

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE

This document has been compiled to provide a response to the key issues raised in submissions lodged within the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) during the public exhibition period for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the amended Rocky Hill Coal Project (the amended Project) proposed by Gloucester Resources Limited (GRL).

GRL is seeking approval to develop and operate a small scale open cut coal mine 3.5km to 7km southeast of the Gloucester urban area to produce approximately 21 million tonnes of run-of-mine coal which would yield a high quality semi-hard coking coal suited for the manufacture of steel.

GRL originally proposed the Rocky Hill Coal Project in 2013 (“the 2013 application”). However, in June 2015, during the assessment period for the 2013 application, GRL requested the assessment be placed on hold as it was in commercial negotiations with Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd (Yancoal) regarding the use of major items of infrastructure at the nearby Stratford Mining Complex. In December 2015, DPE was advised that an agreement had been reached between GRL and Yancoal whereby sized ROM coal would be transported from the Rocky Hill Mine Area to the Stratford Mining Complex via a private haul road and processed and despatched using Stratford Mining Complex facilities, thereby reducing the extent of disturbance associated with the Rocky Hill Coal Project and enabling GRL to implement a number of design modifications which would result in a range of improved environmental outcomes.

When designing the amended Project, GRL placed considerable emphasis upon those components of the 2013 Project that caused greatest concern in the local community, particularly with respect to visibility, hours of operation, noise, air quality and water.

1.2 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

The EIS for the amended Project and supporting *Specialist Consultant Studies Compendium* (SCSC) was placed on exhibition from 17 August 2016 to 14 October 2016. The DPE has provided GRL with a total of 2 591 submissions that were received during the exhibition period from:

- 13 Government Agencies;
- 24 Special Interest Groups opposing the amended Project;
- 3 Special Interest Groups supporting the amended Project;
- 2 286 Individuals opposing the amended Project (including a number of standard form letters);
- 260 Individuals supporting the amended Project; and
- 5 Industry Enterprises providing comments.

Table 1.1 presents a summary of the locations of the individual submitters, i.e. covering those that opposed, supported or provided comments about the amended Project, as determined from information on the DPE website. Of the individual submissions opposing the amended Project, 1 589 were submitted on one of 17 different form letters, of which approximately 1030 were submitted on four form letters. Approximately 950 (42%) of the submissions opposing the amended Project originated from people residing in Sydney and surrounds, Newcastle, interstate and overseas.

Table 1.1
Summary of Locations of Individual Submitters

Total Number of Individual Submissions = 2 551

Total Objections = 2 286

Total in Support = 260

Total Comments = 5

Location	Total Object	Object – Form letters*	Object – Not Form	Support
NSW Country Centres				
Gloucester	586	360	226	116
Taree	199	176	23	6
Wingham	120	95	25	0
Forster	28	21	7	3
Bulahdelah	23	18	5	0
Other	376	250	126	43
Total	1332	920	412	168
Sydney and Surrounds				
Sydney City	19	14	5	0
Sydney Suburbs	509	388	121	7
Blue Mountains	16	6	10	0
Central Coast	43	31	12	5
Total	587	439	148	12
Newcastle				
Newcastle and Suburbs	221	147	74	52
Total	221	147	74	52
Interstate				
ACT	16	8	8	0
QLD	48	28	20	16
VIC	31	14	17	1
WA	3	0	3	1
SA	11	10	1	0
NT	3	1	2	0
TAS	12	5	7	0
Total	124	66	58	18
Other				
Overseas	13	11	2	10
Unknown	9	6	3	0
Total	22	17	5	10
* Form or Form plus extra text				

Approximately 586 (26%) of the individual submissions opposing the amended Project provided a Gloucester address whereas 116 (45%) of the individual submissions supporting the amended Project provided a Gloucester address. A substantial proportion of the individual submitters requested their names be withheld.

Figure 1.1 provides the frequency of themes raised in the submissions by residents opposing the amended Project from Gloucester (including Forbesdale) and the surrounding localities of Barrington, Bindera, Copeland, Faulkland and Stratford.

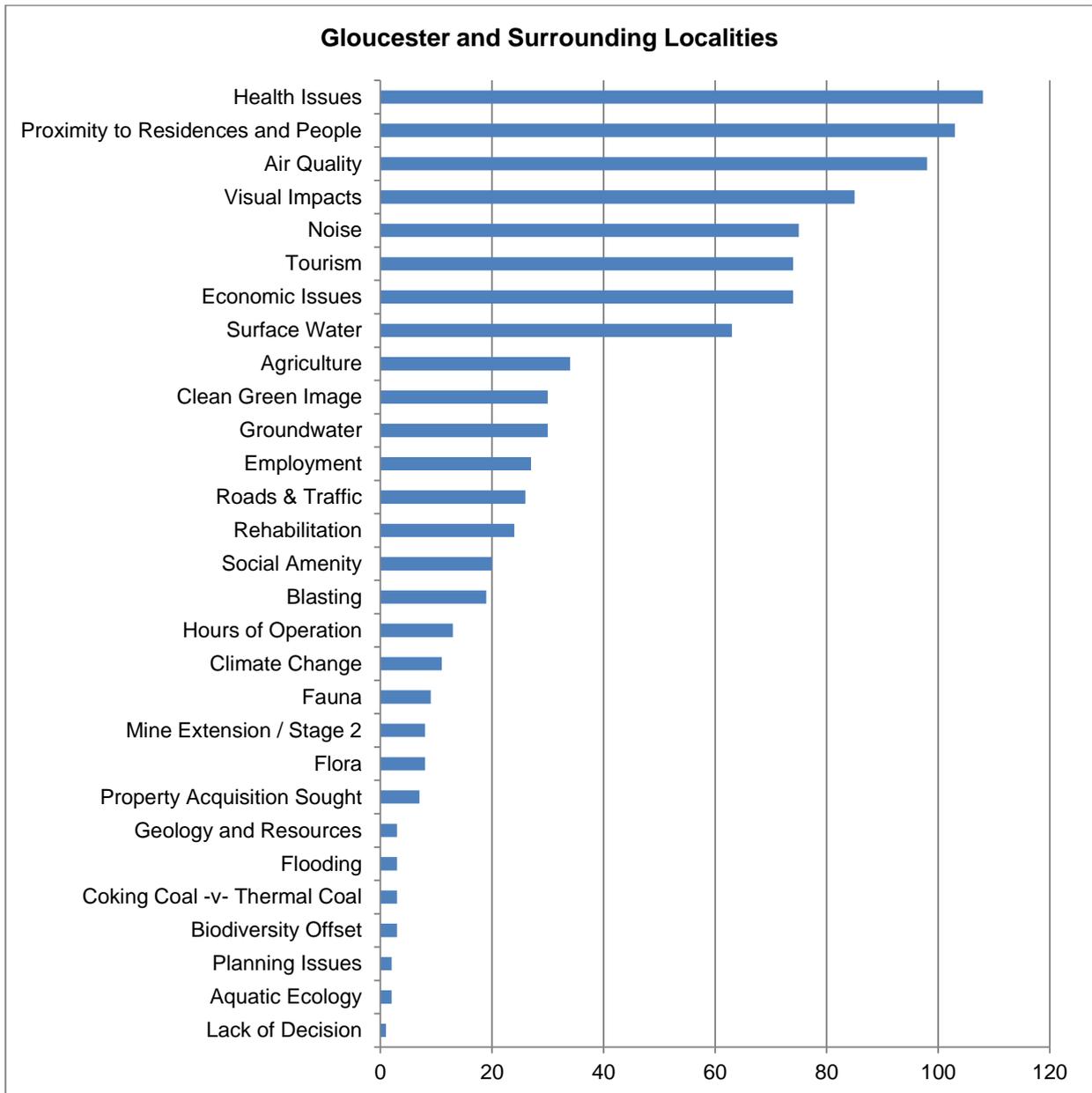


Figure 1.1 Frequency of Themes Raised by Residents of Gloucester and Surrounding Localities

It is noted that there was a similarity of themes raised by residents of Gloucester and surrounding localities albeit with different frequency depending on the locations of authors.

The key themes in submissions supporting the amended Project related to employment and the need to increase and diversify business activity in Gloucester in order to maximise the likelihood of the township sustainability.

1.3 GRL'S CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

GRL was formed specifically to develop coal projects within the Gloucester Basin and is fully cognisant of the challenges that a mining operation near Gloucester presents and the issues that it will need to manage.

GRL places considerable emphasis on undertaking all activities in a professional, scientifically sound, responsible, transparent and courteous manner and has been able to amend its 2013 Project principally to reduce the areal extent and impacts of its activities, yet retain the key feature of its proposal, i.e. to produce high quality coking coal for export in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

GRL recognises that should the amended Project be granted development consent, it will need to continue to demonstrate to the local community that it has a social licence to operate, and is a company that can be trusted to undertake its activities in compliance with the development consent and related approvals and commitments. Building and maintaining trust with the local community will be fundamental to the success of the amended Project. GRL looks forward to continuing and expanding its role as a corporate citizen of Gloucester and the surrounding district.

1.4 GRL'S ONGOING ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Engaging and consulting with the Gloucester and surrounding communities has been a thorough and determined process for GRL. The Company considers that the consultation processes during the various assessments for the amended Project, including the consultation undertaken by Key Insights for the Social Impact Assessment and the additional consultation by representatives of the Company, have been comprehensive and inclusive.

It was recognised that the scale of the assessments completed for the EIS and the supporting SCSC necessitated further consultation and engagement, especially during the public exhibition period as the community considered their submissions about the amended Project. In August 2016, when the amended EIS went on public exhibition, GRL undertook a wide range of engagement activities to inform the community about the amended Project, and engage with them on the issues the amended Project presented.

The key philosophy of engagement activities at this time concerned the availability of GRL representatives to those seeking more information or to ask questions. Acknowledging the importance of this process, the Chief Operating Officer Mr Brian Clifford made sure he was regularly available to the people of Gloucester to discuss and explain details of the amended Project. Mr Clifford lived in Gloucester up to three days a week during the exhibition period, to ensure anyone who had questions about the EIS could ask him personally. Mr Clifford routinely started his day by calling in to see local business people in the main street to discuss the amended Project and keep them updated.

When the public exhibition period commenced, GRL published and distributed a community newsletter throughout the Gloucester area, informing the community of the process for accessing the EIS and supporting documents, approaching GRL to ask any questions and encouraging people to be involved in the submission process. A key community engagement activity during the public exhibition period involved the opening of an Information Centre in Gloucester. The centre was open twice a week for 8 weeks during the exhibition period to showcase the amended Project and provide a location where the community could approach GRL to ask questions. Mr Clifford and his staff personally attended every Information Centre open day to engage with interested people. The Information Centre contained a range of educational material, including:

- copies of the EIS and other associated documents to explain the amended Project;
- a large, to-scale map showing the proximity of the closest homes to the proposed Mine Area. Residents were able to view the map and determine the distance between their home and the Mine Area;
- a video demonstrating details of the mine's development and the projected views of the mine from six key vantage points around Gloucester township; and
- a large flip-book showing photomontages of projected views from six different vantage points around Gloucester.

The level of public feedback during the public exhibition period was encouraging, especially from those seeking to register for job opportunities. It was, however, determined following review of the submissions received by DPE that some members of the community misunderstood the potential impacts and the measures that GRL would implement to monitor, mitigate and manage the development of the amended Project. Therefore, even though the period for making submissions had ceased, it was concluded that there would be benefits to continuing engagement activities. Some engagement included continuing activities already familiar to the community such as hosting the bi-monthly Community Consultative Committee meetings (with all minutes published on GRL's website) while Mr Clifford and other GRL representatives continued to engage with the community through the following.

- Hosting information sessions for small community groups, as requested.
- Addressing meetings of Gloucester community groups, as requested.
- Meeting individuals of Forbesdale Estate to discuss issues about the amended Project.
- Meetings with landholders in the area to discuss potential impacts of the amended Project.
- Meetings with representatives of various industry groups.
- Responding to all people who contacted the organisation requesting employment.

Throughout this period, GRL has also continued to be involved in the community by sponsoring local events such as the Gloucester Show and Chill Out Festival and creating a community movie festival by purchasing equipment and movies for a dedicated monthly community movie night.

GRL remains encouraged by the feedback it has been receiving from the community and hopes that the information provided to landholders, community groups and individuals has directly answered some of the questions raised and addressed in this document. Following the submission of the RTS document, GRL plans to continue engagement activities on a weekly basis, and is committed to regular, ongoing community engagement throughout the life of the proposed mine.

1.5 DOCUMENT FORMAT

This document has been compiled in four sections with three appendices.

- Section 1: introduces the scope and format of this document.
- Section 2: provides detailed responses to all key issues raised in Government agency and community submissions in respect of the amended Project.
- Section 3: provides GRL's response to a range of recommended conditions proposed by Government agencies to be incorporated in a development consent should the amended Project be considered for approval.
- Section 4: provides an updated Summary of Environmental Management and Mitigation measures.

A set of appendices are attached to the document incorporating supporting information to a number of the responses. **Appendix 3** incorporates a copy of the land ownership figure that can be lifted out and extended beyond the document edge so that it can be viewed concurrently with the responses.

Appendix 1: Tew Property Report.

Appendix 2: Targeted Fauna Survey Report.

Appendix 3: Land Ownership (lift-out).