately \$84 billion; and
- Annual exports of approximately 30 Mtpa of coal (once fully operational) equating to a value of approximately \$3 billion per annum.

## **1.7 Alternatives to the Project**

As the coal resource is located within MLA 70426, it is not feasible to locate Alpha Coal Project (Mine) to an alternate location. Coal seams which are the target of mining operations do not extend to the east of Lagoon Creek or the MLA boundary. The coal seams situated further west of the proposed Alpha Coal Project (Mine) described in this EIS could potentially be mined in the future as part of a separate approvals process.

In order to identify the most suitable Alpha Coal Project (Rail) alignment various assessments were undertaken with the key objectives being to:

- Ensure the selected route is feasible from engineering, environmental, and social perspectives;
- Ensure operational scenarios and the potential alignment are viable and sustainable; and
- Determine the lowest cost, lowest risk option to deliver the specified coal transport task.

Due to the scale of the Alpha Coal Project (Rail) and complex objectives, approximately 200 various railway alignment options were analysed. These options were further refined into sub-options, on the basis of the following:

- Consultation with affected landowners and identification of key social impacts such as dust and noise impacts, direct physical and economic property impacts;
- Chosen viable export facility; and
- Avoidance of significant vegetation, national parks and state forests.

The regional Queensland cost of not proceeding with the Project in its currently proposed form, would include:



- Loss of employment creation including a total of 1,060 (mine) and 2,680 (rail) construction jobs and around 2,300 (mine) and 225 (rail) operational job opportunities (including contractors), along with the flow-on (indirect) employment opportunities for the region;
- Significant export income would not be realised;
- Introduction of new, and upgrade of existing, infrastructure including roads, airports, power and water supplies would not be brought to the region;
- Injection of revenue into the regional economy would not occur;
- Significant Queensland and Commonwealth Government taxes and royalties from a state-owned resource would not be generated;
- Loss of skill development and education opportunities; and
- The economic opportunity of developing a coal resource which is viable and in demand would not be realised.

The alternatives for the Project components are further discussed in Volume 2 Section 1 and Volume 3 Section 1.

## 1.8 Co-location Opportunities

Due to the remote location of the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) site and the current lack of other mining development in the region, no co-location opportunities were identified. However, the Proponent is entering confidential discussions with other nearby projects, developments and infrastructure providers to establish supporting co-location opportunities, in order to mitigate environmental and property impacts. At this stage of the EIS it is proposed that the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) will utilise the energy and raw water from the proposed Powerlink Galilee Basin Transmission Project and SunWater Connor River Dam and Moranbah to Galilee Basin Pipeline Project. It is understood that this energy and raw water infrastructure will be made available by the above mentioned third parties to other projects as well as the community in the local area.

The proposed Alpha Coal Project (Rail) traverses the following linear infrastructure, thereby utilising the co-location of utilities to reduce community and environmental impacts:

- The proposed Alpha Coal (Rail) alignment runs parallel to the Queensland Rail (QR) Northern Missing Link (Goonyella Abbot Point Expansion (GAPE) project) railway for approximately 70 km through a pass in the Leichhardt Range and parallel to the Newlands Railway to a point near the Bowen River; and
- The North Queensland Gas Pipeline intersects with the Alpha Coal (Rail) at chainage 275 km and then runs parallel to the Alpha Coal (Rail) up until reaching the chainage 405 km mark of the alignment.

## 1.9 The Environmental Impact Assessment Process

Environmental impact assessment is the process undertaken to identify, evaluate and mitigate potential environmental impacts of a development proposal. In Queensland, DIP uses this process on behalf of the Coordinator General (CoG) to assess development projects that have been declared significant. The Alpha Coal Project has been declared significant under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWOA) and this EIS will be assessed under this Act.

The EIS aims to allow for informed decision making, knowledge transfer, and provide opportunity for comment. The content of the EIS addresses the issues identified in the TOR (Volume 4, Appendix A) issued by DIP.

The EIS relates to the entire life of both the Alpha Coal Project (Mine) and (Rail) components including construction, operation, maintenance, as well as rehabilitation and decommissioning. The EIS enables reasonable, cost effective and technically achievable conditions to be developed to ensure that the social and environmental impacts of the Project are reduced to acceptable levels. The level of analysis and detail in the EIS reflects the environmental risks and level of significance of particular impacts.

### 1.9.1 Methodology of the EIS

The environmental impact assessment process for the Alpha Coal Project includes the following key stages:

1. The *Initial Advice Statement* (IAS), the process for declaration of a significant project in accordance with the requirements of s.27(1)(a) of the SDPWOA. The IAS for the Project was lodged with the CoG in September 2008;
2. *Significant Project Declaration*. On 21 October 2008 the CoG declared the Project a significant project for which an EIS would be required, in accordance with Part 4 of the SDPWOA;
3. Matters of '*national environmental significance*'. In November 2008, the Proponent referred the project to the Commonwealth Minister for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPC) in accordance with the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). On 13 January 2009, DSEWPC determined the Project to be a '*controlled action*' under the EPBC Act as there is potential to impact on the following matters of '*national environmental significance*' (MNES):
  - Sections 12 and 15A (world heritage properties);
  - Sections 15B and 15C (national heritage places);
  - Sections 18 and 18A (listed threatened species and ecological communities);
  - Sections 20 and 20A (listed migratory species); and

In cases where a Queensland 'significant project' is determined by the Commonwealth to be also a '*controlled action*' under the EPBC Act, a bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments recognises the Queensland EIS process under the SDPWO Act as an appropriate process pursuant to Section 87 of the EPBC Act;

4. Preparation of *Terms of Reference* (TOR). The draft TOR for the EIS was prepared and released for public comment between 7 February 2009 and 9 March 2009. A total of 22 submissions (from advisory agencies, the public, and various organisations) on the draft TOR were received. All matters raised were evaluated and where appropriate incorporated into the final TOR. The final TOR was released by the CG in June 2009. The Project TOR is included in Volume 4, Appendix A;
5. Preparation of the *EIS*. The EIS is presented within this documentation in Volumes 1 through to 6. During the EIS compilation and project development a large number of studies (biophysical and



social) have been undertaken. The extent of these studies is presented in Volume 2, Section 1.9.4 and Volume 3, Section 1.3;

6. *Review and assessment of the EIS.* A public notice will be placed in relevant local and state newspapers advising the public of where copies of this EIS are available for inspection or purchase and the advertising and submission timeframe. Submissions relating to the EIS may be made by any interested party to the CoG during this advertising period;
7. *Preparation of a supplementary EIS report.* Following the public submission period, the Proponent may be required to prepare a supplementary report or addendum to the EIS to address specific matters raised in submissions on the EIS; and
8. *Preparation of the Coordinator General's EIS evaluation report.* At the completion of the assessment phase, the CoG will prepare a report evaluating the EIS submission and other related material, pursuant to Section 35 of the SDPWO Act. The CoG report will include an evaluation of the environmental effects of the Project and any related matters, and will reach a conclusion about the environmental effects and any associated mitigation measures. The evaluation will take into account all relevant material including; the EIS, all properly made submissions, and other submissions accepted by the CoG, any other material the CoG considers is relevant to the Project, such as the supplementary report/addendum to the EIS, comments and advice from advisory agencies, and technical reports on specific components of the Project.

After an EIS has been completed and the CoG report has been finalised, the CoG will distribute the report to the Australian Government, relevant state government agencies, and local authorities which are responsible for approvals and overseeing project development.

### **1.9.2 Objectives of the EIS**

The objective of the EIS process is to ensure that all impacts, direct and indirect, particularly environmental, social and economic impacts are fully examined and addressed. The EIS aims to be a self-contained and comprehensive document that provides for:

- The identification of stakeholders and key issues associated with the Project;
- Interested bodies and persons; a basis for understanding the Project, alternatives and preferred solutions, the existing environment that would be affected by the Project, the impacts that may occur, and the measures to be taken to mitigate all adverse impacts;
- The DIP and the Advisory Bodies; a framework for assessing the impacts of the Project both adverse and beneficial, in view of legislative and policy provisions; and
- The Proponent; a definitive statement of measures or actions to be undertaken to mitigate any adverse impacts associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning stages throughout the Project. Environmental management plans (EM Plans) are included in the EIS, describing potential impacts and environmental management strategies designed to meet agreed performance criteria.

### **1.9.3 Submissions**

Copies of the EIS have been submitted to the DIP. The DIP is to distribute the EIS for public and Advisory Body review and comment. The EIS has been placed on public display at the offices of the Barcaldine Regional Council and copies made available to interested persons. An electronic copy of

the EIS is available for download from the DIP (<http://www.dip.qld.gov.au>) and from the Hancock website, [www.hancockcoal.com.au](http://www.hancockcoal.com.au).

Any person, group or organisation can make a written submission about the EIS to the DIP. Such submissions do not have to relate to the whole of the EIS and may relate to any aspect. Persons making a submission do not have to be an expert in any of the issues assessed in the EIS.

EIS comments and submissions must be made in writing and sent to the DIP within the comment period, as advertised in the public notice about the EIS.

All submissions, comments and enquiries regarding this EIS must be addressed to:

EIS Project Manager  
Alpha Coal Project  
Significant Projects Coordination  
Department of Infrastructure and Planning  
PO Box 15009  
CITY EAST QLD 4002  
Tel: (07) 3224 4736  
Fax: (07) 3225 8282

The DIP and Advisory Bodies will consider public submissions in making decisions in relation to the Project. The DIP will coordinate the consultation process between the Proponent, the Advisory Bodies, and the public and collate and review all comments received on the EIS.

HPPL may then be required to prepare a supplementary report addressing the comments submitted by the Advisory Bodies and the public. At the conclusion of this process, the DIP will prepare an assessment report on the EIS.

## **1.10 Public Consultation Process**

Consultation with advisory agencies, members of the public, and other stakeholders has formed an integral part of the EIS preparation phase and will continue during project development and operations. The community consultation process aims to ensure clear, transparent, two-way communication between the Proponent and the interested and affected stakeholders through listening, recording, and responding to issues relating to the Project. The process provides an opportunity for the Proponent to impart information to stakeholders regarding the Project; to obtain valuable local knowledge from these groups, and to respond to concerns through appropriate action. It provides stakeholders with an opportunity to express their views and concerns, provide feedback, and partake in the EIS process.

A variety of communication tools and activities have and will be used to inform and receive feedback including; EIS display and feedback, community information sessions and meetings, newsletters, advertisements, presentations, attendance at regional show days, a website and provision of a free call number (refer to Volume 5, Appendix O and Volume 6, Appendix K).



## 1.11 Approvals Process

### 1.11.1 Relevant legislation and policy requirements

In addition to the EIS approval process, the Project will need to obtain other approvals and comply with all relevant legislation and policies (Commonwealth, State and local government) before construction can begin and operations can commence.

Table 1-1 details the key legislative and policy requirements, the relevant authority, approvals and timing information applicable to the Project.

Table 1-1 Key Approvals Required for the Project

Legislation	Relevant Authority	Action/ Approval	Timing
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	Department of Sustainability, Environmental, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPC)	Approval of the declared 'controlled action' and EIS (under bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments recognises the Queensland EIS process under the SDPWO Act as an appropriate process pursuant to Section 87 of the EPBC Act.). Controlled action determined based on: Sections 12 and 15A (world heritage properties) Sections 15B and 15C (national heritage places) Sections 18 and 18A (listed threatened species and ecological communities) Sections 20 and 20A (listed migratory species) Sections 23 and 24A (Commonwealth marine areas)	2011
<i>State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971</i>	Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP)	Approval of the EIS. Application with the Queensland CG for the Rail component, as to whether it can be considered a "Infrastructure Facility of Significance" under the Community Infrastructure Designation (CID) post the EIS.	2011
<i>Environment Protection Act 1994</i>	Department of Environment and Resource Management including the former Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Natural Resources and Water (DERM)	Approval of EM Plan and issue of an environmental authority to operate the mine	2011
<i>Environment Protection Act 1994</i>	DERM	Environmentally relevant activity (ERA) 8 – Chemical Storage ERA 14 – Electricity generation ERA 31 - Mineral Processing ERA 56 - Regulated Waste Storage ERA 63 - Sewage Treatment ERA 65 – water treatment ERA 60 – waste disposal	Pre Construction

Legislation	Relevant Authority	Action/ Approval	Timing
<i>Mineral Resources Act 1989</i>	Department of Employment Economic Development and Innovation including the former Department of Mines and Energy (DEEDI)	Grant of ML for MLA 70426	2011
<i>Sustainable Planning Act 2009</i>	Assessment Managers	Grant of any development permits (if required) e.g. off-lease quarries	Pre Construction
<i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>	DERM	Vegetation clearing	Pre Construction
<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>	DERM	Interference with species listed under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994	Pre Construction
<i>Water Act 2000</i>	DERM	Licensing of water course diversions and crossings Licensing for bores constructed as part of the groundwater monitoring network Water licenses for dewatering Hazardous dam approval	Pre Construction
<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	DERM	Approval of Cultural Heritage Management Plan	2011

Other Project considerations may include a range of state and regional policies, frameworks, designations and plans such as:

- State Planning Policies (SPP), statutory planning instruments that relate to matters of state interest. There are eight SPP that must be considered in the assessment of relevant development applications lodged under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA Act). Outlined in detail in Volume 2, Section 1.
- The Northern Economic Triangle (NET), established by the Queensland Government in 2007 as a plan to promote sustainable economic, social and community growth through the development of mining, mineral processing and industrial development between Mount Isa, Townsville and Bowen.
- Railway facilities are included as types of community infrastructure as listed in the *Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009, Schedule 2* therefore Community Infrastructure Designation (CID) will be sought for the Project on completion of the EIS. The CID will be sought after the completion of the EIS as designation of the land for the Project must undergo adequate environmental assessment, including public consultation, and also adequate account of issues raised in the public consultation before designation can be granted by the Minister. If the Project is granted CID the development will not require approval under any local government planning scheme, nor need to meet any scheme requirements. However, state-level legislation and regulatory requirements continue to apply, e.g. building and environmental management legislation.



- The Alpha Coal Project (Mine) site is wholly located within Barcaldine Regional Council area. The Regional Council was formed on 15 March 2008 following the amalgamation of the Shires of Aramac, Barcaldine and Jericho. Under the transitional arrangements for the amalgamated councils, the planning schemes for the former shires remain applicable in assessing development until a new regional council planning scheme comes into effect. In the case of the Alpha Coal Project (Mine), the Jericho Shire Planning Scheme, that took effect 23 June 2006, remains the planning scheme against which assessable development would be assessed.
- The Alpha Coal Project (Rail) is partly contained within the Abbot Point State Development Area (APSDA). The APSDA was declared by the Governor in Council and a development scheme approved on 19 June 2008. The declaration of the APSDA is a crucial component of the NET Infrastructure Plan 2007-2012, which is a Queensland Government commitment mineral processing and industrial development. All proposals within the area must comply with the development scheme for the APSDA. Development is managed through the APSDA Plan, which is administered by the DIP on behalf of the CoG.
- The Sustainable Futures Framework for Queensland Mining Towns, initiated by the Queensland Government to provide an overview of the existing situation within mining towns in the Bowen and Surat Basins. The aim of the framework is to develop strategies to resolve issues associated with growth in the region.

Other approvals that may be required, prior to development of the project:

- Material Change of Use for an ERA under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act) and SP Act.
- Registration Certificate for ERAs under the EP Act;
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan, under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*;
- Vegetation Clearing under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* and SPA Act;
- Protection of Wildlife and Vegetation under the *Nature Conservation Act, 1992*; and
- Riverine Protection Permit under the *Water Act 2000*.

### 1.11.2 Planning Processes and Standards

The SP Act establishes the framework for planning and development assessment in Queensland. The SP Act exempts activities authorised under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* and all aspects of development for a mining activity to which an environmental authority (mining activities) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* apply. Regardless of the exemptions of the mining activities, an assessment of the Project has been undertaken against the state planning policies (SPPs). An assessment of the Project against the provisions of these policies, plans and schemes is provided in Volume 2, Section 6.

### 1.11.3 Accredited Process for Controlled Actions Under Legislation

The EPBC Act prescribes the Commonwealth Government's role in environmental assessment, biodiversity conservation and the management of protected areas. The Act identifies six matters of national environmental significance. The Act requires assessment and approval for any activity that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance. Such

an activity is deemed to be a controlled action. It is an offence to undertake a controlled action without the approval of the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The Proponent referred the Project to DSEWPC with a recommendation that the Project was a controlled action, because of its potential impact on a matter of national environmental significance. On 13 January 2009 the DSEWPC determined that the Project was a controlled action (refer to Section 1.9.1 Stage 3)

As a consequence of this decision, the Project triggered the impact assessment provisions of the EPBC Act.

The DSEWPC is an advisory agency to the Queensland Government for the Project's EIS process. As part of the EIS process, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts will review the EIS to ensure that it adequately addresses the requirements of the EPBC Act. The Minister's assessment will follow preparation of the assessment report by DIP. DSEWPC will ensure that input from other relevant Commonwealth agencies is provided.

A stand-alone report is provided as an appendix that fully addresses the issues relevant to the controlling provisions, refer to Volume 4, Appendix C (EPBC Report).

#### **1.11.4 Bilateral Agreement**

The bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Queensland relating to environmental assessment (the bilateral agreement) came into effect on 11 August 2009. The agreement provides for the accreditation of certain Queensland environmental assessment processes to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach for actions requiring approval from both the Commonwealth Environment Minister (under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) (EPBC Act) and the State of Queensland. This agreement will therefore enable the Commonwealth to rely primarily on the Queensland assessment processes in assessing actions under the EPBC Act. Upon completion of an assessment of the likely environmental impacts of this project proposal, the Queensland Coordinator General will provide a finalised assessment report to the Commonwealth Environment Minister. The Commonwealth Environment Minister would then be expected to make a decision on whether or not to approve the proposal within 30 business days after receiving the report from the Coordinator General.

HPPL in November 2008 submitted a Referral of Proposed Action to the Commonwealth under the EPBC Act (Referral 2008/4648) to construct a mine and supporting rail link in Central Queensland. The Commonwealth on 13 January 2009 issued a Decision Notice that confirmed the proposed action is a controlled action, and confirmed that the project will be assessed under the bilateral agreement with the Queensland Government.

#### **1.11.5 Port Area Referral**

The port element of the project at Abbot Point does not form part of this EIS. NQBP, the owner and operator of the Abbot Point port facilities, is conducting the port area environmental impact assessment activities.