

Appendix H

Botanical and fauna habitat survey

BOTANICAL AND FAUNA HABITAT SURVEY

FINGAL TIER

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

FOR HARD ROCK COAL MINING PTY LTD

17th January 2012



PHILIP MILNER LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT PTY LTD

144 Allisons Road, LOWER BARRINGTON
POSTAL: C/O Post Office, BARRINGTON, 7306
TASMANIA

Mobile: 0417 052 605
Home Phone: (03) 6492 3201
Email: philip.milner@bigpond.com

A.B.N.No. 32 068 906 258

Introduction:

Hard Rock Coal Mining Pty Ltd is extending the drilling program within their Fingal Tier lease in order to further prove the coal resource. An additional 6 exploratory drill holes are proposed, 2 in the vicinity of the old Valley Mine workings (“A” and “B”), drill site “C” located off Valley Road itself above and to the east of the old workings, and “D”, “E” and “F” located along the edge of the escarpment towards the east and all of which will be accessed from Valley Road 2.

A botanical survey and fauna habitat assessment over the lease area which included a desktop search of the known natural values of the locality was undertaken by GHD in August 2011.

This field survey targets the locations within the lease which are likely to be impacted by the proposed drilling program, and this report should be read in conjunction with the previous report prepared by GHD.

Objectives:

- Undertake a field survey of the proposed drill sites in order to determine the possible impacts on the natural values present, including threatened flora, threatened vegetation communities and potential threatened fauna habitat.

Location of Study Area:

The area to be surveyed is located within Fingal Tier, about 4km from the town of Fingal.

MAP REF: Tasmap 1:25,000, Map Sheet No. 5839, St Marys

BIOREGION: Northern Midlands (Fingal Valley)

- Reference point for this survey: GRID REF: 587710E – 5390364N
(All Grid References MGA Zone 55 GDA94)

Field Survey:

Methodology: The attached map details the locations of the proposed drill sites. “A”, “B” and “C” were surveyed on foot. The locations of “D”, “E” and “F” which have been subject to recent forestry harvesting and are in a disturbed state and were not surveyed in detail. A general survey was undertaken along Valley Road 2. which has also been subject to forestry operations.

The field survey was conducted on the 10th January 2012.

Limitations: No botanical survey can guarantee that all vascular flora will be observed and recorded during a single survey in one year, due to seasonal and annual variation in abundance and the possible absence of flowers and fertile material for identification. Ephemeral species that may have been present includes species of orchids, lilies, grasses and other graminoids. However all significant species known to occur in the study area and its environs are considered in this report.

Field Survey Results:

Proposed Drill Sites “A”, “B” & “C”.

Drill site “A” is located above and to the east of the old mine workings and will require the formation of a short upslope vehicular track for access.

The vegetation community observed within this location was *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Open Forest however it was difficult to differentiate between *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest and Woodland on Sandstone and *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest on Woodland on Dolerite as the

geology in the area is not well defined. The two communities are largely distinguished by the nature of the substrate as the composition of the vegetation in both communities is similar. The previous survey undertaken by GHD has mapped a localized area of *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest and Woodland on Sandstone to the east of Smudgy Creek, the area in which drill site “A” is located. *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest and Woodland on Sandstone is a threatened community listed under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* however the drilling of site “A” as proposed will not have a significant impact on the community providing the larger and mature trees are avoided.

Drill site “B” is located below and to the immediate north of the old mine workings alongside an existing vehicular track.

Drill site “C” is located above and to the east of drill site “A” and will be accessed by an existing but obscure vehicular track from Valley Road, a distance of less than 200 metres.

Both “B” and “C” are located within areas mapped as *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest and Woodland on Dolerite and again there will be minimal impact providing the larger and mature trees are avoided.

No threatened species of plants were observed although it was too late in the season to observe spring flowering species of orchids. The following species of plants which are in addition to the list within the GHD report were observed during the survey. *Clematis gentianoides*, *Goodenia lanata*, *Linum marginale*, *Pimelea humilis*, *Poa rodwayi*, *Poranthera microphylla*, *Pteridium esculentum*, and a *Wahlenbergia sp.* Some potential habitat for species of fauna such as trees with hollows were observed in the locality, however such trees will not be impacted by the proposed drilling program.

Proposed Drill Sites “D”, “E” and “F”.

The three proposed drill sites are located below the edge of the escarpment to the east of drill site “C”, and near the interface between the two main vegetation communities in the location, *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest and Woodland on Dolerite which occurs across the slopes, and *Eucalyptus delegatensis* Dry Forest and Woodland which is present across the top of the escarpment. Each drill site will be accessed from Valley Road 2 and each access route will extend through forest which has been subject to forest harvesting and is in the early stages of regeneration with saplings of *Eucalyptus delegatensis* and *E. brookereana* up to 3 metres high being evident. The proposed drilling program and associated access formation will have minimal further impact on an already disturbed location. No threatened species of plants, or potential habitat for threatened species of fauna were observed in this location although mature trees with hollows are likely to be present down-slope of the drill site locations.

Survey Conclusions:

The proposed drilling program of 6 drill pad sites and their associated access routes will have minimal impact on the natural values of the location including the threatened vegetation community *Eucalyptus amygdalina* Forest and Woodland on Sandstone. No threatened species of flora were observed. No mature trees with hollows will be impacted by the proposed drilling program.

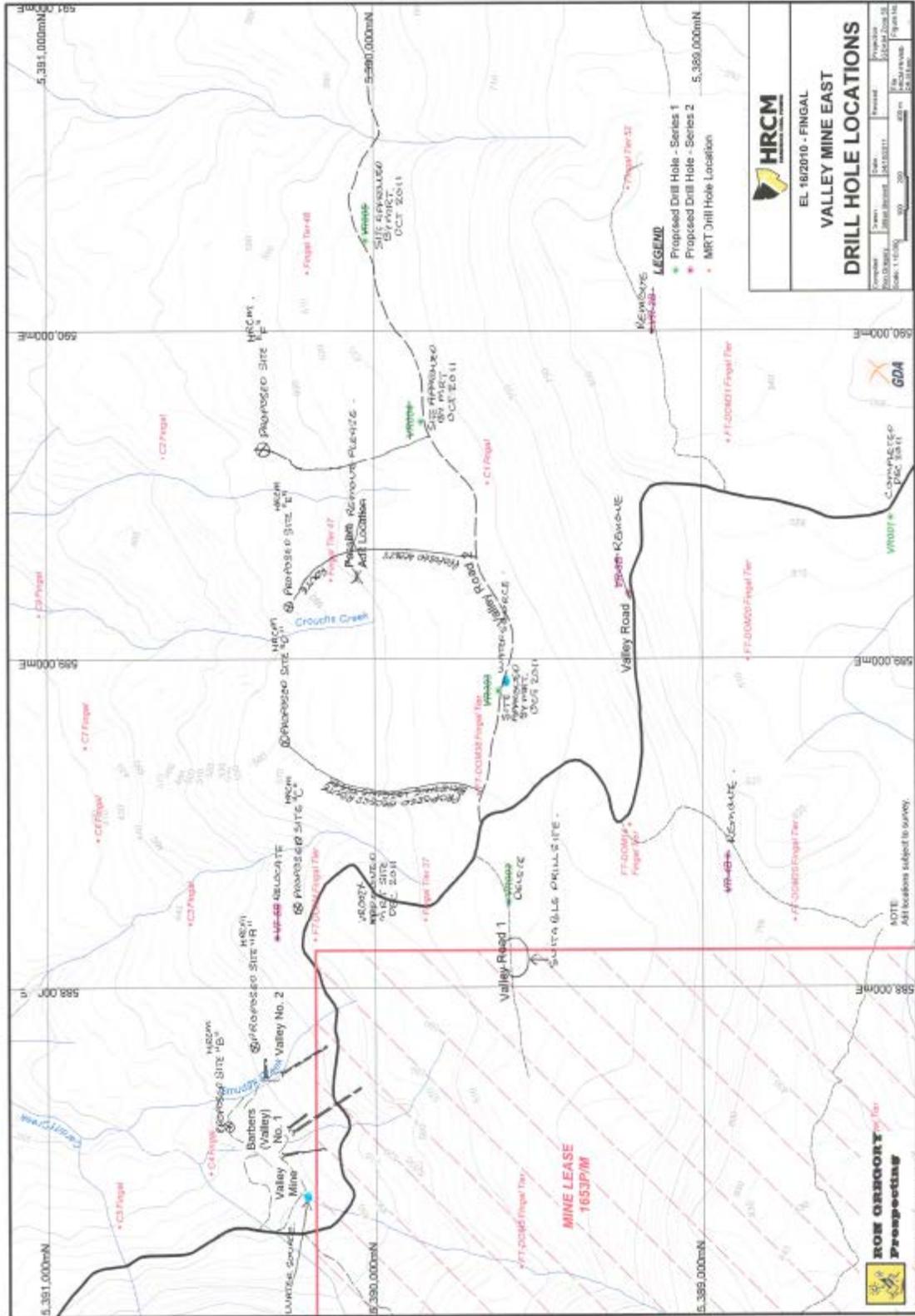
Recommendations:

- Adjust the alignment of the proposed access track to Drill Site “A” where necessary in order to avoid the mature Eucalypts and limit other environmental impacts.

- Ensure that the formation of each access track has minimal impact on the vegetation and underlying substrate.
- Ensure that the location of each drill site is clear of any mature Eucalypt and in locations for minimal impact on the understorey vegetation..

Philip Milner

Vegetation Consultant



MAP 1. Map of the Target Area within EL16/2010 showing proposed drill site locations.